



THE BATTLE BEGINS BUT HOW TO WIN THE WAR?

Editorial

The UCU has called for 18 days of strike action at 150 universities across February and March.

This follows the union's rejection of the paltry pay offer by the UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers' Association) of just 5%. This equates to a 15% real-term wage cut between 2022-24. Coming on top of a decade of pay freezes, this attack could push a huge section of higher education workers into poverty.

This latest wave of action has already begun. The first strike day on 1 February saw UCU members joining hundreds of thousands of our sisters and brothers in other unions.

We should seek to coordinate more days of action like 1 February. After all, our struggles are all part of the same fight – whether in Royal Mail, the schools, the civil service, the railways, or elsewhere.

UCU members do not stand alone!

'Escalation'

It is welcome that the union's HEC (higher education committee) has called for further strike action to defend university workers and to fight for a real pay rise.

At the same time, it is worth reflecting on the current strategy. 18 days of walkouts is more than was declared last year. This will undoubtedly cause considerable disruption.

Nonetheless, although members will be going out for longer across all universities, this is still a repeat of the past strategy of calling 'escalating action' in the form of distinct blocks of strikes.

But the past four years of UCU strikes show that the bosses will respond to such strategies with intransigence rather than concessions.

The employers, meanwhile, have genuinely escalated their tactics. They have moved from merely stonewalling the union to launching direct attacks on UCU members.

This was displayed in full force last year, with the threat of 100% pay

deductions across multiple institutions for staff taking part in the national marking and assessment boycott (MAB) at the end of the spring term.

Already, QMUL members are being threatened with 100% deductions for 39 days of pay, as a result of going on strike for just three days in November 2022. This is a sign of the belligerent and bullying stance that UCU members can expect from university bosses nationally.

Democracy?

This brings us to the question of the moment. How is it that our union is pursuing the same strategy for the fourth year in a row, despite all the experiences of previous strikes?

Sadly, this choice of action was not the result of a democratic debate. It was the result of a top-down scare campaign run by the general secretary, Jo Grady. This was
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Image: Steve Eason, flickr.com

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scandalously broadcast across social media, including on the official UCU Twitter account.

The aim of this campaign was to overturn the democratic decision made by our HEC in October, who chose to escalate the struggle to indefinite strike action at the start of the current term.

Despite this intervention from Grady, indefinite action won 31% support in a vote at a national branch delegate meeting in early January.

That almost a third still backed this strategy – in the context of a one-sided fear campaign from the top – shows the strength of feeling among members.

This vote was also over continuous indefinite action. The possibility of 'discontinuous indefinite action', which had been discussed in many branches, and which had been met with some support, was not given a hearing at all at this meeting.

In any case, it is no wonder that members were unwilling to vote for a serious escalation of the dispute. This would require bold leadership – one that could confidently argue for such a militant strategy within the union and in public. But the current leadership has already torpedoed such a move.

Militancy

UCU Marxists support an indefinite strike. We have argued for this consistently for

some time. Along with coordinating action with other unions, we believe an all-out approach is the strongest strategy for bringing about a clear victory.

In fact, given the huge uncertainty that this would cause the employers, indefinite action would likely force them to retreat in a shorter space of time.

Nevertheless, the 18 days that have been called remain an escalation compared with last year. This should be used to its fullest extent. We need large picket lines and demos to boost morale – and to show the bosses that we are united and determined to win.

The union should keep the option of indefinite action open, however, as a card in our hand that we can play should these 18 days not suffice. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of last year. We must be ready to up the ante when the bosses go on the attack.

This means starting a serious public fundraising campaign to allow for extended strike pay. If we do not prepare in advance, the bosses will know that they can ultimately outlast us in this fight.

It also means building support for taking militant action at a rank-and-file level alongside our sister unions in the higher education sector. This should include the formation of local cross-union strike committees to mobilise and coordinate such action.

Fightback

Behind their bravado, the bosses are terrified of the mandate that we have for strike action. We must be prepared to use this historic mandate to its fullest extent.

We are part of a wider strike wave that is showing no signs of slowing. Now more than ever, bold leadership is essential.

Upcoming NEC elections in UCU, in this respect, will play an important role in determining the future direction of the union.

In these, it is important that left candidates learn the lessons of these disputes. This means putting forward a programme of democratic demands to ensure that members have genuine control over their union and their struggles.

