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FREE/DONATION

# Catalyst

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# A year of struggle at the University of Sussex




**A clerical Worker at the University of Sussex recounts how the outsourcing of 235 jobs has been met by Staff and Student solidarity and the birth of The Pop-Up Union.**

In May 2012, the University of Sussex announced plans to outsource 235 jobs to private contractors. Theseincluded all estates and maintenance workers, porters, cleaners, catering and hospitality staff. I wasn't one of those directly affected, though at the time was on a casual contract.

Immediately after the plans were announced, the three campus trade unions - UCU (academic and high-grade non-academic staff), Unison (clerical/cleaning) & Unite (estates, maintenance) - organised two mass meetings. The first, the day after the announcement, attracted 60 people.

Several days later, over 250 packed into a lecture theatre. In response to a contribution from the floor, there was a unanimous show of hands for industrial action against the plans. Students vowed militant support for staff.

We were many, we were strong. Then the demobilising began. At first, we were told that management were refusing to talk to the unions, and therefore they couldn't enter dispute yet. And when we could, it would take at least 6 weeks. Unison deserve a special mention here for trying to deter their members from attending demonstrations organised by rank-and-file workers.

Over the summer, students were away, and the handful of worker-activists became increasingly frustrated with silence and inaction from their unions.

The unions for their part blamed management, saying that as they weren't being told anything, they had nothing to tell their members. When the autumn term arrived, the 'movement', such as it was, was dead.

It was at this point that militant workers and students began regularly meeting. Members of SolFed (a revolutionary union initiative with a small presence on campus) had begun canvassing campus for contacts and putting different groups of workers in touch with one another. As yet there was little in the way of a plan, but building horizontal contacts would benefit the struggle later.

After Christmas, now 7 months after the initial announcement with still no sign of action from the campus trade unions, students took the initiative.

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## Stuff YourBoss!

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# Higher Education pay fight needs workplace organisation

This year's pay round for higher education (HE) workers is following the same old tired and somewhat dismal pattern of the last five years. Management and unions spend months negotiating, at the end of which management come up with the usual derisory offer of 1% or less. The HE unions then consult members and, if they reject the offer, go on to ballot members, with mixed results.

Last year, UNITE won the ballot but did not take action because UCU and UNISON failed to get a clear mandate for action in their ballots. In 2011 UNITE also won a ballot for strike action, but decided on a "work to rule" and overtime ban rather than strike action voted for. However, the action was poorly organised, widely ignored and ended in fiasco. The dispute dragged on for over a year, having little or no effect, with the minority of committed union members participating in the action losing money hand over fist. When UNITE leaders decided not follow the 2012 ballot and accepted the pay offer, they neglected to call off the 2011 work to rule. So, at one point UNITE members were taking action over the 2011 pay offer having already settled the 2012 pay dispute!!

This year all the HE unions have rejected the 1% offer and are consulting their members to see if they are willing to take action. Unlike in recent years, with the effects of falling wages really beginning to bite, there is every chance that the unions will take action this autumn. But realistically, given the poor state of the unions, it's unlikely that they will be willing or able to take the kind of prolonged action needed to force a major management climb down and win a significant pay increase. However, if the unions force any kind of pay increase it has to be seen as a victory that will boost morale and make it easier to mount a more effective campaign next year.

However, education workers should not be under any illusion as to the mounting problems they face, not least in the growing privatisation and casualisation of the workforce. In the face of these attacks we are the witnessing the slow decline of workplace organisation within the HE unions. And the importance of strong workplace organisation cannot be stressed enough. A well organised workplace is the bedrock of trade unionism that sustains and develops a sense of solidarity and culture of opposition and resistance which in turn forms and defines the day to day culture of the trade union as a whole. Without vibrant and effective workplace organisation the union becomes a hollowed out shell that struggles to mount even the most limited of opposition to management.

If the HE unions take strike action over pay this year it has to be seen in this context. Any action has to be used to build up workplace contacts not only in our own unions but in the rest of the campus unions. From there activists' meetings can be held to share experiences and as a means of starting to build resistance. Even if it is only one or two of us meeting up it can help to stop the feeling of isolation and to boost confidence.

