

SOCIALIST APPEAL

UNISON BULLETIN

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UNISON CONFERENCE THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN

Unison Socialist Appeal Supporters

Editorial

This year's Unison national delegate conference represents the culmination of eighteen tumultuous months in our union.

From the onset of the election campaign for the general secretary position, right up until today, there has barely been a week without some degree of controversy.

Paul Holmes' general secretary campaign and the subsequent victory of the Time for Real Change (TFRC) candidates in the NEC elections were a real earthquake, with implications far beyond Unison.

The right wing in the union have tried to explain all this as being down to the intrigues of a left faction.

But the truth is that the rise of the left in Unison reflects years, if not decades, of discontent with the status quo in Unison.

Bureaucratic blockage

Years of paying lip service to the fight against low pay and discrimination at work, combined with years of ineffectual opposition to waves of Tory austerity, have eroded member's support for the right-wing 'establishment' in Unison, as in many other unions also.

Decades of unfettered right-wing control of Unison, with a pliant NEC that was cosseted and bolstered by perks and privileges, created a lay bureaucracy, with all the sense of entitlement that flows from it. No wonder members have looked for something different!

In challenging this control and winning an overall majority on the NEC, Time for Real Change shook up the hornets' nest.

The right wing found themselves in a minority for the first time, losing all the votes, and effectively being unable to present any serious alternative ideas.



The efforts of the right wing have concentrated on obstructing the work of the NEC, combined with virulent attacks on Paul Holmes, the left-wing Unison President. They are able to do this through their dominance amongst the staff and within other unelected structures, as well as a layer of lay officials that have been co-opted by them.

The right's strategy is clear. In waging a guerilla struggle of this kind, they intend to bog down the left in their elected positions with all kinds of delays, thereby preventing them from functioning effectively.

In this way, they hope that grassroots members who have voted for TFRC will become disillusioned, allowing the right wing to retake these positions the next time they're up for election.

Conference showdown

As such, it is imperative that the left takes the fight to the bureaucracy and the right wing. The outcome of this year's national delegate conference will play a large role in this.

Conference will be a big test for Time for Real Change. The right wing have sought to manipulate the conference agenda to rule out NEC motions on key issues: like the election of full-time officials, and a review of legal services – a motion that they didn't even print in the preliminary agenda for conference.

This is no accident. These motions would likely receive support at conference,

and would have a major impact if implemented.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the bureaucracy to maintain control of the situation. This is why they are resorting to blatantly undemocratic tactics like this.

The lessons of the defeat of the Corbyn movement are vitally important in this context.

The success or otherwise of the campaign for real change depends on a resolute leadership – one that is prepared to take on and defeat the bureaucratic obfuscation of the right wing.

The message from those events is simple: give the right wing an inch, and they will take a mile.

The left must therefore face down and defeat these undemocratic efforts to block their motions from discussion.

Fighting programme

Beyond conference itself, there are big questions that have to be posed.

How can the left ensure that the fight for real change is developed? How can we carry out a fundamental transformation of Unison into a fighting, democratic union? How can we build a union that both successfully defends our members, and becomes a genuine weapon for workers in the class struggle?

How can we ensure it becomes a pole of attraction in the labour movement for workers looking to fight back against the employers and the Tories?

Continued from previous page.

One thing is very clear. The battle to transform Unison cannot be won within the confines of the Unison HQ on Euston Road. The fight for real change needs to be taken into every branch, and placed in the hands of every member. But that also requires a clear programme.

Time for Real Change has highlighted the cost-of-living crisis, low pay, and discrimination in recent material. But there is a way to go. An important step would be to develop a Charter for Real Change: a manifesto that sets out clearly what TFRC is fighting to achieve.

Such a document – by clearly laying out bold socialist policies to tackle the burning problems facing grassroots members – could have an electrifying effect. Not only would it enthuse existing activists, but it would also bring new layers into the struggle, massively strengthening the position of the left and solidifying our base amongst the rank and file.