But beyond these internal reforms, we need union leaders who are class fighters.

Grassroots members are showing incredible resolve, militancy, and willingness to sacrifice. We deserve a determined leadership that matches this, and that is willing to go all the way.

Above all, we need a leadership capable of turning the current struggle into a mass campaign against marketisation and profiteering within our sector – one that is prepared to fight for a fully-funded, nationalised higher education sector, with staff and students in control. ■

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UNION DEMOCRACY

A vital question for our movement

Elena Simon, University of Sheffield

(personal capacity)

Jo Grady's campaign to become General Secretary (GS) back in 2019 was welcomed as a rebellion against a stale bureaucracy overseen by Sally Hunt who had been in post since the first General Secretary elections in 2007.

Grady's critique of the sell-out deal by outgoing GS Sally Hunt and her support for grassroots voices had seemed to mark a new era of member engagement within the union, mobilised through the dispute.

She promised greater democracy in the union and gained a big echo. And her election was the first time in the history of the union that a grassroots member has been elected as GS.

Now four years into her term, and no closer to winning either of the long-running disputes on pay and conditions and pensions, we must draw some lessons from her time in office.

Specifically, has democracy within the union improved under her leadership?

Democracy commission

Initially, in her first year, a democracy commission was tasked with identifying potential rule changes to hand rank-and-file members more decision-making power, especially during the course of the disputes.

Over the course of a year this commission worked out a detailed plan of suggestions to put forward to a Special Congress.

This included a national disputes committee to direct the course disputes take and made up of delegates from each branch; limiting the term of the GS to three instead of five years; as well as introducing a right to recall elected officials, including the GS, which was widely supported after the sell-out deal by Grady's predecessor.

These measures represented concrete steps to place more decision-making power into the hands of the rank-and-file.

The Special Congress in 2019 called to discuss the recommendations, however, ended in chaos. Two-thirds of the motions were not heard, and significant motions like the disputes committee were defeated.

Legal advice sought by the union claimed the commission was casualising the position of the GS. This all led to the termination of the commission altogether.

Pandemic

Then during the pandemic in 2020, democracy within the union took a complete backseat.

Of course this was an unprecedented time. But this was precisely when members needed their union the most, to come together to discuss how to fight for safe conditions.

Indeed, at a local level, branches up and down the country used video calling platforms successfully. Meanwhile, sister unions such as the NEU spearheaded national mass zoom meetings which organised resistance against unsafe conditions in schools during the pandemic.

decision of the Higher Education Committee (HEC), and also shared fighting fund details publicly.

Taking these debates to Twitter is not only a populist move, implying the union's elected bodies are not representative of the membership, but also in that it presumes a silent majority for which the GS speaks.

Twitter has its use and can play a role in amplifying the coverage of strikes and campaigns. But it is not a useful tool for democratic discussion of the course an active strike should take.

For rank-and-file democracy!

These episodes illustrate a consistent tendency towards a bureaucratic sidestepping of democracy. This actively harms the ability of the union to win its disputes, and leads to division when unity is most required.

Ultimately, we need strong rank-and-

Ultimately, we need strong rank-and-file democracy in which members collectively express their views and decide on what course to take in their disputes. This must go hand-in-hand with bold leadership to win for members.

But national meetings, including Congress, were postponed allegedly due to safety concerns with widely available video calling platforms.

And when lockdown online meetings were introduced in UCU, the online Congress time was reduced by half in the online format. It also required an even number of pre-registered pro- and contra contributions per motion, which hindered free discussion and debate.

Social media

Instead of genuine discussion, the union has also seen an increase in member surveys, questionnaires and Q&A sessions on YouTube.

This is all with the apparent goal of greater rank-and-file say and providing a voice for members. But this is just a mirage.

All of this has culminated recently in the now infamous Twitter stream at the beginning of 2023, in which the current GS publicly went against the democratic

file democracy in which members collectively express their views and decide on what course to take in their disputes. This must go hand-in-hand with bold leadership to win for members.

Members should therefore have greater say over the disputes they want to fight and are sacrificing for. During disputes such as the ones we are currently fighting, we should therefore have strike committees elected at a local level and linked up nationally to ensure direct control over their struggle.

We also need to ensure that our union leadership is accountable. This is why the right to not only elect but also recall elected officials is vital, including the GS. What's more, these representatives should be on the same average wage as their members so their interests are truly aligned.

