

Defend anti-austerity struggle

Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary

The Socialist Party has participated in protests across the country since the Blairite coup was launched. We say:

- Demand a labour movement conference open to all left organisations and Corbyn supporters
- Prepare for a general election with a clear anti-austerity, anti-racist programme - opposition to all cuts, £10 an hour minimum wage, mass council housing building and renationalisation.

The civil war within Labour - which has existed since Jeremy Corbyn was elected as Labour leader - has now broken out into the open. The 'mass' resignations of the shadow cabinet indicate a determined push by the right-wing Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) to remove Corbyn. The no confidence vote of Labour MPs was 172 to 40 against him.

It is a mere trifle to them that he was democratically elected with the biggest mandate of any leader of a British party in recent history. Urged on by the right-wing capitalist media, they are determined to evict Corbyn. They plan to install a right-wing stooge and in this way roll back the labour movement to the dark days of Blairism.

"Labour must now act to remove Corbyn as leader... Having unsheathed the dagger, Labour MPs cannot now draw back", writes the Financial Times. Show me who your friends are and I will show you who you are!

There is a deep and abiding fear in the possessing classes that in the fluid and charged social situation in Britain - with mass opposition to austerity capitalism - if Jeremy Corbyn survives the latest plots and Labour remains intact, a government led by him could be pushed into power even as early as a general election in the autumn.

The additional fear is that then he could be pressurised into introducing radical measures in favour of working people. And this has convinced them and their echoes within the labour movement to strike now to try to bring him down and, if necessary, to damage and destroy the political influence of the labour movement itself, as in 1931 when Labour split and the right formed the National Government with the Tories or in 1981 with the formation of the Social Democratic Party.

Urgent organising needed

What is needed is an urgent labour movement conference, which should be convened now, involving all those who support Corbyn: the trade unions, Labour Party branches and including all left and socialist organisations inside and outside the Labour Party.

The Socialist Party wanted to be involved in a regenerated, open and democratic Labour Party. Unfortunately, the leaders of Momentum - formed to defend Jeremy Corbyn - rejected this approach in favour of top-down bureaucratic control, which involved them quite disgracefully resorting to exclusions and expulsions of those who disagreed with them. This must end.

The leftward moving ranks of the labour movement have rushed to defend Corbyn, because of what he represents: the promise of a radical and hopefully increasingly socialist future for the labour movement in place of discredited capitalism.

The crowds outside parliament together with protests locally against the anti-Corbyn right-wing MPs indicate this. So also does the welcome shift of left general secretaries like Lenny McCluskey, who has warned right-wing anti-Corbyn MPs that they will be reelected, having previously rejected the arguments of the Socialist Party for this.

This plot was predictable and indeed was predicted by the Socialist Party. We wrote many times that the only things which were uncertain were the timing of the attempted coup and on what issue.

The referendum provided the trigger for the right-wing hounds in the PLP to viciously attack Jeremy and demand that he go. Why? Because he was 'lacklustre', his staff turned up late at 'Remain' briefings and he was a reluctant remainer, which was obviously the case! Yet he had carried out their bidding in supporting Remain, which the Socialist Party considered was a mistake. The EU is a bosses' club which has been and will continue to be used against the working class, as Greece and other countries show.

And if the right have succeeded in wearing down Jeremy Corbyn, imposing obstacles to him once more standing for the Labour leadership - which he would win overwhelmingly - then this must not be acquiesced to.

The civil war within Labour indicated that two parties have uneasily coexisted for the last nine months. This could not continue indefinitely and was bound to come to a head at a certain stage, if not over the EU then on some other issue.

Therefore it is necessary to face down and confront the blackmail and sabotage of the right by adopting decisive measures. If it is accurate, then a report in the Financial Times is welcome, which indicated a new determination of Corbyn to fight the right wing. He was asked by a delegation of Labour MPs: "Are you prepared to split the party over this?" He replied that he did not want to but then added, "But if necessary..." [Financial Times 28/6/16]

If he follows through on this, it would mean a welcome, positive development for the labour movement. It would represent a complete break with the discredited right wing and the formation of a new radical workers' party, which would in turn act like a magnet for workers and youth looking for a serious struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

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After the referendum:

Tories Out! General election now

Fight for a 24 hour general strike

Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary

"The referendum result may well go down in history as *the pitchfork moment*", declared the Financial Times (FT), wailing the anger and despair of Britain's elite at the decision by the majority of voters in Britain to leave the European Union.

For the capitalist class in Britain and across the EU as a whole, this is a major blow described by the FT as "the biggest setback in the EU's history".

For British capitalism in particular it is a terrible defeat. It could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom if there is another vote for independence in Scotland, and also lead to the collapse of the Tory Party, once among the most successful capitalist parties on the planet.

It is also possible that the Labour Party could split in the aftermath of 23 June as the pro-business right plot to remove Jeremy Corbyn. Politics has been thrown into turmoil.

Many of the seventeen million people who voted for exit, however, will have woken up with a sense of elation

that they had been able to express their rage at everything they have suffered as a result of big business making the working class pay for the economic crisis in recent years: low pay, zero hour contracts, benefit cuts, the lack of affordable housing, and public services cut to the bone.

What is more, by doing so they have forced Cameron - the hated prime minister - to announce his resignation.

Not only in Britain but across Europe many workers have been inspired by this vote against the bosses' EU. There is no doubt that many workers in Greece, whose living standards have been devastated at the hands of the institutions of the EU, will have been cheering at the result of the referendum.

In response to the referendum result, the financial markets are in upheaval, with sterling plunging to its lowest levels for thirty years. In part this is because the financiers, the 'masters of the universe', had arrogantly calculated that their choice would win the day, and so were not prepared for the Brexit victory.

The gyrations of the financial markets will not necessarily be immediately reflected in a new crisis in the 'real' economy, either in Britain or worldwide. However, the referendum debate has been used by Chancellor Osborne to distract from the signs of a new stage of economic crisis for both UK and world capitalism, which is developing regardless of Brexit, and can be added to by the shockwaves caused by the referendum result.

Project fear

During the referendum 'project fear' reached gigantic proportions. Economic catastrophe, third world war and the fear of an increase in racism and intolerance were all used to try and browbeat voters into supporting 'Remain'. Legitimate fears around these issues were major factors in why 48% of people did decide to vote for Remain. In particular it appears that a majority of young people voted Remain partly because of fears that racism would grow if there was a vote for exit.

Nonetheless, it is incredible the number of people who voted for 'Leave' and used the referendum as an opportunity to oppose the undemocratic, remote EU and to protest; ignoring threats from the leaders of all of Britain's establishment parties, plus every world leader from Obama to Merkel.

Incredibly cynically, even the terrible murder of Labour MP and Remain campaigner Jo Cox was used to try and increase the vote for Remain.

Without doubt the dangerous atmosphere whipped up by right-wing politicians during the referendum debate has increased the danger of racist and far-right attacks. But it was not only the racism of the official Leave side, but also the constant attacks on migrants by Cameron, with the Labour right wing even demanding that he went further in the final days of the campaign! Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, it would have been equally necessary for the workers' movement to stand clearly for unity, against racism and in defence of the rights of migrant workers in Britain.

At the same time, it is completely false to suggest that the exit vote had - in the main - a right wing or racist character. Of course, some of those who voted for exit will have done so for racist or nationalist reasons, but the fundamental character of the exit vote was it was a working class revolt.

Particularly with a referendum, where voters are given a binary 'yes or no' choice - there are bound to be different motivations among people who voted on both sides. But in fact no working class movement is 100% pure, completely without reactionary elements or sub-currents. It is the job of socialists to see what is primary - in this case a largely working class electoral uprising against the establishment.

In general, there was a correlation between the amounts of poverty in an area and there being a majority for exit. Scotland and Northern Ireland, where the referendum was seen differently, were exceptions. However, in England and Wales it was not only white working class areas, but also more ethnically diverse working class areas that voted to leave.

A majority in Bradford, with a high Asian population, for example voted for leave. Although in London - with a younger and relatively wealthier population - a majority voted for Remain, the number of 'Leavers' was much higher in poorer boroughs.

In Barking and Dagenham, where less than half of the population now identify as white British, 62% of people voted to leave. In neighbouring Newham, one of the poorest and also the most ethnically diverse area of the country, 47% voted to leave.

While the scale of immigration became a central issue in the referendum campaign for the majority this was in the main not about opposing people who have come to Britain from other countries. Instead it was based on experience of employers using any means they can - including workers from other countries - to drive down wages, plus anger at the huge cuts that have taken place to public services and fear that they could not cope with a further increase in the population.

The fact that even Farage had to make clear that he did not favour any existing EU migrants losing their right to stay in the country is a reflection of that mood, although of course the workers' movement must fight to make sure that is the case.

This has to be linked to a struggle for a £10 an hour minimum wage, the rate for the job for all workers and opposition to cuts in public services as the only way to defend the rights of all workers, regardless of their country of origin.