Broad left

To activate such a layer of workers, who can then democratically decide the policies Unison needs and promote them at all levels within the union, we also need an organisation for them to join.

This highlights the need for an open and democratic broad left. Such a body must organise across the whole union, presenting clear perspectives, arguments, and ideas that clearly break with the lip-service-only approach that has hampered the effectiveness of Unison since its formation.

Some significant steps have already been taken. Doubling strike pay and making it payable from day one is a welcome move, for instance. This has contrasted sharply with the track record of the bureaucracy and the right wing, who have consistently sought to hold back the membership. But on its own, this isn't enough.

For too long, branches have been left to fight alone. There are many issues that require coordinated action: attacks on pensions; wage freezes; the threat of privatisation – the list only gets longer.

A broad left would give the necessary political edge to such campaigns within the union. It should be seen as a vital part of the struggle against the bureaucracy, and a counterweight to their dominance in head office.

Coordinated action

At a time when the cost-of-living is spiralling out of control, with workers being made to pay for another capitalist crisis, Unison should be taking the lead in organising with other public sector unions to coordinate industrial action across all sectors.

The potential for such coordinated action was illustrated in the pensions dispute in November 2011, where millions participated in a huge one-day public sector strike. That movement could have stopped the Tory-Lib Dem coalition government in its tracks.

This inspiring struggle could have been used as a springboard to unite the unions against the government and its capitalist backers. But instead, right-wing union leaders – Dave Prentis,

foremost among them – simply marched members up the hill and then back down again, before agreeing to a rotten deal and selling the membership short.

Today, the cost-of-living crisis affects millions of working people and their families – even more than were affected by the coalition's attack on pensions.

In this context, a one-day public sector strike now would receive overwhelming support amongst workers. More than this, it would show workers that there is a way forward, if used as the foundation for a concerted campaign to topple the Tories from power.

Seize the moment

The struggle to transform Unison won't be won or lost in Brighton this June. But it is an important milestone. For the first time, the question will be placed clearly before Unison's membership: Will it be business as usual inside the union? Or is it time for real change?

The left must seize this opportunity to win a clear victory over those who represent the former. This means putting plans in place to counter any efforts at obstruction or sabotage. We must be prepared to do whatever it takes to demonstrate the difference that the left's plans for Unison will make to ordinary members.

The right wing and the bureaucracy have already proven how far they are willing to go in their struggle to protect their privileges. Time for Real Change and all honest left activists must be similarly resolute in their efforts to democratise Unison and prepare our union for battle.

Unison is potentially an enormously powerful union. It has been held back for decades by a leadership that preferred perks to policy and picket lines; that prioritised freebies over fighting for the members.

Now, at a time when members really need our union to stand up and help them organise to defend themselves, this fight has never been more important.

The opportunity ahead of us cannot be squandered. The most effective way of seizing it is to actively involve grassroots members in the struggle to transform the union at every level.

- For a fighting and democratic Unison!
- For the election of all full-time officials!
- Build an open, democratic national broad left organisation!
- Fight austerity! No wage freezes! No to below-inflation pay deals!
- For unified coordinated action across the public sector!
- For a one-day public sector strike! ■





UNISON HEALTH SECTOR CONFERENCE FIGHTBACK NEEDED

Unison Socialist

Appeal Supporters

The Unison Health Service Group conference took place on the 25th-27th April in the same week as the Health and Care Act was passed. Delegates from across the country attended to discuss the main issues of the day with their comrades and fellow health workers.

This conference should have been a council of war. Delegates' time should have been spent getting down to the serious business of defending the NHS and health workers against this act, which will work to deepen privatisation of the health service even further.

Yet despite a determined campaign to get a motion on this dangerous act onto the agenda it was blocked, activists believe, because of the UNISON Health Service Group Executive's right wing leadership's cosy relationship with the new Integrated Care Boards.

As the blocked motion points out, membership of these boards will now be open to the private sector. To prevent any discussion of this doesn't just spit in the eye of the union's so-called democratic processes, it also represents a betrayal of the very principle of free healthcare at the point of use.

