

The Spark



The capitalists will do everything to stop us taking power and building a planned economy, but if we want a decent future for British workers and their children, export of capital, imperialist war and monopolist profiteering must end.



Union leaders' give performative 'solidarity'

The Morning Star ran an article on 16 May reporting that an open letter, signed by the general secretaries of 25 trade unions including train drivers' union Aslef, civil service union PCS and the Fire Brigades' Union, was sent to deputy prime minister Angela Rayner on 16 May. The letter stated:

"After 14 years of austerity that have a damaging impact on our communities, services and society, it is imperative that urgent investment be made to deliver the transformative change that the people need.

"The proposed cuts to Birmingham bin workers, up to £8,000 annually, represent a continuation of austerity, not its end ...

"We reject the notion that pay equality is synonymous with reducing pay in a 'race to the bottom' and instead advocate for a more equitable approach

of 'levelling up'."

Whilst the activist layer of the movement organised a 'mega picket' in May, which had approximately 300 people in attendance, this letter amounts to the sum total of 'solidarity' offered to the workers by the entire trade union bureaucracy since the strike began in March.

It is the trade union movement's servility to the Labour party which is the root cause of this inactivity on the part of the trade union bureaucracies.

Their loyalty to the party, which includes their loyalty to Angela Rayner, however conditional it may be, means that workers in contestation with a Labour government will not only have to overcome the opposition of the government but the obstruction of their own union leaders as well.

Civil service union joins Ukraine march of shame

On Sunday 1 June, trade unions, including the civil service union PCS, the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) and the deeply reactionary GMB, took part in the 'March for the Children of Ukraine' demo in London.

The demo's 'demands' (not to our own government but to Russia's) was based on the false narrative spread by the imperialists and their proxies in Ukraine that over 20,000 Ukrainian children have been 'abducted' by Russia.

The trade union movement has an inglorious history of peddling total lies about Russia's special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine (which is, in reality, a war forced on Russia by Nato aggression, using Ukraine as a proxy).

In October 2023, the TUC's annual congress carried a motion that falsely accused Russia of 'suppressing trade unions and political opposition' and carrying out 'ethnic cleansing' in Ukraine. In fact, it is the Ukrainian regime that has banned real working-class organisations. The only 'unions' now operating openly in Kiev are under the control of the fascist junta and its western masters.

Particularly disgusting was the motion's cynical use of the

memory of British antifascist fighters who gave their lives in the Spanish civil war. Their heroic example (most of whom were under the direction of the Communist International) was used to demonstrate (falsely) the TUC's "proud history of solidarity with victims of fascist, imperialist aggression".

This is turning history on its head, indeed!

The fact that during the Istanbul talks on 2 June, Ukrainian negotiators were only able to offer the *unverified* names of 339 'missing' children (as opposed the 20,000 'abductions' they have claimed) demonstrates how completely the trade union bureaucracies have been duped by the propaganda of (or how willing they are to peddle lies for) Anglo-American imperialism.

Whether willingly or by accident, the end result is that they are shoring up support for Nato's aggressive and unjust proxy war.





Incessant promotion of gender ideology by the ruling class has met with no push-back from the trade unions, who have completely abrogated their responsibility to defend the interests of the working class, acting instead as enthusiastic promoters of a society-wide campaign of child abuse and misogyny.

FBU promotes gender ideology over the heads of its membership

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) carried a thoroughly anti-working-class motion at its annual conference in Blackpool in May. The motion claimed that the supreme court ruling on 16 April, which determined that gender (as defined under the Equality Act 2010) is based on biological sex, was neither “sensible” nor “workable” and was “driven by far-right ideologies”.

The notion that excluding people from places like toilets and changing rooms based on their biological sex is neither sensible nor workable is a ludicrous one in itself.

More importantly, the idea that biological reality – that a woman is an adult human female and a man is an adult human male – should be described as ‘far-right ideology’ demonstrates both the deluded nature of gender ideology and also the vast chasm that separates the bureaucratic and activist layer of the FBU and its grassroots membership.

The Campaign for a Democratic FBU, a rank-and-file campaign group that exposed the cronyism and corruption that prevailed under former general secretary Matt Wrack, pointed

out that the motion, which was submitted as an ‘emergency’ and circulated to delegates with only 48 hours’ notice, should not be interpreted by the casual observer as a reflection of the views of the wider subs-paying membership.

With other unions like the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Unison showing that they are willing to sacrifice the rights of women (and children!) on the altar of bourgeois identity politics, the FBU has caved in to the emotion and opprobrium of its vocal LGBT+ section in response the wholly sensible supreme court ruling.