Expressing anger

The electoral uprising that has taken place was predicted by the Socialist Party. As we explained in the document agreed at our national conference in March: "Like the 2014 Scottish independence vote, it is possible that the EU referendum could become a means by which many workers express their rage at continued austerity. We have to pose the referendum in those terms, explaining that voting 'Leave' could lead to the possibility of getting the Tories out."

Now, once the referendum is over, this has been weakly recognised by Momentum, the organisation initially set up to organise support for Jeremy Corbyn, when it said: "Millions appear to have chosen 'Leave' to vote against the unfettered globalisation that has seen living standards stagnate or fall, as the cost of living rises." Unfortunately, however, they have only recognised that today, having spent the referendum campaigning for Remain!

In fact, the revolt took place despite the complete failure of the majority of leaders of the trade union movement and, unfortunately, also Jeremy Corbyn to put an independent working class position in the referendum by leading a socialist, internationalist campaign for exit completely independent from and in opposition to the 'Little Englanders' of UKIP and Co.

This is what the Socialist Party did; explaining we are against the bosses' EU, which acts in the interests of the 1%, but in favour of workers' solidarity across the continent and standing for a voluntary socialist confederation of Europe.

Instead, Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the TUC, appeared alongside the leader of the Tories in Scotland, Ruth Davidson, without one word of criticism of the Tory government.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell did correctly refuse to appear alongside Tory politicians but nonetheless were ruthlessly used by David Cameron to try and win a majority for Remain and save his own skin.

In the Observer (12 June 2016) David Cameron brazenly declared that he couldn't "be accused of an establishment stitch-up" because he was "saying listen to Jeremy Corbyn and the Green party".

The political situation would have been transformed if Jeremy Corbyn had stuck by his own historic position of opposition to the EU because, as he said at the time of the Maastricht Treaty: "It takes away from national parliaments the power to set economic policy and hands it over to an unelected set of bankers."

A campaign explaining how nationalisation of the railways or the steel industry are illegal under EU law, and standing in solidarity with workers in Greece, Ireland and the rest of the EU, could have increased the majority for exit and forced not just Cameron's resignation but an immediate general election, with the coming to power of a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government being posed.

The complete absence of a mass working class voice in the referendum has left the ground free to the ex-Tory ex-stockbroker Nigel Farage to falsely pose as the voice of the 'little people'. In reality, of course, the divisive Little Englander ideas of UKIP offer no way forward for working class people.

However, despite the serious mistakes made by the majority of the leaders of the workers' movement in the referendum campaign, it is not at all automatic that UKIP and their ilk will be the gainers from it.

A clear call now for an immediate general election could still lead to the coming to power of a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government, especially if an anti-austerity programme is put forward.

At the same time, the trade union movement needs to go on the offensive against this weak and divided Tory government, fighting for a 24-hour general strike to be called against any new threats of austerity in the wake of Brexit.

The 91% vote in favour of strike action by the teaching union, the NUT, gives an indication of the mood that was developing even before the referendum. So did the votes to demand councils implement no cuts budgets by the Unison and Unite local government executives, the GMB conference and the Wales TUC.

Those resolutions, however, now need to be turned into action. The National Shops Stewards Network conference, taking place on 2 July, will be an important opportunity for rank and file trade unionists to come together and discuss how to build such a movement.

Of course, for big business in Britain a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government is a nightmare they will do their utmost to avoid, fearing the huge expectations it would raise among working class people who have suffered years of austerity.

Therefore the capitalist class and their loyal representatives on the Labour benches are now, as we have warned, already attempting to lay the blame for the Brexit vote at Jeremy Corbyn's door and use it as an excuse to move against him.

As we write, two arch right-wing Labour MPs, Margaret Hodge and Anne Coffey, have presented a motion of no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn to be debated by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader was an expression of the growing anti-austerity mood in society. Although, unexpectedly, it found an expression in the Labour Party leadership contest, this was primarily a movement from outside of Labour, primarily of young people and some 'old Labour' returners, who were looking for something different to the succession of party leaders - Tory and New Labour - that have acted in the interests of the 1%.

Unfortunately, however, from the beginning Jeremy Corbyn has been surrounded by a Blairite Labour machine determined to undermine and remove him.

The last months have shown, as we warned, that no compromise with these representatives of the capitalist establishment is possible. On the contrary, any further retreats by the Labour leadership would inevitably lead to an ebbing of support for Jeremy Corbyn among those who have been enthused by his stance.

Instead the challenge from the right should be met implacably and with determination. Jeremy Corbyn rightly said that many had voted for Brexit in protest against austerity.

Fight austerity

He should now launch a fight against austerity, with the programme which he stood for Labour leader on as its starting point. This should include making clear that he opposes austerity whoever it is implemented by: Brussels, Westminster or local councils. Such a stand - including a £10 an hour minimum wage and mass council housebuilding - would be able to enthuse not just those who elected him as leader, but growing numbers of the workers however they voted in the referendum.

The capitalist class are facing a crisis; they are fumbling around to try and find parties that can act reliably in their interests. It will not be easy for them to avoid calling a general election. It is even possible now that the

divisions in both Labour and the Tories, who are in reality only held together by the electoral system, can lead to a realignment of British politics. A split in the Tories and Labour could lead to a new alignment of the pro-capitalist wing of the Labour Party and the pro-EU Tories.

It is not for nothing that Janan Ganesh comments in the Financial Times (14 June 2016): "The Tory and Labour moderates newly mingling in the Remain offices rather get on." It is even possible that the capitalist class could shift towards supporting a change in the electoral system to proportional representation in order to try and put such a coalition into power.

But while the capitalist class are in chaos, it is urgent that the working class finds its own political voice. The referendum result shows the enormous potential for a mass fight back against austerity in Britain. The task is to create a mass political party capable of leading such a fight back, politically armed with socialist policies.

See also analysis from Socialist Party Scotland:

[Britain's EU referendum was an uprising against the austerity establishment](#)

Online petition calling for Jeremy Corbyn to call for a general election to get the Tories out:

<https://www.change.org/p/jeremy-corbyn-mp-general-election-now-tories-out>

For socialist meetings on the EU referendum result and aftermath go to:

<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23091>

For a leaflet, go to: <http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/txt/435.pdf>

How do socialists respond after the EU referendum? The Socialist Party's Hannah Sell explains

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After the referendum...

United working class resistance can cut across racism

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialist Party national organiser

The reports of appalling racist abuse, including signs saying "Leave the EU, no more Polish vermin" being posted through the letter boxes of Polish families, and of physical attacks since the EU referendum must be condemned and opposed.

Racism blights the lives of millions under capitalism. But the capitalist press seems to want to give the impression that it started with the referendum result. This is false.

Clearly the relentless right-wing propaganda on immigration from the leaders on both sides of the EU referendum debate is a major contributing factor. Correctly these attacks have received a lot of coverage and condemnation in the media. Victims of racism and discrimination will no doubt hope that all the injustices that

exist are given adequate attention, which has not been the case previously.

The Leave vote has had a certain effect, with workers interpreting the result as a sign that they're not welcome. But, as the Socialist Party has asserted, the majority on the Leave side voted out as an expression of opposition to austerity and the rule of the elite.

Refugees

The Socialist Party's call for a Leave vote had nothing in common with the racists. We oppose the bosses' EU with an anti-racist platform based on international workers' solidarity and socialism.

And while many people voted Remain in defiance of Ukip and the Tories, a vote to stay in the EU is not a way forward for fighting racism and division. For example, the EU has withdrawn its Mare Nostrum rescue operation in the Mediterranean in favour of military deterrence, leading to the death by drowning of 2,500 desperate people.

Racism is a feature of daily life for millions of workers and young people in Britain as elsewhere. Research shows that, for example, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) workers with A-level equivalents are 3.2 times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts. Estate agents in London routinely discriminate against black people looking for a home. A disproportionate number of those who die in all forms of detention or after contact with the police following the use of force or serious neglect are from BAME communities.

This situation has been worsened by Tory austerity. There has been a 50% increase in long-term unemployment for young black people since 2010. Only 4% of British Pakistanis say they are not worried about being harassed because of their race or religion. The resignation of Cameron will be celebrated by those on the sharp end of his anti-working class racist agenda.

Tory and Ukip Leave campaign leaders must be condemned for their outright racist and divisive referendum campaign, climaxing in that scandalous 'Breaking Point' poster promoted by Ukip leader Nigel Farage, showing a queue of refugees next to those two words. Ukip must be opposed.

But it is rank hypocrisy for Cameron to come forward and claim to be in opposition to racism. Cameron's spokeswoman told journalists: "We should be absolutely clear that this government will not tolerate intolerance... intimidating migrants, telling them they need to go home".

Intimidating migrants is exactly what the Tories have been doing both before and during the referendum campaign. Let's remember that a central Tory appeal to voters was on the basis that Cameron had successfully attacked welfare benefits for migrants.

