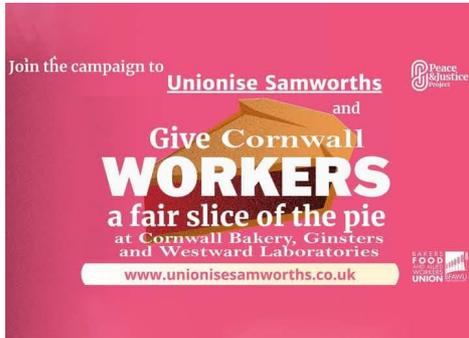


OCTOBER 2022

Organising for the living wage, decent sick pay and union recognition at Samworths, Cornwall



The organising campaign at Samworth's in Cornwall is part of a joint campaign between BFAWU and the Peace and Justice Project. It began when a former employee of Samworths in Leicester contacted the Peace and Justice campaign over imposed changes to terms and conditions throughout all Samworths factories. As a result, many employees are paid less than the living wage and pensions, hours and working conditions have all worsened.

Following a rally in Leicester supported by the Trades Council, the local Labour council and at which Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Woolley both spoke, a campaign was established to target all Samworths establishments.

The aims are:

- Full sick pay for all workers
- All workers to receive the Living Wage
- Restoration of pensions and improved terms and conditions
- Recognition of BFAWU

In Cornwall we started leafleting outside Samworths in Callington October 8th. We got a good reception from workers and plenty of discussion about poor treatment and working conditions. It's absolutely vital in a campaign like this to listen to the workers and start with their concerns and issues.

Leafleting will continue at end of October and throughout November. We are also planning a rally in Callington with Jeremy Corbyn and BFAWU officials speaking. All Callington employees will be invited to attend.

The intention is to roll out our campaign to all Samworths plants and factories nationwide. The aim is to achieve a recognition ballot for BFAWU and establish collective bargaining across the company. We've set up a petition people can sign to show support for our campaign and donate if able:

<https://www.unionisesamworths.co.uk/>

Robbie Woodland talks more about organising the food and related trades in Cornwall UK:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5M968VETqQ>



Universities continue their struggle for justice



Members of the University & College Union (UCU) have voted by a massive majority and surpassed the anti-union thresholds of recent legislation regarding turnout to continue their strike action on a range of key issues. At the heart of this ongoing dispute there have been a range of demands regarding pensions, pay, equality, casual work and workloads. The dispute has been running for some years and has been innovative in the way it links the concerns of established academics with those of new entrants into the sector.

The last few years have seen an increasingly innovative and radical approach in the UCU. A more engaging leadership drawn from the workforce and a greater commitment to social equality has generated an inclusive approach and culture within the union. The UCU is one of the strongest university and college unions in Europe and it forms another part of a large constituency of established and new independent unions that are contributing to a more socially committed agenda at work.

To read more on organising at work, go to: <https://leftunity.org/escalate-the-strikes-defy-the-anti-union-laws/>

Climate Breakdown and Austerity

At the forefront of my mind recently has been the Conference of the Parties 27th summit (COP27) due to begin in Egypt. Interlinking with this is the dire state of life for many people in this country and around the globe.

Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that on current pledges by governments to cut carbon emissions, we are heading towards a global temperature rise of 2.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This is catastrophic. Yet the Tory government, accused of a 'dereliction of duty,' is failing to prepare us for this. It seems they have abandoned us and the planet.

Yet again, record profits were announced by the oil and gas companies. They were already making colossal profits, and now they're even more massive! These are the companies that have known since at least the 1970s that burning fossil fuels would damage the planet. Amongst all this, ordinary people struggle with heating their homes, feeding their families, paying their rents, accessing medical treatment. People can't afford childcare or access reliable public transport so they can get to work. Our public services have been pared down to the bone.

We need urgent action. The IPCC knows this. The UN knows this. Our government knows this. Yet they still prioritise tax cuts for corporations and the rich, whose lifestyles the planet cannot afford to support.

Despite their massive profits, clever accounting practices helped Shell argue that they made no profit in the UK last year; and to top it all, they received c.£90 million tax credits from the UK government.

So the government that will not invest in public services for us all, that won't invest in de-carbonising, that begrudges workers a payrise so they can afford to live, is happy to give our money to the businesses that are trashing the planet. Instead, we need a huge windfall tax on these companies to make them pay for the damage. We need massive investment in infrastructure and public services to decarbonise and to prepare for an increasingly inhospitable climate.

I sometimes despair at this stupidity. The newspapers give interminable space to the circus that is the Tory party leadership fiasco, yet the climate crisis is just another news story. Last night I watched some sci-fi escapism, 'The Day the Earth Stood Still.' The film offers what seems an entirely sensible choice between being destroyed by aliens or changing our ways. Destruction or Life? So simple!

So we need to organise and mobilise. Reach out to people, have climate conversations, give hope that another way is possible to the failed, neoliberal capitalist agenda.

Support the striking workers. Support the People's Assembly and Climate Coalition demonstrations. In Leeds we are organising a Politics and a Pint session to show that our current system is not the only way. If you are in the area, join us. Left Unity members who wish to organise their own political education sessions, let us know. And if anyone has anything they would like to have published in our next newsletter, please send it to us.

Miliciana, Left Unity

Events

5 November – People's Assembly National Demonstration, 12 pm Embankment, London

5 November- Leeds Demands Climate Justice, Yorks & Humber Climate Justice Coalition, 12pm, Leeds, Briggate (near House of Fraser & M&S)

12 November – SOS NHS Conference (London Irish Centre London NW1 9XB)

19 November- Politics & a Pint, People's Alliance of the Left, Horse & Farrier, Otley, 12.30-4.30

20 November- March with Midwives- Leeds, location TBC, and other locations nationally.

3 December – Left Unity National Conference:
<https://leftunity.org/left-unity-national-conference-2022/>

8-11 December- European Left Party Congress, Vienna, Austria

The Autumn of Resistance Calendar week-by-week

24 October -Organise at Work

31 October- Women's Rights

7 November -A better World is Possible; & The Wealth Divide

14 November -Housing

21 November -The Pandemic

Supporting the RMT picket, Ellesmere Port: Otis the dog with human companions.