Within my own workplace we have been able to organise regular activists' meetings among UNITE members. And though we have not yet been able to get people along from other unions we have managed to organise some limited unofficial action. This has drawn other people in who are new to trade union organising and who have then gone on to stand as workplace reps. We have been opposed by both branch officials and the full time official, who remain wedded to the idea that you have to maintain good relations with management. But all attempts to stop us have been defeated at branch level by ordinary members fed up with management's attacks being met with little or no response from union officials.

Though building up workplace organisation in the current climate is never going to be easy, it is the only means of building up the solidarity and structures needed to take the fight to management. There is little point in passing motions at conferences calling for action if they are not going to be acted on in the workplace. This year's fight over pay therefore has to also be seen as a means of trying to rebuild workplace organisation and to establish a militant fighting base within the higher education sector.

# A Year of Struggle at The University of Sussex

Continued from front page

On February 7 2013, they occupied a campus conference centre following a demonstration organised by students and rank-and-file staff. The occupation jolted life back into the anti-privatisation struggle, inspiring many staff who had begun to give in to fatalism, and providing a meeting place and base for organising efforts.

At this point, staff started to discuss what to do in the face of union inaction. Occupying students joined the canvassing and contact-building efforts. The plan we hatched was two-fold: to push as hard as we could within the trade unions for joint industrial action, while developing an alternative structure for an official strike in case that failed: a 'pop-up union'. The Pop-Up Union was launched at a national demonstration on March 25 2013, when over 1,500 people marched.

Management tried to squash the burgeoning movement with a court injunction banning all unauthorised protest. But while the students were evicted by bailiffs and riot police, staff picked up the slack. At this point, more people were attending the Pop-Up Union meetings than the official joint trade union meetings. Momentum was building.

Within a week of launching the Pop-Up Union - 10 months after the initial announcement - the campus trade unions suddenly acceded to demands for an indicative ballot for industrial action, promised as a precursor to a full ballot for strike action. Unison tried to sabotage even this - turning a yes/no question into a 4 page survey, then declaring the results too confusing to announce, and lying about the turnout. Results were very strongly in favour of action: 75% (UCU), 85% (Unison) and 93% (Unite) on strong turnouts.

When once again, the promised industrial action ballots failed to materialise, the Pop-Up Union accounced plans for ballot for industrial action itself. Membership began to swell, making the Pop-Up the second-biggest union on campus, reaching previously non-union staff as well as uniting staff from the three recognised unions.

Time was tight, with summer holidays once again approaching (a weak time to take industrial action). In the end, the ballot was stopped by threat of legal action. The Pop-Up made some basic mistakes in the highly complex legal process and was forced to back down. The window for action was missed, and the outsourcing now appears to be going ahead, seemingly with the blessing of the campus trade unions.




But it's not a total defeat. Once the Pop-Up threatened action, there were some concessions made to the recognised unions over pensions (one of the points of dispute). And while the outsourcing looks to be going ahead, vital rank-and-file contacts have been made, trust in the empty promises of the recognised trade unions - which dragged their heels for over a year, and in the case of Unison, actively sabotaged the movement - has been dispelled, and the beginners mistakes which scuttled the Pop-Up ballot have been learned from."

# Autumn teaching strikes



Primary and secondary teachers will be on strike this autumn over pay, conditions, workload and pensions. Members of the NUT and NASUWT are taking join action as part of their 'historic' agreement to do so last year. The action began with a one-day strike in the north-west region. This term's programme of industrial action is expected to be:

•Late September/early Oct: one-day regional strike in north-east and midlands
•Mid-October: one-day regional strike in London, south-west and south-east
•Likely November: one-day national strike.

Morale is at an all time low with recent surveys indicating that more than 50% of teachers report seriously considering leaving teaching altogether, even in the current economic climate, where jobs are hard to come by and opportunities to re-train probably even less-so. This is reinforced by comment by the current head of the school inspectorate, Ofsted, Michael Wilshaw saying, "if anyone says to you that 'staff morale is at an all-time low' you will know you are doing something right."

Additionally, this year sees the implementation of performance related pay, the impact of which will be felt in September 2014.

Teachers report attacks on a variety of fronts:

PENSIONS - along with other public sector workers, they will be working longer (until 68 in some cases, and possibly even 70 years of age), paying in more pension contributions, to get less in the end.

WORKLOAD - with about 3,000 academies and free schools now compared to less than 300 in 2010, many teachers and other staff have found their working hours increasing, with many academies operating 'extended' school days and having 24-7 building opening hours. Continual changes to the exam system and the seemingly constant shifting of goals posts typified by the GCSE English fiasco of 2012 compound stress. High stakes lesson observations linked to the Ofsted inspections regime are cited by many teachers as probably the single biggest source of stress.