Cameron

Just a year ago Cameron, backed to the hilt as always by the right-wing press, spent the summer whipping up anti-migrant feeling, dismissing the desperate refugees at Calais as a 'swarm' there to 'seek a better life.' Public pressure forced him to drop this crude propaganda but only temporarily. During the May election campaign Cameron echoed Tory London mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith who claimed Labour's Sadiq Khan would be soft on crime because he "provided cover for extremists."

On the other hand it has encouraged immigration to suit the needs of big business, while at the same time fuelling division by slashing public spending on vital services.

The capitalist media has a major responsibility too. Miqdaad Versi correctly wrote: "The free hand of the print and online media to distort facts and blame entire groups of people for the troubles of our country, with almost no recourse, plays an equally important role in this spread of hatred. Let's be clear - they are complicit in the rise of bigotry and the consequences of discrimination. A collation of front-page scare stories about migrants from the Daily Express makes for grim reading."

But the so-called serious press has not got clean hands. If they were serious about racism, they would question

the conditions that workers are forced to live in and provide space for a voice to challenge the racists and austerians on both official sides of the referendum. In reality, the big business-owned media's "awakening" about racism has class motives and is temporary. They want to turn this against all Brexit voters. We say, stop demonising the working class. It is working class struggle that has challenged racist divisions.

Domestic staff and porters at Whipps Cross Hospital in east London show how a united struggle including migrant workers can cut across the race to the bottom by the bosses. The overwhelmingly female migrant workforce had, in some cases, been working on zero-hour contracts for up to four years. Their employer, outsourcing firm Carillion, had been paying the minimum rate. The Unite trade union branch secretary, a Socialist Party member, led the successful campaign to win a pay rise of over 20% and permanent contracts for all.

There is a huge danger in attacking all those who voted Leave as Ukip supporters and racists. In the absence of a mass independent political voice of the working class, Ukip are attempting to claim they represent those who see no solutions to their problems coming from capitalist politicians.

But Ukip really is the establishment's anti-establishment party. Former Tory donor Arron Banks, for example, who defected to Ukip in 2014 with a £1 million donation, was a director of a company, Rock Services, which paid just £12,000 UK corporation tax in 2013-14 on gross profits of £19.7 million after 'recharging' services to another company based in lightly-regulated Gibraltar. Despite the rhetoric Ukip are firmly on the side of the rich.

Fighting the Blairites in Labour who are attacking Jeremy Corbyn - and have echoed Tory and Ukip anti-immigration rhetoric - is needed to build a mass anti-austerity party that can unite the 99%. That opens the way to preparing for a general election with a clear anti-austerity, anti-racist programme - opposition to all cuts, a £10 an hour minimum wage, mass council housing building and renationalisation.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, the 100% anti-austerity electoral challenge in which the Socialist Party participates, warned that the EU referendum would give a platform and state funds to the Tories and Ukip to spread the lies. In attempting to justify the brutal cuts, Cameron and co have tried to distract working class people from the real causes of falling living standards by 'playing the migrant card'.

The real reason for the lack of homes, jobs and services is austerity and the pro-rich rigged economy. The bankers have received £100 billion in bonuses since the economic crisis began.

United struggle

If the government is allowed to falsely lay the blame for austerity on migrants, instead of the crisis-ridden capitalist system and the bankers and billionaires who benefit from it, then the Tories will succeed in destroying our living standards.

There is an urgent need for a united struggle of all workers against austerity and public sector cuts. This includes demanding resources in order to meet the needs of refugees without detriment to the existing population. The trade union movement needs to urgently mobilise both in defence of the refugees and against austerity.

The Panama Papers revealed there is no lack of money. There is no shortage of resources. Across Europe there are eleven million empty homes which could house all the homeless of Europe and the refugees forced to flee war and chaos. But these homes are largely in the hands of speculators and the 1% and are used to make profit.

To be effective the fight against racism and the far right must be linked to fighting austerity with a socialist programme. Join us in that fight - for jobs, homes and services for all and to say no to racism.

Scotland: Towards a second indyref?

Philip Stott, Socialist Party Scotland (CWI Scotland)

In Scotland, there was a 1.66 million (62%) to 1 million (38%) vote for Remain. The 38% vote to leave was higher than many polls had indicated in the run-up to the referendum. Turnout was lower by around 6% compared to England and Wales. In Glasgow only 56% of the eligible voters took part.

A major factor in the lower turnout was the general disgust among a section of the working class towards both official campaigns who were seen as two wings of the establishment. However, in many working class areas the vote to Leave was higher than the 38% average.

In Dundee, where there was a 40% vote to leave, a left Labour councillor who was campaigning for Remain commented: "There are strong parallels between disenfranchised working class Scots voting Yes in 2014, and working class people across the UK voting to leave (and it's not just in England). "Having spent yesterday in Kirkton [a working class area of Dundee] and then at the count, I saw these boxes being opened and sorted. So, I know the majority there voted to leave."

More affluent areas voted heavily in favour of remaining part of the EU. Students and young people, for anti-racist and internationalist reasons, voted by a big majority in favour of staying.

Another important factor as to why there was a lower Leave vote in Scotland was the disgust with which Farage, Johnson and Gove, the main leaders of the Brexit campaign, were viewed. Much of their campaign was tinged with English nationalism, especially from the Ukip leader Farage.

In addition the SNP, the biggest party in Scotland and still with some authority following the 2014 indyref, ran a major campaign in defence of the EU as a "progressive, job creating" institution. They argued in favour of an "open, tolerant Scotland" and this contrasted with the xenophobic campaigns of much of the Remain side.

The Scottish Greens, Labour, the Tories and the Lib Dems, alongside the SNP, produced a joint statement the day before the vote claiming the EU was: "vital for jobs, investment and opportunities for the people of Scotland." Sturgeon also shared a TV debate platform with the Tories in defence of the interests of Scottish and British big business. The SNP's role as part of "Project Fear" will not be forgotten by many working class people.

Despite the unremitting pro-EU propaganda more than one million people, including around a third of SNP supporters, voted in favour of exiting the EU.

Nicola Sturgeon argued that a vote to leave the EU in Britain, with Scotland voting to stay, would be a "material change of circumstance" that would put a second independence referendum on the agenda.

While not committing to a indyref immediately or even definitely proposing to have one, the SNP are using the threat of a second referendum to try and extract from the UK government and the EU an agreement that Scotland can negotiate access to the European single market and for Scotland to continue having a relationship with the EU.

That hesitant position can change if the SNP are refused but they are not keen to move immediately to another referendum. With almost 40% of people having voted in Scotland to leave the EU, and unless and until polls in favour of Scottish independence change markedly, an imminent referendum is not likely yet.

This is an extract of an article available at www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Thousands rally in support of Corbyn

Mark Best

As Labour MPs met and attacked Corbyn, calling for him to resign, thousands of people gathered outside parliament on 27 June to demonstrate against the Blairites intent on removing Jeremy Corbyn from the head

of the Labour Party. While inside MPs were chorusing "Corbyn resign!" the crowd outside joined in such chants as "Blairites out! Corbyn in!"

The need for an immediate council of war, consisting of trade unions, anti-cuts campaigners and socialists both inside and outside of the Labour Party, was well understood by people attending the demonstration. They wanted a clear strategy of how to fight back. And they agreed with the idea of using the support that Jeremy Corbyn has when he poses an alternative to the pro-austerity politics of New Labour, to kick out all the Tories.

Members of the Socialist Party put forward the need to kick out the 'blue' Tories: by Corbyn calling for an immediate general election following the resignation of the prime minister. And the need to kick out the 'red' Tories - the Blairites: by democratising and opening up the Labour Party, bringing in mandatory reselection to allow members to remove those MPs trying to reclaim the Labour Party for big business by removing Corbyn.

The Tories are weak and divided, the Blairites are on the attack, now is the time we must get organised and fight back!

June- July meetings on the EU referendum result

Britain after the EU referendum - How can we defeat austerity?

Below are some of the Socialist Party and TUSC meetings on the EU referendum that have been organised for June and July. All welcome.

25 June 2016

Barking, Dagenham and Havering Socialist Party: After the EU referendum - what do socialists say?

Saturday 25 June 2016, 3pm

Speaker: Dave Carr, an editor of the Socialist newspaper

Contact Pete Mason on 07981 325 899 or by email peter.mason3@btinternet.com for venue details.

27 June 2016

Carlisle Socialist Party: Establishment defeated, now defeat Tory austerity!

Monday 27th June 2016, 7pm

Club Britannia, 35 Lowther Sreett, Carlisle

27 June 2016

Wirral Socialist Party: What next after the EU referendum result?

Monday 27 June 2016, 7.15pm

Stork pub, 41 Price Street, Birkenhead

27 June 2016

Nottingham Socialist Party: What next after the referendum?

Monday 27 June 2016, 7.30

International Community Centre (YMCA), Nottingham

28 June 2016

Manchester & Trafford Socialist Party: After the EU referendum - what next for the anti-austerity movement?

