

AUGUST 2022

Left Unity Trade Union Caucus

85,000 workers across Britain took national strike earlier this month. More action is planned reflecting increased grassroots militancy as a summer and autumn of resistance build.

Employers and their political backers are clearly rattled. The Tory response has been to impose even more draconian strike restrictions. Effectively workers will be forced to break the law or starve this winter!

To their credit, key union leaders have called for a militant response including co-ordinated strikes and a General Strike. Delivering such action immediately poses the question of state power. Labour has refused to back the strikers and will offer no serious challenge to the bosses.

On their own, trade union leaders have historically backed away from politically challenging the power of Capital unless there is pressure from below. This puts an immense responsibility on socialists and activists to build that pressure and convince union leaders to defy the law with mass political strikes.

Left Unity's Trade Union Caucus has recently been re-established to provide a forum for trade unionists and activists to discuss and respond to such challenges.

So far, we have members from: Unite, Unison, BFAWU, NEU, UCU, NUJ and UVW, with members active across the UK.

The group meets monthly via Zoom.

Discussion has ranged widely over a variety of political and trade union issues both practical and theoretical. In our National Council report we identified the following key priorities:

- Making systematic use of the Left Unity website and Newsletter to help build solidarity, exchange information, and raise the profile of the work caucus members are doing, through reports, interviews, videos etc.
- Organising "trade unionism in the community" events. To take trade unionism into our streets and communities.
- Organising speakers / public meetings on specific topics.
- Broadening involvement in the caucus.

All LU members are welcome to attend. For information contact: craiglewis138@gmail.com.

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 14 Sept at 7pm.** Craig Lewis (Left Unity TU officer).

Events

5 September – Protest against Rwanda Deportation Flights 9am-2pm Royal Courts of Justice London

8th September- STUC "Scotland Demands a Pay Rise" Edinburgh, march and rally at Scottish Parliament, (assemble 10.30am Johnson Terrace).

11-14 September TUC Congress – Brighton

17 September CND Protest against US Nuclear Deployment – RAF Lakenheath

17 September Campaign against Climate Change, online

25-28 September Labour Party Conference Liverpool

1 October – Enough is Enough Day of Action (Nationally) & We All Just Want to Stop Oil occupation of Westminster (11 am, Parliament Square, London) **T**

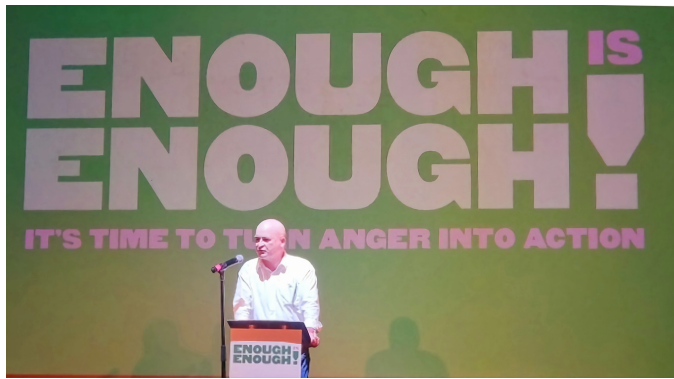
2-5 October – Tory Party Conference – Birmingham (Protest - 2 October 1pm Victoria Square)

22 October NHS in Crisis-Fighting Back; Northern NHS Activist Conference, Leeds

21-23 October European Forum – Athens, Greece

5 November – People's Assembly National Demonstration, Embankment, London

Initiatives for Political Unity on the Left



From its inception Left Unity has had a stated aim “to unite the diverse strands of radical and socialist politics in the UK...”. At our last (2021) conference we decided we would “continue to initiate and engage in discussions with other left forces and social movements in Britain on developing possibilities for political unity”.

Recently this has led to closer working with the Breakthrough Party,

<https://breakthroughparty.org.uk/>.

The Left Unity National Council (NC) sees this as one strand of working towards the possibility of creating a new radical ecosocialist party in Britain. To that end the NC has agreed to:

- continue political discussion and joint working with the Breakthrough Party at national and local level
- encourage branches, caucuses and members of Left Unity to meet with Breakthrough, hold discussions, and consider ways of working together
- develop joint initiatives with the Breakthrough Party;

- launch a broad discussion within the membership of Left Unity, including about the possibility at some future stage of jointly creating a new party with Breakthrough (and potentially others with whom there is close political agreement)
- invite Breakthrough to send observers to the next Left Unity National Council meeting and to our next National Conference.

Another new initiative that Left Unity will be supporting is the ‘Enough is Enough’ campaign www.wesayenough.co.uk initiated by the CWU Union, Mick Lynch of the RMT, MPs Zarah Sultana & Ian Byrne, ACORN housing union, Tribune, Fans Supporting Foodbanks & Right to Food Campaign. This is an important campaign against the cost of living crisis with Trade Unions at its heart.

For more on this see <https://leftunity.org/springtime-in-the-summer/> on the LU website.

Doug Thorpe, National Secretary

It’s difficult not to feel overwhelmed by the convergence of a number of crises this year.

The rising cost of energy will cause suffering for millions of ordinary people, public services and small businesses. Wages are far behind increases in the cost of living, yet corporate profits continue to rise. After our long, hot summer, reservoirs are half empty. Despite increases in the population, no new reservoirs have been built since privatisation. Sewage is pouring into our seas, and 3 billion litres of water are lost every day through leaks. It is clear that our water supplies are being appallingly mismanaged by firms prioritising profits over investment; we need publicly owned water and energy companies- without the need to pay dividends to shareholders, money could be directed to investing in water, sewage and energy to provide an affordable service for all of us.

And impacting on all of this is the climate crisis; currently a third of Pakistan is under water; in Europe drought and wildfires are decimating forests and crops; the latest predictions based on the loss of ice in Greenland are dire for coastal areas. Yet our water supplies are not climate resilient, our crops are not climate resilient, our houses are poorly insulated.

But recent events give me hope. Scientists are arguing the case for civil disobedience by climate experts to highlight how insane ignoring the climate crisis is. The trade unions are fighting back, and as the Enough is Enough campaign so clearly states, we can’t rely on the establishment to solve our problems. It’s up to us. It is more crucial than ever for us on the left to work together to fight back against the broken capitalist system. Please do support one of the many events highlighted in this newsletter.

Ivola Dombay, Left Unity