PAY - teachers feel that the introduction of 'performance related pay' spells the end for the nationally agreed pay scale. This could result in many teachers never making any pay progression - to many teachers this move is not about equalising pay across age/experience - it is about depressing pay and could result in a 'race to the bottom' in terms of teacher pay.

CONDITIONS - since 2012 academies have no longer been required to employ 'qualified teachers'. Many schools are advertising for 'assistant teachers'. These people will do the jobs of teachers, for considerably less pay.

This is a lose-lose situation for qualified and unqualified teachers. The 'assistant teachers' will not be offered the chance to get a teaching qualification - there is little financial incentive for a school train someone who can already do the job for much less. Likewise there is little economic rationale in employing qualified teachers who 'cost' more, regardless of the impact quality on teaching provision. Surveys of parents indicate that over 90% want their children taught by qualified teachers, with many observers likening it to having unqualified doctors or pilots.

The specific dates of the industrial action over these issues have not yet been revealed as the unions were concerned schools would arrange INSET (training) days for the strike days on their school calendars if they knew in advance. The dates for regional and national industrial action are expected to be announced early in the autumn term.".



Pavlos Fyssas, aka Killah P, Hip-Hop artist, metal worker and anti-fascist was murdered on September the 17th by a member of the neo-nazi organisation "Golden Dawn". Updates can be found at blog.occupiedlondon.org

# Keeping the powder dry!

Workers across the country working for building giant and all round unpleasant employer, Kier, have wrestled a satisfactory hardship deal that seen off promised strike action.

Workers based largely around local authority maintenance contracts were informed that they were to see a change in their pay date which would leave them shy of 2 weeks pay. Most of these workers have seen no pay rise for years - indeed, many have never had a pay rise under Kier - and the steady erosion of terms and conditions. Like everywhere in Britain, some staff are living on the financial edge, gradually becoming poorer year on year as their wages stay frozen and the cost of living skyrocket.

Having channelled rage down the legal route of existing reformist unions, there was no surprise to find the recommendations from union full timers has been to accept the deal rather than fight it out for a complete reversal.

Anger and disgust amongst staff working for Kier is widespread; revulsion at the use of the blacklist is palpable, though the constant attack on workers rights has seen some staff mischievously asking how to get on this list!

Workers in North Tyneside have decided to accept the offer so as to keep their powder dry for bigger planned fights in the very near future. The same week the hardship offer was made, staff working in the Stores have been informed they may be under immediate threat as the service is to be outsourced!

Meanwhile, Kier's new acquisition May Gurney are undergoing the same inflicted hardship regarding their pay packets, completely unopposed... The strong rumour for the driver behind this whole outrage was to finance the purchase of May Gurney in the first place!

Well here's to keeping the powder dry (for now) and looking with forward like a kid at Xmas to the coming fight against the biggest set of arseholes in construction.

Solidarity Federation is building a network of militants working in construction, building maintenance and engineering. From this network we will be building a future rank and file, fighting union in these industries. Anyone interested in joining SolFed and becoming a part of this network, or wanting to find out more/become a contact, should contact us at:
newcastlesolfed@gmail.com

# ON THE SHOP FLOOR



Welcome to the first instalment of the "On the Shopfloor" column of Catalyst. This part of the paper is designed to give practical, real-life advice advice to help you improve your life at work.

The backbone of On the Shopfloor will be submissions from readers about problems they've had at work and what they've done to fight back. We'll be emphasizing the power we have when we stick together as well as exploring larger questions of strategy and tactics.

In future issues, we hope to include some basic organising advice, sections on your rights at work, and possibly even some crossover pieces from other papers.

So if you have a story you'd like to share please send your story to solfed@solfed.org.uk. If you've got a story but would like some help getting words on paper, get in touch and we'll be glad to help out with that, too.

Jerome Baxter
Editor, On the Shopfloor

# On worker control (of the staff meeting)

"It was like a chorus of complaints! As soon as one of us stopped talking someone else jumped in. Man, she didn't know what to do!" So went the excited words of one of my workmates that Friday afternoon. We all felt it, too. We were giddy and laughing, and why shouldn't we have been? We'd done it. For once, we were the ones in control. That day, the end-of-week department meeting had belonged to us. For one half an hour it'd clearly been us versus them and we'd stuck together. And it felt good.