Union democracy is not a secondary question – it is vital for a fighting union that truly reflects the will of its members. ■



International Marxist Tendency

We republish here an abridged version of this article from Fightback, Canadian paper of the International Marxist Tendency. Against the backdrop of inflation, crisis and rising industrial action, the conservative government of Ontario attempted to enforce anti-union legislation to force workers "back-to-work". The successful struggle led by education workers to repeal this law contains many lessons for the industrial struggle in Britain today, faced with the same attacks by the Tories and bosses.

For the first time, Canadian workers have forced the repeal of back-to-work legislation. The inspiring struggle of the 55,000 Ontario education workers has achieved an important partial victory. The government thought they would crush the workers by preemptively making their strike illegal, imposing a contract, and violating their constitutional rights with the "notwithstanding clause".

But instead the Doug Ford regime provoked an illegal strike that was spreading into an Ontario-wide general strike. Faced with the immense power of the workers the government blinked, and agreed to withdraw the legislation.

The fact that an illegal general strike movement can blow up within one week shows the latent anger in the working class, who face the same problems everywhere:

decades of wage erosion due to government and corporate austerity, and the prospect of being much poorer due to spiking inflation.

Such a struggle could have broken out literally in any sector of the Canadian working class. But it is to the credit of the school support staff organised in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) that they led the way.

How the strike escalated

The rapid escalation of this conflict is truly astounding. On Sunday, Oct. 30 CUPE gave notice that they would go on legal strike Friday, Nov. 4. CUPE was asking for a very modest \$3.25/hour (roughly 11 per cent) each year of the three year contract. This would only compensate the workers for the value they lost over the last decade and allow them to stop their wages being eroded by current inflation.

Immediately upon CUPE giving strike notice, education minister Stephen Lecce announced new legislation removing the right to strike from education workers. This legislation was particularly pernicious. Unlike previous anti-democratic back-to-work legislation, it did not even send a contract to binding arbitration. Instead, the legislation imposed a contract without any further input from the workers or their union.

The legislation also stipulated fines of \$500,000 per day for unions, and \$4000 per day for individuals, who defied the legislation to go on illegal strike. The final insult

came with the unprecedented use of the notwithstanding clause to override the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The notwithstanding clause meant that there could be no legal challenges to the legislation and the workers had no legal recourse.

These events put the union leadership up against the wall, with no face-saving options. In the past, when faced with back-to-work legislation, union bureaucracies, and even some leftists, repeatedly said that there is nothing to be done. They would say "the law cannot be defied". They just relied on binding arbitration and a constitutional court challenge, which would take up to a decade to wind through the courts. This successfully demobilised the workers and led to a defeat.

The Marxists consistently argued that until some group of workers defied back-to-work legislation the right to strike is not worth the paper it is written on. We were dismissed as utopians, despite the fact that the labour movement would not exist today if workers were not willing to defy unjust laws that made strikes and unions illegal.

However, the lack of arbitration or legal recourse gave the leadership no way out. The choice was abject capitulation or decisive fight.

In a final desperate attempt to placate the government, the union leadership cut the wage demand in half to about six per cent. But this retreat had the opposite effect and merely made the government refuse to bargain anything. Weakness invited aggression. This underlines the importance of rank-and-file workers' control of the movement at every stage—to stop mistakes and backsliding by leaders.

Faced with no other alternative the union organized an illegal strike on Friday, Nov. 4.

From illegal strike to general strike

Over 10,000 workers and supporters marched against the violation of workers rights, united with other smaller pickets around the province. Doug Ford's back-to-work legislation had the opposite of its intended effect and led to the complete shutdown of the Ontario school system. This was the first defiance of legislation in a generation.



GENERAL STRIKE THREAT DEFEATS "BACK-TO-WORK" LEGISLATION



However, one important question remained unresolved. Would this be just a single day of protest, or would it be the beginning of an open-ended illegal strike?

The right wing of the union was surely in favour of demobilisation over the weekend. To their credit, Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) president Laura Walton, and CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn, responded to the pressure of the workers and announced that it would be an all-out illegal strike.

It only took a small ounce of leadership from what is usually a compromising bureaucracy to achieve a historic victory. Committing to indefinitely defy and only going back to work when the workers decide to was the tipping point.