Stage-managed

As with this motion, the right wing worked to keep any criticism or controversy out of the conference more generally. Even with all their efforts, however, they couldn't stop the anger of members from occasionally breaking through.

One such instance was the anger at real terms pay cuts from the Pay Review Body being expressed. A motion from Belfast to immediately withdraw from the PRB was pushed to a card vote.

Unfortunately this motion lost in favour of the gradual approach of the leadership. Their plan is just to keep kicking the issue into the long grass, and no-one has any faith it will lead to action.

Real Change

Time for Real Change held a fringe meeting at which the main business was introducing the candidates for the Service Group Executive election.

One of these, John Flannery summed up his position, *"Up to 8 years ago I would listen to the top table, but I have become frustrated by decisions made, by advice to accept pay cuts from our officers. We know that this has led to a 20% cut in our income."*

John went on to say that a key part of his programme was to defend whistleblowers who needed the union's full backing as the NHS guidance was useless.

Which way forward?

Following this, there was a debate about the strategy to take. Some comrades present believed that health workers should just ignore the executive and organise in their workplace directly. However it was pointed out that the leadership is an actual obstacle to doing this.

Glen Williams, North West Convener, told us how in the North West a left wing Regional Committee had helped facilitate members who needed industrial action through setting up a Disputes Committee to help local members organise.

A fighting leadership is key to taking on the battles facing Unison members in health and throughout the union. A leadership like this could give a fighting lead to members desperate for one and win the first real victories we've seen in healthcare for a very long time.

Such a move would give enormous confidence to the rank-and-file. If it were linked with a bold socialist programme to take on the roots of our problems and generalised across the whole union, this would not just signal the end of pay restraint but the end of the Tory government itself.

Members should support Time for Real Change candidates if they want to see their union effectively take on the bosses and deal with our problems in all sectors ■

INDIA: CASUALISED CARE WORKERS ON INDEFINITE STRIKE

Numan Biswas

The Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union (DSAWHU) have been on indefinite strike since 31 January against the unbearable working conditions and low pay of their members. Their struggle is an example to the labour movement across India.

An 'anganwadi' is a type of child care centre, set up by the Indian government in 1975. Anganwadi workers and helpers also provide a range of facilities to the community like maternity advice and care; these workers and helpers are an essential part of the Indian public health service.

Despite the important role they play, these workers and helpers are not given employee status. Anganwadi workers and helpers receive a pittance of Rs 3,500 and 2,500 per month respectively, in addition to which different state governments contribute a varying amount.

This is the situation that roughly 22,000 anganwadi workers and helpers face in Delhi alone. Millions of anganwadi workers and helpers across India share the same horrid conditions and pay.

One DSAWHU member, Rajni, said in an interview:

"There are no specific work hours as well. We are supposed to work from 9 am to 2 pm. However, even at 12 at night, our supervisor calls us and demands the work to be done. At the centres, they deliberately get our food late and make us stay till 5 pm."

Militant class struggle

Shortly after the indefinite strike was announced by DSAWHU, the workers and helpers organised a sit-in protest outside the residence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence.

DSAWHU has organised mass rallies and marches through Delhi. These were attended by thousands of DSAWHU members.



As the indefinite strike action progressed, the workers and helpers have set up a creche to look after their children. On 13 February, a medical camp was organised by the Progressive Doctors' League near the Kejriwal residence, under the leadership of the DSAWHU.

This kind of solidarity and militant action is a lesson to the entire Indian labour movement, which must be built upon. The determination of this indefinite strike by extremely exploited and oppressed layers of the working class is absolutely inspirational.

Betrayals

Unfortunately, it seems the trade union tops are more interested in limiting the scope of this struggle and stitching up deals with the bosses.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has attempted to broker a rotten deal with the authorities, via its affiliated union, Delhi Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers' Union (DAWHU). The DAWHU is not to be confused with the DSAWHU (which is leading the indefinite strike). The DSAWHU has rightly denounced the open treachery of the CITU and CITU-affiliated organisations.