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7pm

Briton's Protection pub, 50 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester M1 5LE

Phone or text 07968 713 454 for info

28 June 2016

Liverpool Socialist Party: After the EU referendum - What next?

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7-30pm

Casa (basement room), 29 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BQ

28 June 2016

Cardiff Socialist Party: Cameron & Osborne defeated - now let's kick out all the Tories!

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7:00pm

Upstairs at Soda Bar, 4-5 Mill Lane, Cardiff CF10 1FL

28 June 2016

Derby Socialist Party: What next after the referendum?

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7.30pm

Brunswick Inn, 1 Railway Terrace, Derby DE1 2RU

28 June 2016

West London Socialist Party: What does the EU exit vote mean for jobs, wages & housing?

- What do socialists say is the way forward now?

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7.30pm

West London Trade Union Centre, 33/35 High Street, Acton W3 6ND

28 June 2016

Bristol Socialist Party: EU referendum - a working class revolt

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 7.30pm

Halo, 141 Gloucester Road, Bristol BS7 8BA

29 June 2016

Warrington & St Helens Socialist Party: What next after the EU referendum result?

Wednesday 29 June 2016, 7.30pm

Kings Head pub, 40 Winwick Street, WA2 7TU

29 June 2016

Mansfield Socialist Party: The post-referendum political landscape

Wednesday 29th June 2016, 7.30pm

Railway Inn, Station Street, Mansfield NG18 1EF

29 June 2016

Hackney & Islington Socialist Party: Britain after the EU referendum

Wednesday 29th June 2016, 7.30pm - 9pm

Café Z Bar (side room), 58 Stoke Newington High Street, London N16 7PB

29 June 2016

Coventry Socialist Party: After the referendum - now kick out the Tories!

Wednesday 29th June 2016, 19:30

Charterhouse Club, 48 David Road, Coventry

30 June 2016

Stoke-on-Trent Socialist Party: Where next after the EU referendum?

Thursday 30 June 2016, 7.30pm

Village Tavern, 513 Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3ER

The workers' movement needs to go on the offensive against austerity - by fighting for a 24-hour general

strike and for a mass party that stands in our interests. But how can we build such a movement?

30 June 2016

Gloucestershire Socialist Party: Aftermath of the EU referendum

Thursday 30 June 2016, 7.30pm

Friendship cafe, Painswick Road, Gloucester

30 June 2016

Huddersfield Socialist Party: After the referendum - now kick out the Tories

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.15pm

Huddersfield Irish Centre, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield

30 June 2016

East London Socialist Party: What next after the EU referendum result?

Thursday 30 June 2016, 7:30pm

Bryant Street Methodist Church, Bryant Street, London E15 4RU

30 June 2016

Leicester Socialist Party: After the Leave vote - Build an anti-austerity force to kick out all the Tories!

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7:30-9:30pm

Barley Mow pub, Granby Street, Leicester

Speaker: Charlie Taylor

30 June 2016

Swansea Socialist Party: After the referendum - Now let's defeat Tory austerity

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

Dyfatty Community Centre, Chapel Street, Swansea SA1 1NB

30 June 2016

Waltham Forest Socialist Party: What does the Leave vote mean for working class people?

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, London E17 6QQ

30 June 2016

Lambeth Socialist Party: After the EU vote - can we kick the Tories out too?

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

Middle Room, first floor of the Bonnington Café, Vauxhall, London SW8 1TD

Now is the time to take advantage of Tory turmoil - let's push for a general election and a 24-hour general strike against cuts and sell-offs!

30 June 2016

Preston & Lancashire Socialist Party: Britain after the referendum

Thursday 30 June 2016, 7pm

Stanley Arms, Lancaster Road, Preston PR1 1DA

30 June 2016

Bradford Socialist Party: After the referendum - how do we drive out the Tories?

Thursday 30th June 2016, 6.30pm

New Beehive Inn, 169-171 Westgate, Bradford BD1 3AA

30 June 2016

Newcastle Socialist Party: Britain & Europe after the EU referendum

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

Old George Inn, Old George Yard, Cloth Market, Newcastle NE1 1EZ

30 June 2016

Camden Socialist Party: What next after the EU referendum?

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

Roebuck pub, (opposite Royal Free hospital), 15 Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PN

30 June 2016

Hillingdon Socialist Party: What next after the EU referendum?

Thursday 30th June 2016, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, corner of York Road/Belmont Road, Uxbridge UB8 1QW

4 July 2016

West Cheshire Socialist Party: What next after the referendum result?

Monday 4th July 2016, 7.30pm

Old Custom House pub, Watergate, Chester

4 July 2016

Chesterfield Socialist Party: Tories Out! General election now

Monday 4th July 2016, 7.30pm

Chesterfield Alehouse, 37 West Bars, Chesterfield S40 1AG

4 July 2016

Birmingham Socialist Party: After the referendum, kick out the Tories!

Monday 4th July 2016, 7.30pm

Top floor meeting room, the Wellington, 37 Bennetts Hill, city centre, Birmingham

Speaker: former socialist Labour MP Dave Nellist

Call 0794 100 3037 for info

5 July 2016

Bristol Socialist Party: Britain after the referendum

Tuesday 5th July 2016, 7.30pm

YHA (Grain House), 14 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA

6 July 2016

Salford Socialist Party: Britain after the referendum

Wednesday 6th July 2016, 7pm

Royal Oak, 34 Barton Lane, Eccles, Salford M30 0EN

Call 07740 348 550 for more info

8 July 2016

East Kent Socialist Party: Britain & Europe after the referendum

Friday 8th July 2016, 7.30pm

Railway Club, Canterbury Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5NG

12 July 2016

Leeds TUSC: After the referendum - how do we drive out the Tories?

Tuesday 12th July 2016, 7.30pm

West Riding pub, Wellington St, Leeds

13 July 2016

London Socialist Party: How do we kick out the Tories?

- A 'political revolution' is possible
- Fight for socialism!

Wednesday 13 July 2016, 7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London

18 July 2016

Teesside Socialist Party: Which way forward for the labour movement after the referendum?

Monday 18th July 2016, 7.30 pm

Friends Meeting House, Skinnergate, Darlington

19 July 2016

Harrogate Socialist Party: After the EU referendum - what next?

Tuesday 19th July 2016, 7.30pm

St Roberts Club, Robert Street, Harrogate

4 August 2016

Bolton Socialist Party: Britain after the referendum

Thursday 4 August 2016, 7pm

Venue TBC

Also go to:

NSSN 10th annual conference

Saturday 2nd July 2016, 11am to 4.30pm

Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

A conference of the National Shop Stewards Network for trade unionists, trade union reps, anti-cuts activists and all others interested. £6 to attend.

Speakers include:

- Yann Venier, French worker
- Ronnie Draper, BFAWU general secretary
- Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary
- Janice Godrich, PCS president
- Chris Baugh, PCS deputy general secretary
- Sean Hoyle, RMT president
- Steve Gillan, POA general secretary
- Yannis Gourtsayannis, BMA junior doctors' committee national executive

[Click here for a leaflet for the event](#)

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 27 June 2016 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

US presidential election

Sanders' strategy runs up against the buffers

Despite left-wing presidential candidate Bernie Sanders saying he will work with his rival Hillary Clinton to "stop Trump" and "transform the Democratic Party", millions of his supporters are looking for a way to continue the "political revolution" writes Bryan Koulouris, Socialist Alternative national organiser

There is a massive political polarisation in US society reflected in this election. Donald Trump is the most disliked presidential candidate in modern history, and Hillary Clinton is the second most disliked!

The primary victory of the right-populist Trump and the tremendous enthusiasm for left-winger Bernie Sanders are nothing short of a political earthquake in US society.

Trump whipped up racism, sexism and anti-immigrant posturing while opposing capitalist free trade deals and simultaneously saying he'd "destroy Isis" while calling for a more isolationist foreign policy.

Sanders on the other hand mobilised millions of young people with his call for a "political revolution against the billionaire class", his refusal to accept money from corporations, and his pro-working class programme.

Trump and Sanders have one thing in common though: they were bitterly opposed by the leadership of both the Republican and Democratic parties.

Undemocratic

From voter fraud, to coin tosses, to illegal campaigning and attempted sabotage, the Democratic Party

leadership pulled out its undemocratic tools to stop Sanders. It also used the capitalist media to both ignore and to attack him.

Despite this, Sanders says he will work with Hillary Clinton to "stop Trump" and "transform the Democratic Party". Meanwhile, the millions of Sanders supporters are looking for a way forward to continue the "political revolution".

Kshama Sawant, Socialist Alternative Seattle city councillor, initiated #Movement4Bernie. Its petition calling on Sanders to run all the way to the November election and form a new party of the 99% has around 120,000 signatures, and support for this call is growing.

In one CNN poll, Jill Stein, the left-wing Green Party candidate is polling at 7% of the vote with most of this support coming from people who have been "feeling the Bern".