The rubicon had been reached. Would education workers be left to fight alone and isolated? Would they be terrorised into submission by fines which would amount to hundreds of millions of dollars per day? \$4000 per day equals 10% of the yearly wage of the average education worker!

Union leaders met over the weekend in what were surely tense meetings. But on Sunday evening rumours began circulating that there was going to be a Monday morning press conference which would announce an Ontario-wide general strike the following week.

For decades worker militants had been told that you cannot go on illegal strike, and that you definitely cannot have a general strike, but in one week all those conservative bureaucratic excuses had been thrown into the dustbin of history by the raw power of working class people.

The education workers were not isolated in their struggle either. CUPE reported that 75,000 people had used their website to send protest messages to the government. A poll found that 62 per cent of Ontarians opposed the government, and this rose to 68 per cent of parents. This was quite astounding given that Ford and Lecce were claiming to stand up for the interests of parents.

As dawn broke over the illegal strikers setting up pickets Monday morning, there was a real prospect of mass solidarity in a movement that could potentially bring down the government.

Ford's humiliating climbdown

With the expectation of a union announcement of general strike plans, Ford and

Lecce organised a 9AM press conference. In a rambling and incoherent tirade against CUPE, Ford announced he was repealing the notwithstanding clause, on the condition that CUPE pull down their pickets. This led to widespread confusion about whether this was a trick or a genuine offer.

Union representatives demanded that Ford put his offer in writing and delayed their press conference to review it. Eventually, almost two hours late, dozens of union leaders appeared in front of the cameras. Significantly the group of unions present represented both public and private sector.

CUPE National president Mike Hancock announced that the government had blinked. They had a commitment in writing that the entire back-to-work bill, including the imposed contract and the notwithstanding clause, was to be repealed as if it had never been passed. Nobody would face any fines and the parties would return to the bargaining table. As a sign of good faith the union would take down the illegal pickets. Laura Walton subsequently said that the union retained the right to go back on strike if necessary.

Class War

It is high time that the labour movement pushes to make the use of back-to-work legislation impossible. The Ontario education workers have shown that mass defiance and the threat of a general strike is what it takes to stop the erosion of the right to strike. This experience must be generalised to the entire Canadian [and to the British] labour movement. People should be reminded that there was not a single penny of fines levelled against the workers or the unions. It needs to be solidified into standard practice that any use of back-to-work leads to immediate defiance and organisation of a general strike.

The backdrop of this struggle is the 40-year high inflation rates. In the past, when inflation was low, union bureaucracies could sign 0-1% contracts which the workers would begrudgingly accept. But now with

food prices and rent increasing by more than 10% the workers cannot stomach such austerity. Workers inevitably demand that union leaders fight to keep up with inflation or they kick out useless leaders who do not fight.

The struggle of the Ontario education workers is merely the opening salvo in a coming class war. It is the responsibility of the entire movement to support CUPE to gain the best deal that can in turn become a model for the rest of the workers. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), who joined CUPE on illegal strike, has even said they would be prepared to shut the province down if necessary. An injury to one is an injury to all, and a victory for one is a victory for all.

But the capitalists and their politicians will not take this defeat lying down. Their system cannot afford decent wages for workers and they will seek to push back every gain of the workers. Eventually they may even be prepared to provoke the workers so far as a general strike.

This raises the necessity to not just fight for better wages against capitalist inflation, but to overthrow the capitalist system that creates all this inflation. We need to fight for a socialist leadership of the labour movement that can ensure democratic workers' control of our unions and no sellouts in the struggle. We need to fight for a socialist society where workers will not be under constant attack by the bosses. This partial victory shows us that there is no stronger power than the working class. The task is to build a movement that can bring the workers to power. ■



THE 1926 GENERAL STRIKE



NINE DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Socialist Appeal

With the resurgence of the industrial struggle in Britain, the question of a general strike is once again being discussed within the labour movement. This article, originally published in Socialist Appeal in May 2019, looks at the last (and only) time Britain experienced a general strike in 1926, and the lessons for activists today.

Beginning on 3 May 1926, a General Strike swept Britain. Lasting for nine days, the strike showed the enormous power and solidarity of the working class.

The situation that gave rise to the strike had been prepared for years in advance. British capitalism had emerged from the First World War considerably weakened. Rather than investing in advanced machinery to compete with the USA and Germany, the British ruling class responded by attacking wages and conditions.