The Indian state forces have also shown their repulsive, reactionary character in the course of this struggle. According to a report by DSAWHU:

"Delhi police misbehaved with women during 'Khabardar rally' [Beware rally], organised by anganwadi workers on 11 February 2022... Male policemen abused

struggling women and dragged them into the streets, causing serious injuries to several women... despite this brutal police oppression, the women's enthusiasm has not decreased, and they are sticking to their demands with the same energy."

The police are on the side of the anti-worker government and parties. They reflect all the disgusting prejudices of capitalist society, and will viciously defend the Indian capitalist system against all threats.

Which way forward?

There have been anganwadi protests spreading in other parts of the country. For example, anganwadi workers and helpers in Tamilnadu are protesting for similar demands as DSAWHU.

There are millions of anganwadi workers and helpers across India. The demands of DSAWHU should be generalised across the country and a nationwide strike of anganwadi workers and helpers should be organised.

The struggles of the anganwadi workers and helpers must be linked to the struggles of all the workers in India; which must in turn be linked to the struggles of the farmers.

This must be an indefinite strike, involving all exploited and oppressed layers in Indian society, directed against the source of their torment: the reactionary Modi government, the parasitic Indian capitalist system, and the multinational capitalist corporations they faithfully serve ■



UNISON'S NEXT STEPS

UNITE AND STRIKE AGAINST THE TORIES

Lily Boulby

UNISON NEC

Young Members rep

(personal capacity)

Our class, and our union members are facing almighty challenges – almost too many to list.

Rampant inflation. Energy bills rising. Falling real wages. High rents. The devastation caused by the crisis of capitalism is on the scale of a natural disaster.

The billionaires and bankers, however, have been popping bottles of bubbly, shared liberally with their Tory pals, as they report record profits – profits made off the backs of our labour. More than ever, it is vital that our union, Unison, rises up to the tasks before us.

Crisis and cuts

At the same time, the Tory government – a bosses' government of criminals and crooks – continues to attack the public sector, with public sector workers seeing pay cuts, worsening conditions, and redundancies.

The NHS is in a permanent state of crisis, with a record backlog of patients: a crisis created by more than a decade of cuts and privatisation by the Tories.

With 100,000 vacancies across the country's healthcare system, a dwindling number of workers are being left to handle an ever-increasing workload. Adding insult to injury, health workers have received a pathetic below-inflation pay deal. No wonder six out of ten nurses are considering exiting the profession, or are already on their way out.

The situation isn't much better for local authority workers, who are experiencing a real squeeze, with a 1.75% wage increase in the latest pay claim.

Class war

Enough is enough! This is a class war. And at the moment, the bosses are winning. In times of war, armies must build their forces.

Similarly, it is time for Unison to open the doors and launch a mass recruitment drive to expand our ranks – particularly in health.

This campaign should be especially targeted towards young workers. This will revitalise our ranks with new activists willing to fight for a decent future.

Fighting unions

There have been inspiring struggles across the labour movement recently. From bin workers and hospital cleaners, to school teachers and delivery drivers; workers are winning pay increases and decent conditions on the basis of militant action.

These show the way forward. Militancy pays. Through bold action, we can win what our members deserve. Unison must now follow suit. This means putting our reps on a war footing, and backing them all the way.

As the largest union in the country, we should be playing a leading role. We must unite with sister unions, and push for co-ordinated action across the public sector, to strike a blow against the Tories, and make the bosses pay for this crisis.

We must prepare for battle, and transform our unions from little more than insurance providers, into truly fighting organisations – weapons that can be wielded by the working class in the struggle for socialism.

The role of Marxists in this process is vital: to forge a militant leadership across the labour movement. We have no time to waste. Join us in this urgent task! ■



UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION MAKE THE BOSSES PAY!

Will Collins

Leeds medical student

After 12 years of below-inflation pay, Unison Higher Education (HE) staff are at breaking point. The bosses in collaboration with university bureaucrats will stop at nothing to protect their profits and push down wages.