The set-up was simple: A number of us had written a grievance letter. We all knew the issues, they'd been simmering for months. We'd had meetings after work—sometimes through the union and sometimes not—so there was a sense of trust amongst us already. From there, it was simply a matter of some on-the-fly social mapping and selecting which of the original authors would ask for each particular co-worker's signature. In the end, a majority of the department signed. Not just the full-timers and union members either, but part-timers and agency staff, too.

Then we plotted: who would raise each grievance, what they'd say, how we'd deal with our manager's likely responses, how we'd back each other, and who'd turn in the signed letter.

On the day, things came together just as planned. Each participant knew what to say and said it with confidence. The grievances were articulate and well argued, leaving our line manager reeling and struggling to respond. After we said our collective piece, the letter was delivered. We'd picked a long-time worker to do this, someone who management didn't see as a trouble maker and who was also widely respected by workers in our department.

It wasn't a totally unqualified success. Although a majority of our department spoke in one voice, our manager did succeed in co-opting our anger to a degree. We were informed that "our concerns" were already being raised in "every line management meeting". Longer serving members of staff undoubtedly understood the hollowness of these words. Some of the newer employees, however, didn't have that experience.

On the surface, it only took a week of organising to pull off our coup. In fact, this was the culmination of a year and a half long series of smaller actions, some of which succeeded and others which didn't.

Resentment had simmered in the department long before I was hired. But it was only through a conscious campaign of one-on-one conversations that this resentment morphed from individual frustration into anything approaching a collective consciousness. What made the one-on-ones successful, I think, is that they were always about real issues; real problems we face at work. I rarely discuss politics with my co-workers (and, in fact, never use terms like "direct action" or "march on the boss"), so I try to make sure my politics come through in my actions. The one-on-ones always focused on simple ideas about strength and safety in numbers. From there a series of actions sprouted: group meetings, smaller actions, formal grievances, and collective letters to management.

Through all this a sort of collective common sense developed. It's reached the point where "we have to do it collectively" is the standard response from a decent number of my immediate workmates when an issue or grievance crops up.

This dynamic could be seen in our "Staff Meeting March on the Boss". In fact, things got particularly interesting after we turned in our demand letter. Emboldened by the general atmosphere, a workmate—one who who hadn't signed the letter—brought up an unrelated grievance. From there, the floodgates opened. At one point, one of my workmates even stated that "Management don't appreciate how much we do around here, if we didn't come in one Monday morning, this place wouldn't run..."

The upshot of our "chorus of complaints" was not only a meeting with senior management, but a shared and palpable sense of power within the department. As I write this, however, there is no promise that our demands will be won. But with a majority of our department speaking up and challenging management's assumed control of "their" meeting, more confrontational direct actions seem much less like pipe dreams. After all, if we can stick together in a staff meeting, the idea that we can act together seems that much more achievable.

## SOLIDARITY FEDERATION
## WORKPLACE ORGANISER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Whether you've got a union or not, join us for a workshop on how to create strong organisation in your workplace.

Learn the basics of organising. Topics include: building a 'shop committee', cross-union activity, collectivising grievances, and building for direct action. What our attendees have said:

*"This is great! I can't wait to start talking to my co-workers and get my organising committee up and running!"*

*"I've been a union rep for 15 years. I've learned most of these things in that time, but it makes so much sense to have it all collected all in one place."*

*"I love the practical advice. Some of it's so simple, but you don't realise it until it's there in front of you. I can't wait to go apply it at work."*

SolFed is happy to offer our one-day workplace training to any interested groups. We've all got grievances at work, so why not gather some pissed off workmates and get organising? Contact the SolFed national training coordinator at training@solfed.org.uk

## Organising tip: Keep a notebook

You can bet your manager keeps notes on you—especially if they think you're a troublemaker. If management do decide to go on the attack, a clear record allows us to defend against allegations and give us the confidence to fight back.

Similarly, it's only possible to keep so much information in our head at once. By writing down our grievances and the grievances of workmates, we begin to see patterns. We discover areas of collective concern and begin to form a case and a strategy for confronting the boss collectively.

# Working to rule, Ruling to win

A few months ago, management at my workplace attempted to implement several unpopular new policies. The most unpopular among these were increased scrutiny and observation, as well as making staff submit irrelevant documents to 'prove' they were doing their job correctly.