Miners in particular were expected to accept a 13% reduction in their wages, whilst working an extra hour each day. Feeling the pressure from below, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) responded by threatening the government with a general strike.

Government mobilises...

The government retreated temporarily, in order to prepare for an all-out struggle. This involved preparing a scab army by the name of the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS), composed of fascists and other right-wing scum. After nine months of preparations, the government went on the offensive.

With the labour movement swinging to the left after the coming to power of the Tories in 1924, the General Council of the TUC was under enormous pressure to act. Workers in all industries correctly saw the miners struggle as their struggle. If the miners were defeated, others would be soon to follow.

On 1 May 1926, the decision to strike was carried by 3,653,527 votes to 49,911

votes at the TUC. Then on 3 May, millions of workers responded to the call to strike, in some cases against the advice of their own trade union leaders.

The TUC leaders, believing that they would reach a settlement with the government, had made no preparations for the strike. To their surprise, and to the shock of the ruling class, workers showed their magnificent capacity to improvise and organise from below.

... Workers respond

Trades Councils in every area formed Councils of Action and strike committees. Nothing could happen without the permission of the working class.

As the strike developed more and more into a struggle against the state, the Councils of Action developed increasingly into organs of self-government. In reality they were the embryos of workers' power.

Militant demonstrations took place in all the main towns and cities. Clashes with the police were commonplace, and thousands of workers were arrested and imprisoned.

Despite attempts to intimidate workers, the strike was unstoppable. More and more workers came out each day, including even unorganised workers.

Millions of workers put short shrift to the resistance of the ruling class. The General Council of the TUC were terrified of the revolutionary implications of the strike, such as the workers' strength.



Betrayal

A general strike inevitably poses the question of power. Either it will lead to the conquest of power by the working class, or a severe defeat for the workers.

Since even the "Lefts" on the General Council lacked any perspective of taking power and overthrowing capitalism, they rejected the political nature of the strike. They did everything they could to "compromise" with the government, i.e. restore order for the capitalists.

Behind the scenes, the General Council completely capitulated to the government, accepting a reduction in the miners' wages, with no guarantees against victimisation.

This news came as a complete shock to the workers, who could feel the enormous power they wielded during the strike. In response to the sell-out, the railwaymen, dockers, engineers, and other sections renewed the strike, in order to prevent it from ending as a complete rout.

Faced with this growing anger, the government announced that the employers must take back the workers without victimisation.

Role of leadership

With the back of the strike broken by its own leadership, workers returned to work in one section after another. The miners held out for another few months but eventually were starved back to work.

Ultimately, the potential existed for the working class to begin the socialist transformation of society. This potential was squandered by the tops of the trade union and labour movement, who consciously led the strike to defeat.

The lessons from this episode are clear: the working class when organised is the most powerful force in society and can bring it to a standstill. But without a revolutionary leadership, it will not achieve victory. Now more than ever, our task is to prepare in advance and build such a revolutionary leadership. That is what Socialist Appeal is seeking to build today. ■

Letters

Socialist Appeal
Internationalist Marxist
Tendency

WHY I FIGHT: A POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER

It's well known that Postgraduate Researchers have very poor working conditions, but many aren't aware of how acutely bad things are.

If you are fortunate enough to have funding, you can expect a minimum stipend of just over £17,500. This is an increase from four months ago, when pay was an insulting £16,000.

Even with this change, a worker earning the £9.18 minimum wage for 40 hours a week will make more than a PhD student; without even accounting for the unpaid overtime you're expected to work.

For universities, this works wonderfully! They can prey on honest desires to contribute to the good of humanity (the same tactic used to drive down nurses and teachers' pay), and encourage their PGRs to take jobs supervising and marking tutorial/laboratory sessions.

Typical rates are £10-15 an hour, but of course this doesn't include the time spent preparing for these 1-2 hour

sessions (which are both expected to not interfere with your research).

Under such enormous strain, there's a bubbling pot of anger in the sector. In 2020, 770 academics condemned the UK Research and Innovation board for their refusal to extend deadlines or funding for PGRs during the pandemic, despite a £6bn budget.

In 2022, an open letter received over 8,000 signatures in only three days, with almost 15,000 total, demanding a stipend increase due to the cost of living crisis. The 'response' to this letter was handwringing about how 'increasing pay will mean we can take on fewer students' – a response which utterly smacked of hypocrisy coming from a cushy £150,000 salary with a £15,000 bonus!