This conference decision will leave women members wondering if the FBU will also sacrifice them in the event that they need to take a stand to defend their safe spaces.

We note that the aforementioned Trotskyite careerist Matt Wrack has recently been appointed (‘elected’) as leader of the NASUWT teaching union, with the votes of just 2.9 percent of the union’s membership.

In the words of our industrial secretary: “Trade union democracy is dead.”

The Communication Workers’ Union took to social media on 28 May to highlight once again its long-running campaign to ban low-level letterboxes (which put extra physical strain on postal delivery workers and leave them at greater risk of dog bites).

This campaign’s history goes back to the late 1950s, and was recently resuscitated when Lee Barron, the Labour MP for Corby and East Northants and a former postal worker, announced that he was sponsoring a ten-minute bill in Parliament to have the boxes banned across Britain.

How such a law could be enforced to cover existing low letterboxes has not been made clear.

The bill was undoubtedly a welcome distraction for the CWU, given the drubbing its reputation has received following the leadership’s abject capitulation in the Royal Mail dispute in 2023.

In late 2022, posties handed their union leadership a 90 percent mandate for industrial action, only for the union to de-

cide not to take a single day of strike action in 2023.

The leadership then went on to accept what was essentially the same ‘deal’ that its members had so firmly rejected six months earlier.

The latest bid to ban low letterboxes will undoubtedly receive warm support from postal delivery workers, but this should not lead them to forget the treachery of the union’s leadership in the 2022-3 dispute.

Nor should we lose sight of the fact that workers cannot rely on the whims of politicians to win improvements in their pay, conditions and working environment.

Collective struggle is the real, currently untapped, power of the trade union movement – a power that, when properly harnessed and directed – simply cannot be ignored by the ruling class.

How do we create unions that are willing and able to fight for workers’ interests?

- Break all links with Labour and Labour-lite parliamentarism.
- Dismantle the Labour-aligned, capitalist-friendly union bureaucracies; get rid of all those who loyally serve imperialism and promote imperialist wars.
- Defy the anti-trade-union laws and make them unworkable. Bring back genuine democracy to the unions and refuse to allow the state to oversee the running of working-class organisations.
- Build up strike funds so workers can use their collective power in earnest.
- No special perks for union reps: all officials to be paid the average wage of their members and be subject to recall by the members who voted them into office.
- Organise and lead mass campaigns to defend and restore pay, pensions, working conditions, housing, education, healthcare, utilities and community facilities.
- Organise a mass campaign of non-cooperation to obstruct and sabotage the British/Nato/Israeli genocide and war machine.

*United we bargain, divided we beg!
Don’t wait for change – organise it!*



Sandie Peggie and the Royal College of Nursing

On 23 May 2025, it was reported in the press that Sandie Peggie, the Scottish nurse at the centre of an employment tribunal that has sent shockwaves through the trade union movement, will be suing her own union, the Royal College of Nurses (RCN), over their decision to deny her legal representation during her tribunal.

Peggie’s case, which is still ongoing, was brought against both NHS Fife and Dr Beth Upton, a male member who staff who self-identifies as a woman, after she was suspended from work for complaining that she had been forced to share a changing room with a man – namely Dr Upton.

Peggie’s claim is that by be-

ing forced to share a changing room with a man she has been unlawfully harassed under the 2010 Equality Act.

Following the recent supreme court decision that gender under the Equality Act means biological sex, the RCN (which actively promotes the bourgeois and reactionary ideology of gender self-identification) wrote a letter to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of a group of female nurses who had long been campaigning for recognition of their need for single-sex spaces.

Peggie sued the RCN after they failed to do the same for her.



London Underground pay talks

The transport union RMT announced via its website that pay talks on London Underground had finally commenced on 28 May – almost two months after the anniversary date for the 2025 pay increase.

The talks, which will also involve the train drivers’ union Aslef, white-collar union TSSA and Unite the Union, will undoubtedly centre on the transition of train drivers (known on LU as train operators) to a 32-hour, four-day week as agreed at the 2024 pay talks, and how RMT will reconcile this reduction in the working week for drivers with the hours currently being worked in non-driver grades by other RMT members.

There has been a process of peeling the train drivers and their agreements away from the agreements of other grades working on the Underground since the mid-1990s. In the main, this has been driven by Aslef, which organises the vast majority of train drivers, but this has put the RMT in a difficult position, given that it organises members in the train operator grade as well as organising the majority of workers in non-driver grades.

One notable example of this peeling away is the agreement for working on Boxing Day.

At present, train operators work this holiday on a volunteer basis and are generously rewarded for doing so, while other grades who are rostered to work on 26 December have no choice over their timetable and receive only basic pay for the day.