This was especially unpopular as it was an attempt to standardise the model of production in an industry which has traditionally allowed staff a relatively large degree of creative control. These changes came on top of an already strict regime of monitoring and performance management.

The TUC unions had already launched a work-to-rule action against the policies, which had long been a burden on workers in the industry. But a national picture emerged of the work-to-rule being ignored by management in workplaces where workers were unwilling to fight.

The workplace is 100% unionised, with active shop stewards and a few committed union activists, but like many places, has a historically low turnout or participation in union activities from the bulk of members. Despite staff being outraged at the new performance management and scrutiny, there was a feeling of resignation.

Shop stewards, along with a small group of other active workers went out of their way to begin circulating stories of successful resistance in other workplaces on similar issues, as well as repeating little jokes about management and their policies.

Whenever we were moaned to about the policies, we used stock responses such as 'the only way to fight it is collectively', 'Workplace x had a walkout and beat management'.

Rather than taking part in a prevailing sense of doom and resignation, we tried to highlight the potential for a successful fight back. When fellow workers began telling us the jokes and stories we had originally circulated, we knew that there was at least a culture developing where people were willing to openly discuss, criticise and ridicule the policies and those enforcing them; the first step to fighting back.

While the TUC unions were offering to ballot for strike action, we knew that this could take months and that we needed to move quickly. Also, to confuse the issues, no less than five TUC unions operate in the workplace, with only two calling for work-to-rule action.

In a shop stewards meeting, we agreed to ignore TUC union membership divides and treat all workers as part of the same workplace union; making it easier for all workers to take action. In the space of a week, three meetings, involving almost all ground level staff were held, where the idea of blurring the lines between TUC unions was discussed and agreed.

Some of the more militant workers argued that we should take action now, without waiting for the unions to catch up. The shop stewards told the meetings that we were happy to talk to management on behalf of the workforce, but that we would only relay and argue for decision reached democratically at mass meetings.

During the meeting, a course of action involving boycott and non-compliance with management policies was discussed. In a far cry from the protracted balloting methods usually used by TUC unions, the course of action was decided upon by a hand up vote in the meeting and was unanimously passed.

The following day, the boss pulled the shop stewards into his office to inform them that the demands of the workers were being met immediately.

In the following weeks, attempts by a few members of middle management to the contrary were met with non-compliance. Workers, though the sense of solidarity and collective purpose fostered by mass meetings, direct democracy and solidarity felt empowered to resist. We knew that our colleagues in the next block would be doing the same thing.

The action was a far cry from how anarcho-syndicalists would ideally organise; shop stewards were central to the campaign and still (albeit carrying a direct mandate) had the job of negotiating with management on the behalf of the rest of the workforce. The whole action was also just an enforcement of a TUC approved union campaign, prompted into militancy by stubborn management.

However, it does offer a glimpse into how direct action and solidarity can improve working conditions in the here and now. Mass meetings gave us the confidence to discuss, vote on and take direct action as a whole staff. The idea that reps should carry a direct mandate - rather than be unaccountable negotiators – demonstrated how power can be built from bottom-up.

While a victory led to the campaign being wound down, the long-term results of an assertive, confident and united workforce are still plain to see and a culture of resistance has been created which will vastly improve chances of success in future workplace struggles.

# Gifts of Solidarity - Birthday cards as collective action

**Just after sitting down to give evidence at my workmate's disciplinary hearing, I pulled the birthday card out of a stack of papers in my hand. "Here's just a little something from all of us", I said as I handed her the opened card.**

There was a definite pause from management's side. The intention of the act wasn't lost on them. It wasn't a mass meeting or a strike, but everyone who signed that card knew it was us, the workers, verse them, the bosses.

Some time ago I gave evidence in support of a popular workplace activist during her disciplinary hearing. The details aren't important, but suffice to say that my workmate—let's call her Jessica—was being unfairly targeted as she'd been a thorn in the side of management for years.

This situation put stress on the activist layer in my workplace. For Jessica in particular, management had scheduled the disciplinary for her birthday. Although it was eventually rescheduled because of management's usual failure to follow procedure, the worker in question was on disciplinary suspension for a number of months. That meant that all of her work friends had been unable to celebrate her birthday as normal.