Even after the increase, my weekly PGR newsletter from my university helpfully offers details of how to apply for food banks in

every issue, along with mental health support resources for the almost inevitable nervous breakdowns. 'Flexible part time work', as well as food sharing apps like Olio also feature.

'Student wellbeing' is a common thread in universities these days. 'It's okay to not be okay'. Your workload, pay, or deadlines won't be adjusted though, so it's always 'okay to not be okay, so long as it doesn't affect your productivity'!

The UCU has been talking about how to get greater PGR engagement in the union. However these discussions are frequently tinged with 'we don't have the density, so we should moderate our demands'.

As the 770 academics have shown, PGRs have the exact same interests as other UCU members; and the same interests as the students we teach. However, younger members of the union don't want to strike for the fun of it. As one PGR told me on the Nottingham picket lines last year, 'going on strike for us doesn't change any of our deadlines, so it's a big decision to go out in support'.

We want a strategy and a leadership that can fight and win. And we need a vision that can mobilise PGRs and all members: democratic universities ran by and for workers and students, lifelong access to quality education and research, and all funded by the expropriation of the university management and the banks they help line the pockets of! ■



UCU MARXISTS' CHARTER

The Tories are the political representatives of big business. As defenders of capitalism, they are the sworn enemies of the working class.

Neither do we have trust in Keir Starmer and the right-wing Labour leadership, who are taking the party back to Blairism.

The capitalist system is in a complete impasse. It cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown.

We are fighting for bold socialist policies to defend workers and challenge the capitalist system.

- Answer the cost-of-living crisis with a £15 per hour minimum wage. For a sliding (rising) scale of wages, with increases in pay, pensions, and benefits automatically linked to prices.
- If the bosses say they can't afford this, we say: Open up the books! Let the working class and the labour movement see the accounts! If firms plead bankruptcy, they should not be bailed out, but nationalised under workers' control.
- For a fully publicly-owned and free health service, under workers' control and management. Reverse all privatisation and outsourcing. All private health and care services must be nationalised without compensation, and integrated into the NHS.
- Fight the climate catastrophe and inflation with expropriation and socialist planning. Nationalise the energy monopolies, big supermarket chains, and distributors, without compensation.

■ Ban evictions and cancel housing debts. Give local authorities the power to cap rents at affordable levels. And bring empty properties and the assets of the big landlords and management companies under public control.

■ For a mass programme to build a million council houses a year. Nationalise the land, construction companies, and banks to provide the resources to accomplish this.

■ To fight job cuts and unemployment, work should be shared out without any loss of pay, in order to lower the hours of the working week.

■ Repeal the anti-trade union laws. No to class compromise. All union officials to be regularly elected, with the right of immediate recall by the membership. Officials to receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

■ Fight for the real emancipation of women. Remove all barriers to women working: provide free nurseries, after-school childcare, and care for the elderly. End all forms of discrimination. Equal pay for work of equal value.

■ Abolish the relics of privilege and feudalism: the monarchy and the House of Lords. The assets of the parasitic landlord class and aristocracy should be expropriated for the public good.

■ Scrap tuition fees and student rents. Free education and full maintenance grants for all. End marketisation – kick the profiteers out of education. Put staff in control in schools and universities.

■ Many small businesses are faced with bankruptcy – squeezed not only by the banks, but by the big monopolies. By nationalising the banks we can supply these small businesses with the lifeline of guaranteed low-interest credit.

■ The financial resources required to fight the crisis must not come from increased taxes or more austerity, but through the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses. Rather than a 'wealth tax', we call for the expropriation of the monopolies.

■ Instead of building up the national debt through government borrowing, the money needed should be obtained entirely from expropriating the accumulated profits of big business and the billionaires.

■ No to austerity! Reverse the cuts! The working class must not pay for this crisis!

■ For a mass campaign to bring down this criminal Tory government and do away with this rotten system!

This crisis does not just exist in Britain alone, but is felt internationally. A Socialist Federation of Britain should be linked to a World Socialist Federation, in order to plan resources internationally for the benefit of all. This would put an end to the brutality of capitalism and allow humanity to begin solving the urgent issues of climate change, disease, and poverty that face our planet.

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

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN US

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