While this poll comes before the tidal wave of "lesser evilism" against Trump hits left-wing voters, it shows the current search for an alternative among Sanders supporters.

Trump and the right-populism he represents cannot be defeated by relying on the Democratic Party. Its big business policies directly lead to support for right-wing populism, such as the free trade deals and bank bailouts it has championed.

As we have pointed out repeatedly, an establishment icon like Hillary Clinton is the worst way to defeat Trump in this election. If defeating Trump was truly the Democratic establishment's top priority, why did they do everything in their power to stop the most effective anti-Trump candidate, Bernie Sanders?

Break with Democrats

Further, if Clinton wins this election do we really believe it will put an end to the threat of right-wing Republicans?

It is only a working class programme that can effectively combat right-populism. That is why we demand that Sanders breaks from the Democratic Party and runs in the general election to begin building a new party that can combat both right-wing populism and the corporate-controlled Democrats rather than letting Donald Trump become the only well known 'anti-establishment' candidate.

The Sanders campaign has given political expression to working class anger at the billionaire class, particularly among young people. Over 1.5 million people attended Sanders' rallies. This shows the potential for what could be done to continue the "political revolution against the billionaire class".

A majority of young people in the US - the best educated and most diverse, yet most indebted generation in history - now prefer "socialism" over "capitalism", even if their idea of socialism is limited and confused.

This is not just a passive preference though; young people are moving into action through the Sanders campaign, the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, Black Lives Matter and struggles against sexism and homophobia.

Throughout Bernie's campaign, there has been a clear contradiction: he's running a campaign of strident opposition to corporate America within a party controlled by those same corporations he's fighting.

On the left, Jill Stein of the Green Party is the strongest presidential candidate. Socialist Alternative has gathered support for the idea of Sanders running alongside her all the way to November to continue the fight against the billionaire class.

Stein has a left-wing programme and is gaining some name recognition. At Socialist Alternative's recent national convention, we agreed to support her campaign while building the socialist movement necessary to end the poverty, war and misery of capitalism.

If Clinton wins, then the Democratic Party will be overseeing a system in crisis and carrying out attacks on working people, youth and the oppressed. Movements would then come into conflict with the establishment

Democrats while Sanders pushes people to "reform" the Party.

Independent

These contradictions would provide possibilities for independent left and working class politics. To fully prepare for immense opportunities in the future, socialists must skillfully but boldly stand up against "lesser evil" pressures and put forward a strategy and programme to win victories for working people.

Socialist Alternative in the US made a breakthrough for independent working-class politics and socialist ideas by getting Kshama Sawant elected twice to Seattle city council.

We led the way on the movement for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and were a socialist pole of attraction in the Sanders campaign. This preparatory work in advance of the mass upheavals coming in US society will provide tremendous opportunities to organise for the socialist transformation of society.

Italy: Prime Minister Renzi's party routed

Five Star mayors elected in Rome and Turin

Chris Thomas, *ControCorrente* (CWI Italy)

The local and mayoral elections in Italy have exploded the myth of "Renzi the invincible".

The prime minister's Democratic Party (PD) in 2014 bucked the anti-establishment trend by gaining over 40% of the vote in the European elections.

This summer it has been crushed in the capital Rome by the populist 'anti-establishment' Five Star Movement (M5S), whose candidate Virginia Raggi won 67% of the vote to the PD's 32%.

The M5S also routed the PD in its former stronghold of Turin - home to car maker Fiat and historic workers' movements - where Chiara Appendino, took 54.5%.

Overall the PD lost half of its councils while the M5S won 19 out of 20 of the second round run-offs it contested. With six major cities up for grabs this was a mini general election in which the PD won only two - Bologna and Milan - both against a candidate from the right.

Leaving aside the high level of abstention (almost 50%), the M5S was the main beneficiary of a huge anti-Renzi vote. This was fuelled by a weak economy which has been stagnant for almost a decade. There has also been deep disgust at massive corruption involving all the traditional establishment parties.

The "centre-right" also lost. Former Prime Minister Berlusconi's party, Forza Italia, won less than 10% of the vote in many areas.

The left in its various electoral permutations was almost an irrelevance, losing around a third of its vote in the five main cities compared to the last local elections in 2011. These purely opportunist electoral groupings with no real roots in local areas are incapable of filling the political void to the left of the PD.

Test for M5S

These elections represent a crucial turning point for the M5S which has undergone a radical make-over, rebranding itself as a respectable, credible political alternative. Its co-founder, comedian Beppe Grillo, has taken a step back.

But, faced with running two major cities, the M5S is about to undergo its toughest test so far. It is one thing to have the mayor of small cities, it is quite another thing to govern the country's capital with its major transport

and rubbish collection problems, a debt which is twice its annual budget, and a political system infested with mafia, lobby and vested interests.

Raggi's electoral programme was deliberately vague on details. During her campaign she tried to reassure worried local authority workers and taxi drivers and has said she will try to renegotiate the city's budget and expects "maximum loyalty" from the Renzi government. But what will happen when the central government refuses and insists that public services be cut?

How will Raggi be able to govern for "all Romans" when faced with irreconcilable economic interests and a political system that is rotten to the core?

It's inevitable that the contradictions inherent in a cross-class populist movement like the M5S would at some point explode to the surface.

In Turin, where ControCorrente has a base among the 5,000 workers employed by the local transport company, GTT, we will be fighting to defend the transport workers against any attempts at cuts and privatisation or attacks on working conditions.

In doing so, we will seek to expose the M5S fallacy of representing all "citizens", to bring about a class differentiation and to promote the need for a political party which represents the class interests of workers.

Read this article in full on socialistworld.net

Teachers strike to defend pay and conditions and to...

Stand up for education!

Jane Nellist, NUT national executive, West Midlands (personal capacity)

With a massive 91.7% 'Yes' vote in the National Union of Teachers (NUT) ballot for strike action in England, teachers have given a resounding message that 'enough is enough!'

The NUT national executive confirmed the first day of strike action will be on 5 July and agreed to stand by its commitment of further days in the autumn term.

With the Tory government in disarray following the EU referendum vote to leave, we have a chance to win a massive victory for teachers and for education.

Funding cuts are hitting schools, resulting in job losses and cuts to additional support for the most vulnerable pupils. This will get far worse in many schools if the Tories succeed in changing the formula used to fund schools, ironically called 'fair funding'.

Workload

Workload continues to cause misery for teachers who are facing endless pressures from government demands and the 'exam factory' education system that hits teachers and pupils - all exacerbated by the funding cuts.

The Tories' drive towards the academisation of every school means our national pay and conditions could be ripped up leaving teachers worse off in terms of cuts to take home pay, sick pay and maternity pay.

Surveys of members already show that vast numbers of teachers are being denied pay increases they should be entitled to. If the Tories get their way this will only get worse. We have to stand and fight for increased funding to schools and education, guaranteed terms and conditions in all types of schools and resumed negotiations on teacher contracts to allow workload to be addressed.

Teachers know that there is lots of support from parents and wider communities. Growing numbers of parent groups are organising to stand up for state education. They are opposing forced academy conversions, excessive testing and supporting the need to have qualified teachers teaching their children as well as fighting against cuts to funding which threaten educational opportunities.

You can support our strike by posting on social media, visiting our picket lines on the morning of the strike and if you can, attending the rallies being held in various cities across England. And if you are a parent, why not talk to other parents and start a support group.

National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference

Organise to take on the Tories! Link up strikes!

Come to the 10th annual NSSN conference!

Saturday 2 July 2016, 11am to 4.30pm - Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL (Tube: Holborn)

Jane Nellist will be speaking alongside Yann Venier a striker from France and secretary of the CGT trade union in Nancy, BMA junior doctors, and leading members of the BFAWU, FBU, RMT, PCS and POA - come talk about your dispute too!

Unison conference 2016: Major turning point in the union

Neil Cafferky

This year's Unison national delegate conference marked a major turning point in the union.

On its final day the conference was rocked by the Brexit result and subsequent resignation of Cameron. Many delegates entering the conference on 24 June were either jubilant or confused following the announcement but that mood was not matched by the right-wing leadership of Unison.

Socialist Party member Brian Debus moved that the conference business be suspended to discuss the referendum result. This was rejected and a downbeat statement from general secretary Dave Prentis was read out. Later, Mark Evans from Carmarthenshire local government branch said: "The best defence is collective action. The union should be demanding a general election now to lift the confidence of all the members"

Important motions

Conference also debated and passed a number of important motions such as defending migrants and opposing racism, branch funding, attacks on facility time, bringing privatised local services back under the control of councils as well as combating poverty.

On branch funding the leadership got away with passing a regressive proposal that limits branch decisions on future budgets, and stopped another motion that would have increased branch funding

A particularly intense debate took place around the motion on 'fairer taxation and the future funding of our public services'. The leadership, and even those who consider themselves on the socialist left, limited themselves to calls for higher taxation on the wealthy to fund public services. An amendment moved by Coventry branch called for the nationalisation of the banks under democratic workers' control.