When it finally came time for the hearing, a few members of my workplace committee hatched a plan: we'd circulate a card for our victimised friend which would then be presented to her at the disciplinary and in full view of the senior managers conducting the disciplinary.

As I said, Jessica is very popular with the staff. For years, she's been the go-to person for not only accompanying co-workers during meetings with management, but offering kind words and advice when it came to personal as well as workplace issues. So workmates were already inclined to sign a card, but especially so given how management had treated this particular individual. Signatures and well-wishes were quick in coming until the entire card, including the back, was full-up with birthday greetings.

It was a small act of solidarity, but such acts shouldn't be underestimated. They are steps, however small, towards building a culture of resistance in the workplace. In this instance, I'm sure the birthday card was weighing on management's mind when they decided on the outcome of the disciplinary.

Just as we think of solidarity as something we exercise against the boss, it's also something more: it's how we support each other. Whenever workers begin standing up, management will almost inevitably begin singling out "ringleaders" and "troublemakers" as an early part of their counter-offensive. For even the most dedicated of workplace activists, that can be a stressful and lonely place to be. The solidarity that goes on behind the scenes is no less important than the united front we present to management.

In Jessica's case, the combination of private solidarity, public support, management incompetence, and a good defence meant that things turned out for the best. The disciplinary panel caved and instead of losing her job—as her managers had clearly intended—she was given a lesser sanction and allowed to return to work.

Today Jessica is still making trouble on the job, continuing to not only challenge the boss but pay back the solidarity she experienced during her disciplinary. And I know she's kept that birthday card.

# Cinema workers getting organised in London

**Find them online:**
**Twitter - @CurzonWorkers**
**Facebook - www.tinyurl.com/CurzonFB**

As austerity continues to bite and the crisis provides an excuse for bosses to come after hard-won concessions, far too many of us have seen our pay stagnate and our working conditions suffer.

Workers at Curzon Cinemas are fighting back. Despite promoting a rosy independent cinema image, the entirety of Curzon's non-managerial workforce languishes on zero-hours contracts and subsists on well below the London living wage.

This year, the workforce got organised. Workers at over 8 London cinemas joined the trade union BECTU, demanded recognition, and presented a supporter petition of over 1500 signatures to management. In a media savvy campaign, they enlisted the help of well known names such as Mike Leigh and have received press attention in a variety of national new sources.

On the shop floor, workers spread the union drive from one cinema to another and have boycotted meetings with management that don't live up to their collective expectations. Shopfloor agitation has already won a raise and despite stone-walling from management, the campaign shows no sign of slowing down.

The following interview was conducted with a representative of the Curzon workers.

**Catalyst: Give us some background to the campaign. What are the grievances?**

We are campaigning for:
•Real dialogue - we do not feel we can have this with Curzon until they recognise our membership of BECTU
•Real contracts - we are on zero hour contracts and risk losing our scheduled hours at any time
•Real pay - we have just had our pay increased to £7 an hour as a result of this campaign but this is still £1.55 short of London Living Wage.
In addition we believe Curzon should offer concessionary priced tickets for students, senior citizens and the unwaged.

**Catalyst: What got the ball rolling interms of organising?**

A couple of suspect dismissals at head office and several members of general staff suddenly having their hours cut. There was also a growing unease about plans for expansion and proposals to substantially increase our duties with no change in our pay.

**Catalyst: How did you spread the campaign from one cinema to another?**

Mainly by email. A lot of emails!

**Catalyst: What was management's response?**

**Were you surprised about the level of antagonism you received?**

Whenever we answer questions about management we have to make the distinction between managers at the individual cinemas, who we have no grievance with, and 'management' at Curzon's head office.

The response from head office has been contradictory and at times disingenuous. There have been moments of antagonism and attempts at understanding. It's quite confusing!

**Catalyst: Part of management's response has been to create these worker forums. What's your analysis?**

They are designed to stretch out the process and to make us compliant. We were promised everything in the first of these forum meetings. Then a change of personnel at head office lead to all plans being scratched. For this reason, all representatives of general staff refused to attend the recently held meeting unless a BECTU official was present. This request was denied so the meeting went ahead without us.