However, at the University of Leeds, workers organised with Unison are showing that we don't have to simply accept this. In fact, they are fighting back!

Crisis in HE

As the economy teeters on the brink of recession, bosses all over the country are responding by pushing down wages and increasing the intensity of work. This is being acutely felt by workers in the HE sector.

In 2010, universities had their funding cut and were told to make money by other means. They were subsequently opened up to private investors looking to turn a profit from HE. Tuition fees increased to a whopping £9,250 and HE staff have faced a 20% pay reduction when adjusted for inflation.

The marketisation of HE is the direct consequence of capitalism. Rather than invest in staff and decent services for students, university managements are more concerned with turning a profit. Therefore, they are looking to increase the exploitation of staff on the one hand while charging students more for their education on the other.

Cost of Living Crisis

While these conditions were bad enough before, the cost-of-living crisis has made the situation unbearable. Household energy prices have risen by 54% and inflation is set to increase to 10% which is pushing many HE workers into poverty.

One Unison worker at the University of Leeds told Socialist Appeal that, "when you have a full-time job, you shouldn't have to sit at home without the heating on, and then for your vice chancellor to be on a six-figure salary".

Branch secretary Angela Blackburn stated "members are telling us they can't afford to live on their wages, they're having to get second jobs, cut back on necessities and use food banks. This is unprecedented."

The situation is so dire that HE staff are being forced into strike action as the only way to put food on the table.

Class power

In Leeds back in March, HE staff at the University went on strike for the first time in 10 years. They were accompanied by 1,200 students and striking UCU members who joined them for a march through the city centre.

This was a huge display of strength and solidarity. Ted Grant once said "not a wheel turns, not a phone rings, not a lightbulb shines without the kind permission of the working class". This is true particularly of the HE staff who have the power to completely shut down the University.

The employer body has responded with a disgraceful 3% rise and 9% for the lowest paid staff. With inflation reaching 10% this is again another pay deduction!

Unfortunately, the right-wing in the union see themselves as mediators between the workers and employers rather than genuine class fighters. This is why the fightback so far has been relatively tame.

One Unison worker from Leeds put it well, "we can't keep on doing a three-day strike and going back in for a year, that's a long weekend, that's not disruptive".

The rank-and-file of the Union can trust only in their own strength. Those so-called leaders who won't fight the bosses are cutting the throats of the members. The left only have a narrow majority in the higher education SGE, a majority must be won on a fighting programme.

Transform the Union

This process has already begun, with the left organised around the Time for Real Change (TFRC) banner being elected to the NEC last year.

This has already led to significant gains for rank-and-file members. For example, minimum daily strike pay was at £25 from day 3 or 4; now, thanks to the new NEC, it is £50 from day 1!

This is more than some University of Leeds workers earn in a day, meaning simple policies like this can bring out a wider layer of workers on strike. However, this only scrapes the surface.

Mass engagement is needed from the grassroots, so TFRC can take the fight for change into every corner of the union.



This could help push to transform the entire union into a democratic fighting one. Given what the members are facing, this must be treated as a priority.

We have seen with the recent pay offer, and the 100% pay deduction for UCU members boycotting marking, that the bosses will go to any limit to protect their profits. Accordingly, workers must be as ruthless in defence of their own interests.

For a start, Unison must link up with other unionised sectors within education and organise for sustained joined-up strike action around mutual grievances, including indefinite strikes. This would strike fear into the hearts of management and is the only way HE workers will receive any kind of dignified pay offer.

Fight for Socialism

We have seen how struggles are eventually crushed by attrition if they are not escalated. What the bosses give with one hand, they will take back with the other further down the line.

The University of Leeds has £700 million in reserves which is either being hoarded or spent on flash new buildings. The money is there to pay staff, however, this wealth is in the wrong hands; the hands of the ruling class.

Under socialism, the running of HE would be put into the hands of university workers and students. This way, the huge cash reserves would be used to improve the quality of education rather than prop up the bank account of the wealthy.