This was opposed by the leadership with a platform speaker from the executive calling the amendment

"unrealistic". Replying to these attacks, Steve North from Salford local government branch, argued that although he supported any reform that improved the lives of working class people, the trade union movement should never be content to settle for a few crumbs thrown from the bosses' table. The job of the union is to raise the members' sights.

Although the amendment was lost, a significant minority of delegates voted in favour, fertile ground for future arguments in favour of socialist policies.

The most important discussion took place outside the conference venue on 21 June. 400 delegates and visitors gathered for a meeting to launch a new organisation dedicated to changing the leadership and direction of the union. Unison has seen many such meetings in the past, however this meeting was the broadest one yet, bringing together all shades of opinion within the union that are opposed to the current leadership. In particular former supporters of Dave Prentis are now on board and playing a leading role.

In a powerful speech, North West regional convenor Paula Barker called for a change of direction from the union. Commenting on the passage of the recent trade union bill through Parliament she noted Tory Lords citing Unison approvingly as some benign force and asked how this could be possible? The case for change in the union was clear.

Opportunity

Glen Williams, the chair of the local government service group executive, publicly thanked the Socialist Party for reinitiating the left meeting. Paul Holmes a Labour left and a member of the SWP also spoke from the platform.

In his platform speech Roger Bannister said: "Socialist Party members are totally committed to this initiative. We have an opportunity to make Unison a union the government and employers think twice about attacking."

At the conference and during the Socialist Party fringe meeting £1,275 fighting fund was raised with a further £250 still to come in and 174 copies of the Socialist were sold.

RMT conference 2016: EU and Corbyn coup on the agenda

Socialist Party reporters

The RMT transport workers' union national conference is taking place in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum and amid the developing coup by the right wing of the Labour Party against Jeremy Corbyn.

Delegates welcomed the vote to leave the European Union - the RMT has always opposed the EU and its directives promoting privatisation and attacking workers' rights. Opening, Sean Hoyle, president of the RMT and formerly a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate, welcomed the vote but condemned the xenophobic and racist campaign in the media and by the official Leave campaign. "We are an international union and we support the rights of migrants and refugees" he said. "We supported Brexit as the fight to defend workers' rights but our voice was drowned out in the media and Vote Leave".

He also pointed to the huge opportunity now that the Tories were split and the opportunity to get a left Labour government but instead the right wing were attempting a coup against Corbyn and to install "the same old right wingers, the same old Blairites".

General secretary Mick Cash also condemned the Blairite coup that followed the referendum: "The one moment that we wanted a strong and united movement to have a go at Ukip and the Tories is now. One thing that the referendum showed is people are sick of the political class and yet the Blairites are at it again."

Outside many delegates were clear that it is even more important the union retain its support for TUSC now

that the Blairites are attempting to remove Corbyn as leader.

Over 40 attended the TUSC fringe meeting on 28 June, the highest ever at any RMT conference. There was a very positive mood towards TUSC at the meeting which was addressed by RMT executive member John Reid and TUSC chair, Dave Nellist. Delegates made the point that the best way to support Jeremy Corbyn was to ensure that the right-wing Blairites were opposed in elections and also that there is a very real prospect of a new party of the working class arising out of the Blairites attempt for a coup.

National Museum workers accept deal

Strike action forces management concessions

Dave Reid

PCS members at the National Museum of Wales (NMW) have voted by 78% to accept an improved offer from museum management to end the long running dispute arising from the cut to premium payments for weekend working.

The museum strike has had a major impact on the labour movement in Wales. Museum workers have been on continuous strike for two months in a dispute that has lasted two years. Their determination and enthusiasm has inspired the trade union movement in Wales and across the UK. They led the Cardiff May Day march organised by Cardiff Trades Union Council and organised a series of rallies for the strike which drew wide support. The appearances by strikers were the highlights of the PCS and Wales TUC conferences.

Support and solidarity has poured in from as far afield as Portugal, with the Lisbon dockers sending messages of support. Tens of thousands of pounds were raised in solidarity from trade branches and organisations. Working people in Wales rallied round with brilliant support for the strikers. For example, £420 was raised by NSSN and Socialist Party members in just three collections outside Cardiff stations. Museum workers also supported other workers by joining the BFAWU picket line at RF Brookes.

Two years ago museum management announced it intended to cut weekend premium payments for museum workers. With most museum workers expected to work weekends - some have only one Sunday off in three - this amounted to a big pay cut, especially for the lower paid workers. Cleaners, for example, will lose £200 a month. Management, who were losing nothing from their inflated salaries, offered them compensation equivalent to two years of loss of pay, but it would still have amounted to a big pay cut.

It's apparent that a trend is developing in both the public and private sector for management and employers to specifically target the elimination of weekend payments in order to cut down on their costs. The trade union movement must send out a clear message that hard fought, historically gained terms and conditions will be defended robustly against employers who attempt to drive through these changes, as well as opposing those who believe they can simply buy them out.

A series of one day strikes did not force the museum's management to back down - it threatened the workers with the sack and the imposition of contracts. So at the end of April indefinite strike action was called at seven of the eight sites.

The strike closed two museums for two months and seriously affected the operation of the others. Big Pit museum staffed by ex-miners has been at the forefront of the struggle even though the miners would not have lost out as much as some of the other workers. They knew that the lower paid workers need the premiums, and have been absolutely solid at the forefront of the strike.

The calling of the indefinite strike jolted the Welsh government into action. The National Museum of Wales is funded and overseen by the Welsh government. PCS branch officers met Welsh Labour leader and First Minister, Carwyn Jones on the first day of the indefinite strike. Earlier in the dispute Jones had fobbed the workers off; but with indefinite strike action called and the Assembly elections a few days away, he promised

that he would settle the dispute. New funds for the NMW were found and eventually, after a deliberate hesitation to save face, management came forward with an improved offer.

The securing of extra funds from the Welsh government by strike action was a significant step forward. Union members in Welsh councils should follow the example of the NMW and refuse to capitulate when they're told there's no more money; instead step up industrial action if necessary.

The deal does not save the weekend premium payments but improves the compensation payments worth five years of allowances, instead of two, with an option to take this over four years as pensionable payments. There is also a reduction in weekend work and a 4% pay rise in 2017.

The offer is a big improvement on the original proposal, amounting to nearly £5,000 per worker extra, but falls short of defending the weekend premium payments. New starters, for example, will not get weekend premium payments. Some workers are disappointed that the weekend premiums have not been retained, others felt that it would take a big new initiative to force further concessions from the bosses and the Welsh government.

The Welsh government seems to believe that the strike was solely about the workers trying to defend their own conditions, but the museum workers were very conscious of fighting for each other, and also to maintain pay, conditions and stable employment for future workers - of holding the line against low pay and casualisation.

But everyone realises that the gains that have been made are down to the resolute and courageous action by the strikers over many weeks of action. PCS branch officers are also determined to keep up the fight to return the weekend premiums: "We see the deal not as the end of the war, but the end of the first battle", one of the officers said.

The Welsh government is discussing bringing cultural institutions in Wales into one organisation including National Museum of Wales, CADW and the National Library, all organised by PCS. It is likely that there would be a unified set of terms and conditions. Staff in other institutions have retained weekend allowances and so there is an opportunity for workers at the National Museum of Wales to win back weekend allowances provided there is the full involvement of NMW reps in the negotiations.

It should not be taken for granted by PCS that the Welsh government will equalise terms and conditions upwards. The government could have intervened to ensure workers' weekends are protected at the NMW but this 'friend of the workers' stood by while they were attacked by museum bosses and have not insisted that weekend premiums are retained in the new deal. So there has to be a resolute negotiating stance and a readiness to continue the campaign if weekend payments are to be won back.

Geraint Parfitt, one of the leaders of the strike, will be addressing the National Shop Stewards Network conference in London on 2nd July. For tickets for the South Wales coach, contact Alec Thraves on 07890 680685.

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 24 June 2016 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Protest to demand reinstatement of sacked bakers' union rep

Michael Barker, Leicester Socialist Party

Over a hundred campaigners and trade union activists paid a defiant visit to the headquarters of Samworth Brothers, a bullying penny-pinching company that has sacked BFAWU bakers' union rep Kumaran Bose.

As at other food manufacturers, since the introduction of the National Living Wage the company has been attempting to cut premiums to alleviate the cost and Bose's only crime is to fight these attacks by recruiting workers to the union.

A wide variety of representatives from different unions and groups attended the protest and united to demand his reinstatement. Greetings of solidarity were brought by the National Shop Stewards Network, Leicester and Districts Trades Council, Unite the Union, Unite Community, the National Union of Teachers, GMB, Tamil Solidarity, the Socialist Party and others.

The protest was attended by a minibus full of BFAWU members and workers from Pennine Foods in Sheffield who recently struck and won against cuts to premiums.