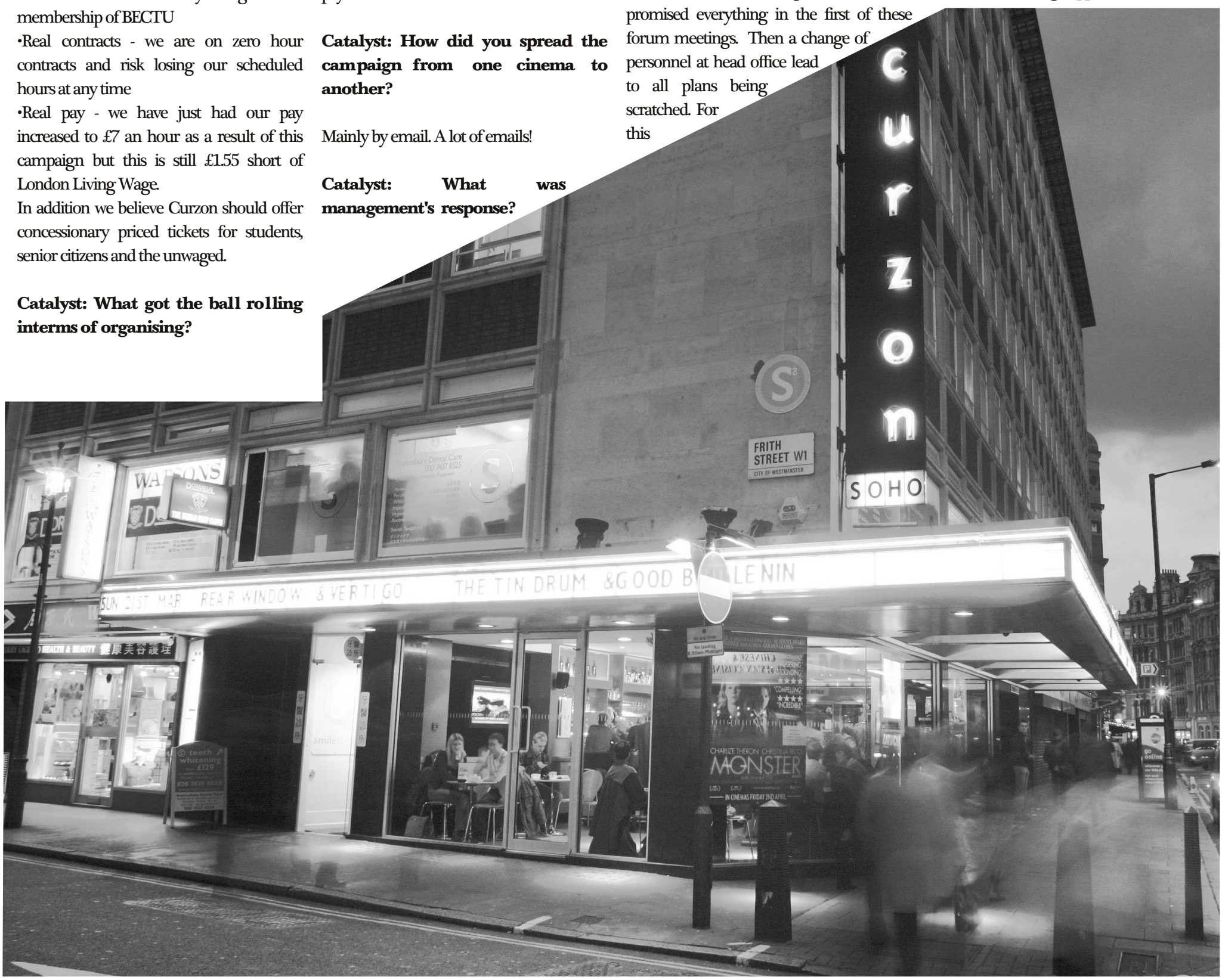
**Catalyst: Your Facebook page is called the Curzon Workers Party. Why did you choose that name?**

We were calling ourselves that half-jokingly and then it stuck.

**Catalyst: What are the next steps for the campaign?**

This would be a great time for Curzon to reverse their negative press, set an example and recognise our membership of BECTU.

Until then we are keeping the public discussion going. Many thanks to SolFed for their continuing support.