We say:

- Transform Unison into a democratic, fighting union!
- For coordinated action across the education sector!
- For the democratic running of universities by students and staff!
- Solidarity with HE workers! ■

CLIMATE CHANGE, WET AND CAPITALISM

Jonathan Lees

Environment Agency worker

UNISON member in Leeds

Climate change is one of the most serious issues of our time, and Unison members in Water, Energy and Transport (WET) are at the forefront of the struggle against it.

Warming temperatures and rising sea levels are already having a serious negative impact in places like Bangladesh, but even in the UK flood risk is increasing leading to regular flood events devastating some communities on a near yearly basis.

It is estimated that in 20 years, four times as many houses may be at risk from flooding, a situation exacerbated by private developers building on flood plains for cheap land and to make a quick buck from unsuspecting homebuyers.

Cuts and Closures

Austerity has only made the situation worse. The last decade of Tory rule has seen the Environment Agency's (EA) budget cut by as much as a quarter. These cuts are felt most keenly by workers at the agency itself. Over 2000 jobs have been cut over the last decade, a full 6th of the entire EA workforce.

These cuts alongside general mismanagement from the agency's corporate structure has a direct impact on the ability of the EA to handle flood events effectively. The estimated cost to the UK economy from flooding was £3.2 billion in 2007, more than four times the EAs

annual budget at the time of just £709 million.

But floods are not the only issue. Increasing temperatures make water shortages more likely, particularly in south-east England. Here we run into another horror of capitalism: private water monopolies.

Monopoly is the ultimate goal for capitalists; to corner the market, charge whatever price they like and gain superprofits in the process. Since the privatisation of water utilities in 1989, Britain has essentially had state-sanctioned water monopolies.

It's worth noting, incidentally, that England and Wales are the only countries in the world to operate like this. Not even the USA, famous for health profiteering, stoops this low in the search for profit.

Daylight Robbery

Over the last 30 years water companies have handed over £57 billion in dividends to their shareholders, almost half what they spent on improving and maintaining treatment plants in that time and slightly larger than the £48 billion they have amassed in debt.

Revenue has remained sufficient to cover costs throughout; in effect these dizzying debts have been taken on purely to pay more out to owners!

Meanwhile publicly built infrastructure is seriously mismanaged - in 2020 there were more than 400,000 instances of raw sewage being released directly into rivers and coastal waters.

In the past, only extreme rainfall overwhelming treatment plants would cause such discharges. Now, chronic

underinvestment by private water companies means almost any amount of rainfall is enough to cause them. Consequently no English rivers pass the EAs standards for good chemical health and only 14% meet their standards for good ecological health.

Private water essentially ensures ecological devastation, unsanitary rivers, creaking infrastructure and debt. In addition, the agricultural sector allows huge quantities of waste and fertiliser to wash into our rivers purely to save them the cost of proper disposal. At the end of the day, water quality is simply not seen as affordable.

Turn Green - Turn Red!

We could list a thousand more examples just like this. Major companies play a decisive role in producing greenhouse gases and pollution with just 100 global companies being responsible for 71% of emissions.

The capitalists who ultimately bear responsibility for all this are incapable of dealing with its effects. So long as there is profit to be made, they will never fully turn from these practices. We cannot expect help from them.

The only solution is public ownership and democratic workers' control; not just of water utilities but our infrastructure and economy at large. This way, we could institute a socialist economic plan across society: saving the environment while improving everyone's living standards.

This is what's needed to really turn the economy green, protect the environment and the millions of people whose houses and livelihoods are routinely at risk of flooding. In other words, the only way to be truly green is to turn red! ■



UNISON MARXISTS' CHARTER

Bold measures are required to deal with the coronavirus crisis. Only a clear socialist programme can offer a way forward.

We must have no faith in the Tories or their hangers-on, whose worship of the market has brought this country to its knees.

Instead of attacking the left, Labour must provide genuine opposition to this sham-bolic Tory government. Support workers in the fight to put lives before profits!