Notable absentees however were Leicester's three Labour MPs, Jon Ashworth, Liz Kendall, and Keith Vaz. All three were invited to attend, and all gave their insincere apologies.

In contrast, Labour MP for Leeds East Richard Burgon did attend, realising the importance of fighting to defend trade union rights.

Speaking in defence of Kumaran, BFAWU Ronnie Draper said: "Believe it or not he is not a troublemaker, this is a guy who had the courage of his convictions to stand up against an oppressive employer. And this company is nothing but an oppressive employer. They are seeking to deny trade union recognition when we've got 50% or more of the people in the union already."

National Shop Stewards Network chair, Rob Williams, observed how employers like Samworth "see trade union rights as an illness, or as an infection" they hate any attempt by workers to unite to fight back against their toxic bullying bosses.

"We are not going to let the likes of Samworth Brothers stop us from building trade unions," Rob continued. "We have to do whatever it takes to get Kumaran's job back."

Workplace news in brief

University strike

University of Sheffield UCU lecturers were on strike on 23 June as part of the union's national campaign for a 'Fair Deal for Higher Education'. Strikers ran an alternative open day, with soap box speakers, explaining to prospective students and their parents how university lecturers had suffered the biggest fall in salary of any public sector workers since World War Two. UCU communications officer Sam Marsh contrasted the £14,323 a year salary of the lowest paid university worker, and his own £32,065 a year salary as an experienced lecturer, with that of the university vice-chancellor Sir Keith Burnett on £385,000 a year! The aims of the ongoing campaign are to close the gender pay gap (women earn 13% less than their male counterparts), end casualisation (some lecturers get only £2,500 for a three month contract) and win a decent pay rise. UCU members at Sheffield Hallam University are striking on 30 June.

Alistair Tice

Southern trains dispute

Southern Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) conductors were picketing again against driver-only trains on 21 June, outside Barnham station. ScotRail conductors were also striking on the same issue. The GTR conductors are determined that this will not get through and are prepared to take more strike action. This is about passenger safety as well as job losses. If GTR is successful in its bid to get rid of the conductors, this will have important consequences for the rest of the network - other franchises will try to make similar cuts. Also

the rail union RMT has received a leak indicating that senior civil servants at the Department of Transport are authorising train cancellations on GTR. RMT members suspect that the chaos on the GTR franchise could have been deliberately orchestrated as part of a policy to blame the staff. One recent incident involved a train driver and guard being left standing next to a train at Brighton station, along with passengers, as Southern cancelled the service claiming it was due to 'lack of staff'. The conductors are united and we must all support them. These attacks will keep happening until the railways are renationalised, putting people and their safety before profit and rebuilding a safe and well-run, affordable service for everyone.

Sarah Welch

Cleaners strike

Low-paid migrant cleaners organised by the United Voices of the World trade union have been on an indefinite strike since 8 June demanding the living wage and the reinstatement of cleaners, unlawfully sacked by the anti-union cleaning contractor Thames Cleaning and Support Services Limited. Socialist Party members and the National Shop Stewards Network joined them on the protest below outside the offices the Fortune 500 commercial real estate company CBRE who manages 100 Wood Street and awarded the contract to Thames. To donate to their strike fund, bank details can be found at www.uvwunion.org.uk/volunteer/

Old v young is a phoney war - the enemy is the 1%

The capitalist media is falsely trying to paint the EU debate polarisation as 'selfish' older people selling out young people. This ignores the abject poverty of many pensioners. It ignores the anti-establishment sentiment underlying the Leave vote - shared by most young Remainers. And it ignores that pensioners fought to get us the NHS, education system and welfare state that successive Tory and New Labour politicians have gutted - with the EU's support. Socialist Party member Claude Mickleson, an activist with the National Pensioners Convention, explains that pensioners and young people face the same problem: austerity and capitalism.

I believe it is right of the Socialist party to encourage the young in particular to become engaged in left-wing politics. They are the future and will have to carry on the fight for real socialism when the older ones among us are gone - but not forgotten.

Contrary to the exertions of many commentators when courting the young, pensioners are not gaining any advantages over other sections of the population.

At parliament's recent 'intergenerational fairness inquiry', the National Pensioners Convention submitted a paper showing that the different generations are, as the man said, "all in it together" - at least the working class.

Pensioners have not escaped austerity. Like other age groups, health, property wealth and income are not evenly or equally distributed within the 'baby boomer' or earlier generations.

Older people still make a huge financial and social contribution to the life of the nation. Even after the state has paid for pensions, health care and other benefits, pensioners provide the treasury with the equivalent of an additional £40 billion through taxes, volunteering and unpaid caring.

Pension cuts

Over the last five years, the so-called 'triple lock' pensions system - part of the Liberal Democrats' contribution to Coalition government attacks - has cut increases in the basic state pension. The triple lock raises pensions by the greater of the conservative 'CPI' inflation estimate, overall annual earnings growth or 2.5%. The previous system linked pensions to the greater of the higher, more realistic 'RPI' inflation estimate

or 2.5%.

Even so, there is talk of the triple lock being unsustainable. This is grossly premature, based as it is on just one year of a slightly higher raise. Critics have yet to put forward a credible alternative that would enable pensioners' largely meagre incomes to keep pace with the rest of the population.

Fuel poverty and excessive winter deaths among Britain's elderly are a national scandal. The winter fuel allowance is a vital part of tackling this problem. Progressive taxation could recoup the allowance from those who do not need it, rather than unfair and divisive 'means testing'.

The media, think tanks and some politicians want to create a phoney war between the generations. The real unfairness and inequality in society is between the super-rich elite and the rest.

Big business attacks on the basic (and limited) rights of current and soon-to-be pensioners will affect younger generations even more when they reach pension age.

Instead of creating division between young and old, socialists aim to improve the income, health and welfare of all generations. The National Pensioners Convention, by fighting for proper treatment of its members, is preserving these rights for those pensioners yet to come.

Featured letter: Blacklisting

Blacklisting victory donation dedicated to workers' struggle

Trevor Grewar, Chair, Unite the Union, Hull NE/GEO/25 branch (personal capacity)

Please accept this donation of £2,000 which is part of a recent legal settlement from the construction workers blacklisting case.

Can I humbly dedicate this donation to all activists past and present who have had the courage, determination and understanding to take an active part in the class struggle.

Moreover let's not forget the numerous activists who have been on the more secretive blacklist other than the recent case. If anything this is and was more insidious because it is more secretive, concealed on documents/diaries and numerous phone calls and discussions which employers and their lackeys manage to keep undercover and therefore not subject to legal cases and therefore no compensations.

These creatures from the black lagoon can be countered effectively by struggle, solidarity and socialism.

Theatre review: Bread & Roses

Heavyweight commentary plus satire

Geraint Thomas

If you're looking for a comedy that's whimsical and light-hearted, then maybe going to see the Nottingham-based 'Bread & Roses' theatre collective isn't for you. This group of young socialist actors brings some heavyweight social commentary to major political subjects - in a way that will entertain you, while making you face the harsh realities of the world.

In an open mic night at the Running Horse they performed 'In whose name?', their piece about Syria, the refugee crisis and immigration. They threw some satire about the British political elite into the mix, as well as a call for unity in the face of divide-and-conquer tactics, and for a better society.

Syria

The style of their performance worked as a series of related sketches covering the topic, using actual stories of people affected by the war in Syria as a part of their material. But it was interspersed with comedy - such as two men from a "small fishing village" that's "full of immigrants", ending with "Benidorm's changed a lot over the years."

If you hear this group is performing anywhere nearby then I can't recommend going enough. You'll be thoroughly entertained, but also come out angry and determined to change the world.

Visit www.bread-roses.co.uk for more information

Letters to the editors

The Socialist inbox

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, phone 020 8988 8771 or email editors@socialistparty.org.uk.

We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Views of letter writers do not necessarily match those of the Socialist Party.

Workers celebrate

Following the historic vote for Britain to leave the European Union, Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the Trade Union Congress, was putting across a message of pessimism on the Radio 4 Today programme. She had lined up behind the Tory leadership and big business in calling for a vote to remain.

In contrast, fellow workers at my delivery office were in a celebratory mood, seeing the result as a victory and an opportunity for the working class.

As I walked into work there were handshakes, high fives, cheers and discussion about the decision. Contrary to how, in the most part, the media and some on the left have declared this as a victory for the right wing, the most popular point of discussion was the view that Cameron would soon be gone and a general election would be on the horizon. Cameron resigned just hours later.

There was recognition that the working class had widely rejected the EU and Tory austerity agenda and the establishment as a whole. My colleagues now have the Tories firmly in their sights, appreciating that the racists and xenophobes will also need to be defeated in the coming weeks and months.

Workplace meetings are being planned to organise for the next steps, showing the rise of political engagement. I hope this victory can act as a catalyst for socialism, led by organised workers, in the coming period. The National Shop Stewards Network conference on 2 July [see back page] will give workers the opportunity to discuss this further.