How well the RMT will be able to manage these groups of members, with their diverse and distinct terms and conditions, may soon be tested, as the union has commenced a ballot of all London Underground members in response to their latest pay offer of 3.1 percent for the year 2025-6.

With the retail prices index (RPI) in February (the month commonly used to calculate annual pay rises that take effect in April) at 3.4 percent, and with it having climbed to 4.3 percent by May, it is unlikely workers will accept a second consecutive year of below-inflation pay ‘rises’ (which are, in effect, pay cuts).

As we go to press, news is in that LU has upped its pay offer to a whopping 3.4 percent, and has given the unions until 9 August to decide whether to accept. RMT members have voted in favour of strike action and action short of strike. It remains to be seen whether other Underground unions will follow suit.

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A new working-class party?



Jeremy Corbyn addresses Dave Nellist's 'Trade unionists for a new party' meeting on Zoom.

An online petition calling for the establishment of a new working-class party led by the trade union movement has garnered just 2,000 signatures since it opened on 19 May.

The petition, started by the Trotskyite former Labour MP for Coventry Dave Nellist, is signed by former and current trade union officers as well as dignitaries from Nellist's misnamed 'Socialist party'.

The petition says: "We ... believe it's time for the trade union movement to seriously discuss founding a new anti-austerity, anti-war party. Our movement will be weakened if workers see us as a voice for pro-austerity Labour. We call for urgent discussions within our union and across unions to organise a conference to establish a political voice for working people."

The British trade union movement is in complete servitude to the imperialist Labour party and has been since the party was founded. Because of their abject loyalty to Labour, and through Labour to the British imperialist ruling class, the movement's leaders consistently promote anti-working-

class ideologies like identity politics, promote imperialist wars, and reject the building of working-class power in workplaces.

The idea that the trade union movement in its current form could be the basis of a party that would genuinely represent working-class interests is laughable. Most of the initial signatories to the petition have spent a lifetime as part of the Labour/TUC machinery of working-class control – either directly as members of the Labour party or indirectly as Trotskyite promoters of the Labour party.

They are the problem, not the solution.

This petition is yet another attempt to keep workers fixated on the idea that a real and positive change in their working and living conditions can be brought about through the British parliamentary system.

Falling out of faith with Labour and the whole parliamentary system? Let's offer you Labour mark 2 and see if that keeps you quiet for a while longer.

Since the petition was launched, the Socialist par-

ty and a multitude of other Trotskyite and opportunist groups have all jumped to promote the 'new workers' party' initiative being fronted up by former Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana – two faithful servants of the British imperialist ruling class whose main job has always been to pretend that 'change' and 'peace' are possible *through voting for and joining the warmongering imperialist Labour party.*

Those who really do want to bring about meaningful change for the working class (ie, actual progress, not more of the same) should take careful note of the gap between the rhetoric and deeds of these enemies in our midst.

After all, British industry continues to be shuttered and workers' pay is sinking lower and lower *right now*. A genocide is in motion *right now*. New theatres of war are opening all over the world *right now*. The government is enacting fascist legislation to suppress dissent *right now*.

And in light of these urgent challenges and threats, charlatans like Nellist, Corbyn and their trade union friends want to keep shouting 'hope' and 'change' while asking us to do *nothing meaningful now* but instead to keep on hoping things will magically get better if we ... *prepare for the 2029 general election.*

The truth is that we could elect a parliament full of Karl Marxes and it wouldn't make a jot of difference to the daily business of imperialist Britain,

which is run not from Parliament but from the Square Mile and associated gentlemen's clubs.

The only parliamentarians worth having would be those who were trying to help the workers learn this vital lesson. If alleged 'radicals' want us to vote for them on the basis they are going to 'fix our problems' through new laws and a kinder administration, they are lying to us and wasting our time.

Worse. They are buying time for the ruling class to wage more genocidal wars abroad, to keep militarising our society, to push down workers' pay and conditions even further, and to create an ever-more fascist regime of repression to crush all dissent.

They are helping the capitalist class to 'reset' its system at the expense of workers at home and abroad.

The ruling class is prepared to wade through an ocean of blood in order to restore profitability. The 'left' Labourites, Trotskyites, CPB revisionists and co are all trying to help them to do it.

We must not let them succeed!

Workers do not need a 'Labour party 2.0'. We do not need to 'get back to 1945'. We need to organise against the system and its rulers; we need to organise independently in our own interests.

We need to break all links between our organisations and Labour party politicians and bureaucrats, whether 'old', 'new' or self-identifying as 'revolutionary'.