The bosses and their craven political representatives have shown what their priorities are. We must establish and fight for our own. Therefore, we demand the following socialist measures to protect workers, and put health before wealth.

We demand:

- For a fully-funded, publicly-owned, and free health service, under workers' control and management.
- Reverse all privatisation and outsourcing. All private health and care services must be nationalised without compensation, and integrated into the NHS.
- Nationalise the pharmaceutical companies - without compensation - in order to ensure that medicines and vaccines are produced rapidly, efficiently, and made freely available to all worldwide.
- Workplace safety must be in the hands of workers' committees and the trade unions. Proper health

and safety measures must be implemented, with adequate PPE provided for all workers. The costs for this must be paid for by the bosses.

- A proper living wage must be provided to all workers of at least £15 an hour. End all forms of discrimination; equal pay for equal work. This includes age discrimination, where young workers are forced to work for a fraction of the real minimum wage.
- Any future lockdowns or restrictions must be accompanied by measures to provide for workers affected by workplace closures. This means 100% wage support for those furloughed, as well as full sick pay for those required to isolate.
- If the bosses say they cannot afford to pay for workers' wages, we say: open up the books! Let the working class and the labour movement see the accounts. If firms plead bankruptcy, they should not be bailed out but nationalised under workers' control.
- Labour councils must not administer and implement Tory cuts and austerity. They must instead fight to reverse the austerity inflicted on public services.
- All elected officials in the labour movement should be subject to the immediate right of recall by the members, and take the wage of an average member of their labour organisation.
- Ban evictions and cancel housing

debts. Give local authorities the power to cap rents at affordable levels. Bring empty properties and the assets of the big landlords and management companies under public control.

- The financial resources required to fight the crisis must not come from increased taxes or more austerity cuts. Nationalise the banks under public ownership and control. Rather than a "wealth tax" we call for the total expropriation of these financial monopolies.
- Nationalise the 100 biggest monopolies under workers' control and management, and without compensation to the capitalists. On this basis the economy can be democratically planned in the interests of the majority, and not for the super profits of a tiny few.

The coronavirus crisis has exposed the global nature of the crisis of capitalism.

A Socialist Federation of Britain should be linked to a World Socialist Federation, in order to plan resources internationally for the benefit of all.

This would put an end to the barbarism of capitalism and allow humanity to begin solving the urgent issues of climate change, disease, and poverty that face our planet.

If you agree with our programme here, get involved with Socialist Appeal in Unison and help us fight for a better, socialist world!

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN US

Marxists are class conscious fighters for socialism. As Marx explained, we should be regarded as the most resolute section of the working class.

Marxism arms us with a conscious understanding of society and the class struggle. Only by absorbing this outlook can we lay the foundation for the overthrow of capitalism.

For us, Marxism is the science of social revolution and therefore needs to be studied.

Our tendency therefore stresses the need to educate and train our members in Marxist theory and the struggles of the working class. This gives us considerable advantages. First and foremost, Marxist theory is a guide to action, a guide to the class struggle.

As isolated individuals we can do very little. However, organised together

we can achieve a considerable amount. Organisation allows us to concentrate our forces to much greater effect. Based on correct policies and perspectives, we can intervene effectively in the class struggle.

The present reformist leadership of the labour movement has led to one retreat after another. In practice they accept capitalism and its limits.

The leadership of the Labour Party is now in the grip of the right wing, who serve the interests of capitalism. This revival is due to the weakness of the left to act decisively, which in turn is a reflection of the weakness of reformism.

Likewise, the reformist trade union leadership has failed to meet the challenges we face. They are lagging completely behind the objective situation. For them, it is simply 'business as usual'.

But the crisis of capitalism is posing massive challenges in front of the working

class. We will fight shoulder to shoulder with those prepared to fight. In doing so, we will point to the future needs of the movement.

Our task is to provide the necessary clarity for the struggle. Capitalism cannot be reformed; it needs to be consciously overthrown by the working class in Britain and internationally. That is why we are internationalists and proud to be part of the International Marxist Tendency ■