Carl Harper, Communication Workers Union (CWU) member, Peterborough

I work for a finance company. So when I went into work that morning, as expected, we had emails from management saying it's all OK, though there was a tone of disappointment. I saw many of the Remain campaigners calling the Leavers 'racists and Ukip supporters.'

So when I went to lunch I was kind of worried when I came to a cheery bunch of the 'white working class' colleagues. From many conversations with them they are not socialists, don't describe themselves as 'left wing' and many don't usually vote.

I watched when Cameron's resignation was showing on the TV screen and there was a fist pump and some excitement. Then it came to Trump's statement and the idea Boris may be the next leader. They described it as a comic horror show. They did not like either of them one bit. Then Farage - they had some nasty things to say about him.

So I asked, "what did you vote?" and the main response was Leave. I asked why, then, they hated the Leave campaigners? "They are all as bad as each other." So why did you vote leave? "Cos we've had enough, we want to stick one up at them and actually change something for once."

So what about immigration? "I don't think that will actually change, we'll have whatever the bosses want. Just glad we've got Cameron out."

Dinner that evening with some different colleagues also went a very similar way. "I just want to slap Osborne in the face. We need him, as well as Cameron, out now."

'Isabelle', Yorkshire

Don't despair

Can I cheer up my old mate Paddy Shennan, who appeared to be in a slough of despond over the referendum result when writing in the Liverpool Echo on 25 June? This government's ruthless policy of austerity has been approved by the institutions of the EU, which have presided over history's greatest growth in inequality.

To vote to leave this bastion of power and privilege is not to become a 'little Englander', but is to recognise the neoliberal ethos of the EU. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition - including transport union RMT, the Socialist Party and others - called for a plague on both 'official' houses. Our campaign for the socialist alternative was largely drowned out by the confusion and falsehoods peddled by both camps.

Struggles against EU austerity are being waged in France, Spain and Portugal. And European Commission president Juncker took satisfaction in sending Greece's leader back with a flea in his ear to carry out the most savage cuts in Greece's history.

We belong to a European labour movement, with enormous potential power to transform the continent into a bastion of socialism. I recognise that immigration was used by Farage to poison the debate, but he can be exposed for the charlatan he is by a confident anti-austerity campaign for socialist change.

So, Paddy, be of good heart, and take the predictions of Armageddon being belched out by the agencies of the media with a huge grain of salt.

Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool

Socialist Party joins London Pride to march against LGBT-phobia

Mary Finch, Waltham Forest Socialist Party

Annual Pride marches used to be radical, angry protests, aimed at normalising being openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT). But over the past decade, these politics have been abandoned in favour of big business sponsors, turning it more into a parade than a celebration. This can make it markedly difficult for socialists to find an echo on these marches. But the recent political earthquake around the EU referendum and the LGBT-phobic attack in Orlando, transformed the mood at this year's London Pride on 25 June.

Young people in particular were attracted by our demands to kick big business sponsors out of Pride. They saw the commercialisation of Pride as a betrayal of its radical roots, and useless as a tactic for fighting oppression. The Orlando shooting has served as a brutal reminder of the violence faced by LGBT people everywhere, even in countries considered progressive on these issues. It's crucial that we take heed, and take steps to build a mass, united movement of LGBT people and workers. That starts with reclaiming Pride as a protest, not a parade.

Socialist Party demands for a general election to be called were also very well received. LGBT people have been disproportionately hit by austerity. They're far more likely to suffer from mental health problems, homelessness, violence and abuse, so it's no wonder they expressed anger at the Tories. We appealed to marchers as young, angry, working class people, not just as members of the LGBT community. Marchers took 700 Socialist Party leaflets, bought far more copies of the Socialist than previous years, and many expressed an interest in joining the Socialist Party.

While there is still much further to go in reinvigorating and uniting LGBT struggle, this year's Pride march was a small but significant step closer to achieving that.

Leeds holds vigil in solidarity with Orlando LGBT massacre

Michael Johnson, Leeds Socialist Party

Close to 500 people gathered in Leeds city centre on 13 June around the local LGBT scene to hold a vigil for the victims of the Orlando shooting on 12 June. This was a strong show of solidarity from LGBT people and their allies from across the city and beyond, reflected in countless other vigils across the world.

Though, while the crowd gathered in remembrance, it was clear that people wanted more than a vigil and were passionate about fighting both LGBT-phobia and the Islamophobia the attack had kicked up. Socialist Party placards reading "No to LGBT-phobia, no to Islamophobia" were hugely popular, as were leaflets covering the same topic.

The Leeds vigil organisers deserve to be commended for the detail and effort put into it at such short notice and making sure the fact this shooting was a terrorist act of LGBT-phobia, which is sadly being ignored by many news outlets, was clear.

But it was a shame there was a lack of political lead from the organisers and speakers, only really touching on political action with a brief mention of the EU referendum.

Without this much-needed political context, LGBT activists in Leeds will struggle to provide direction to fight the LGBT-phobia facing the community in Leeds and across the world. This is why it is vital for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, non-binary and queer people to get active, not just within LGBT rights campaigns but against all attacks facing the working class to fight and beat oppression.

'We Won't Move' meeting organises opposition to Housing Act attacks

Nancy Taaffe, Housing campaigner

Twenty people attended a meeting called by Socialist Party members on 21 June in central London. It was only our second public meeting of the We Won't Move campaign and present at the meeting were tenants and residents in various housing situations from across London.

We have all participated in the big demos, emailing the Lords and lobbying Parliament. However, now we face the very real prospect of our rents going up and possible eviction if we accrue arrears - along with demolition of our homes through gentrification - and we have to be prepared to resist.

I explained that the purpose of the We Won't Move campaign is to concentrate on how we support and coordinate nonpayment on estates and in different types of tenure and how we popularise the idea of not moving as a way of scuppering demolition of estates.

In much of the Kill the Housing Bill material there are references to how the bill was like the Poll Tax and can be beaten just like the Poll Tax. I pointed out that the Socialist Party's forerunner, Militant, led the anti-Poll Tax victory, and despite the furore around the big demo, it was the steadfast campaign of non-payment that was built in the communities and on the estates a year before it was introduced that made the Poll Tax unworkable and ultimately led to its demise.

This Housing Act could be unleashed by housing associations in some places quite quickly. We have to prepare in the next nine months for every eventuality and we have to get organised now.

The meeting also acknowledged the support of some Labour councils in opposition to this act. We welcome all support of councillors but the meeting proposed that if councillors implement this act in 2017 then tenants should consider standing in the London local elections in 2018 on a ticket of non-implementation.

More about the campaign at www.wewontmove.blogspot.co.uk

Targets raised after two record-breaking fighting fund quarters

Ken Douglas, Socialist Party national treasurer

The political earthquake caused by the Brexit vote means the Socialist Party has to be prepared for anything, including a general election. We have to step up our fundraising to make sure we have the funds to reach as many people as possible over the coming months.

We have raised our fighting fund target to £30,000 a quarter, from the beginning of July. The last two quarters have seen fundraising records smashed with over £39,000 raised before Christmas and over £36,000 in the first quarter of 2016. Now we are heading for a third record quarter in a row as we reach the end of the current campaign.

The Socialist Party has no rich backers, these magnificent totals have been achieved by the fundraising of our members and from the donations by working class people in response to our campaigning and appeals.

The Socialist is an independent voice of the working class; a voice which is largely excluded from the mainstream media, particularly in the debate on the EU referendum.

Capitalism means economic crisis, war, cuts, privatisation and attacks on our living standards, while the rich pile up unimaginable wealth. The Socialist Party has a vital part to play in raising a socialist alternative to the lies of the capitalist politicians on both sides of the EU debate.

But we urgently need your help. Our new target for the July to August quarter is £30,000 - can you raise some money to help our campaign or can you make a donation? We can guarantee that every penny will be used to

build an alternative to the miserable future that the political establishment, and the millionaires and billionaires that they represent, want to force on us.

Donate online: go to www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate or telephone 020 8988 8777

North West regional week of action smashes fighting fund target again

Hugh Caffrey, North West Socialist Party

Extra stalls in the North West as part of a fortnight of action raised around £1,000 fighting fund in early June on top of regular branch activities. We sold around 50 copies of the Socialist and a number of people asked for more information about joining the Socialist Party. Some branches are doing extra campaign stalls in late June and early July which will add to these totals.

Usually we have an end of quarter week of action across the region, last time doing about 12 stalls in seven days.

The issues we are campaigning on are cuts to local NHS and public services and opposition to zero-hour contracts. In previous weeks of action, we have campaigned on nationalisation of the railways which is especially topical when fares are increased in the spring, or for renationalisation of electricity and gas to end corporate profiteering which is at the forefront of people's minds in the colder parts of the year.

All these are issues where big majorities of working-class and middle-class people are very angry at the effects of capitalism and see the need for workers' action and public ownership to tackle this.

<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23146>