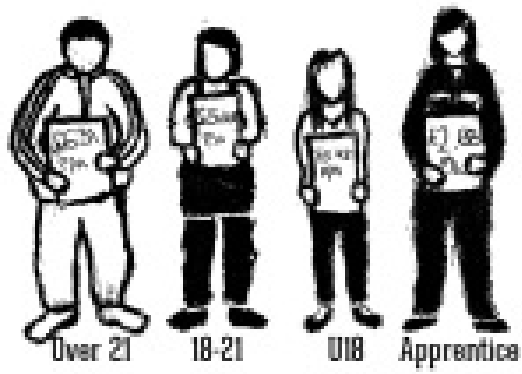
# STUFF YOUR BOSS DOESN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW

## pay

Your boss has to tell you what your pay and conditions are in writing

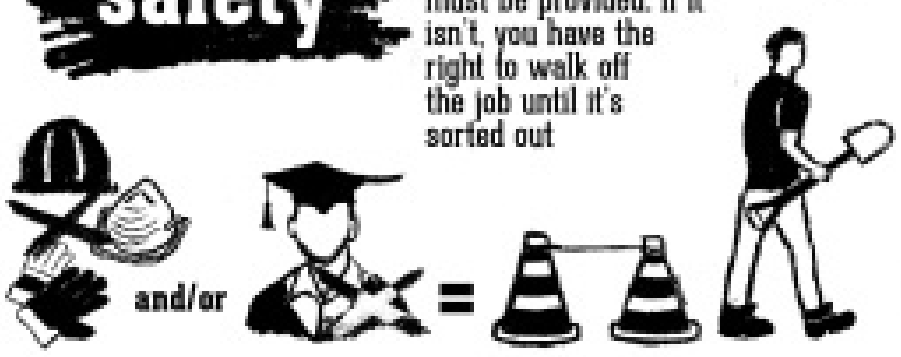


There are different **minimum wages** for different groups. Numbers are correct from October 2013

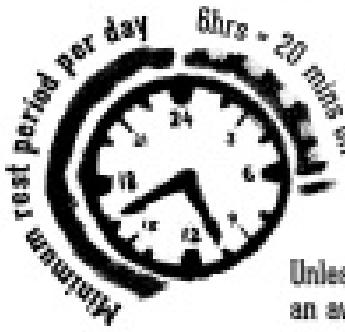



## safety

Adequate equipment and training must be provided. If it isn't, you have the right to walk off the job until it's sorted out




## working hours





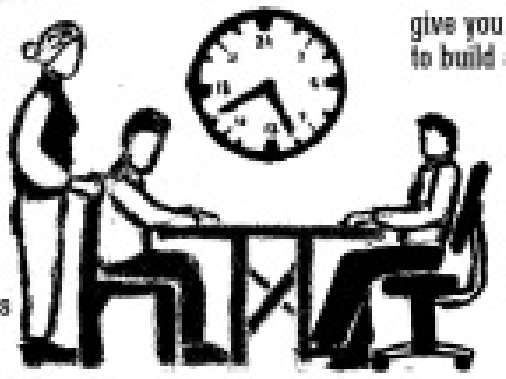


Unless you opt out, it is illegal to make you work more than an average of 48 hours a week in a given 17-week period

## disciplinaries

Your boss must give you time to build a case

You are allowed to bring a union fulltimer, your local rep, or a colleague into a tribunal, and it's important to do that so you have a witness



## holidays

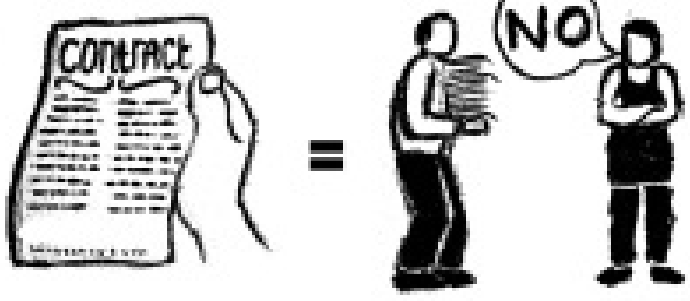


You're entitled to 5.6 weeks off a year, or 28 days in total, bank holidays included



**Part-timers** get the same 5.6 weeks as full time staff, adjusted for their work hours

## change at work



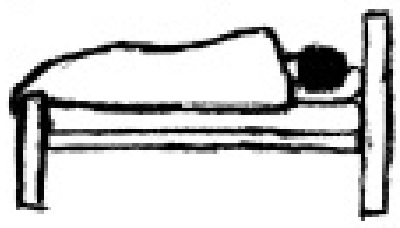

If it's not in the contract, the boss can't make you change what you do or how without either permission or a flexibility clause

## sick pay

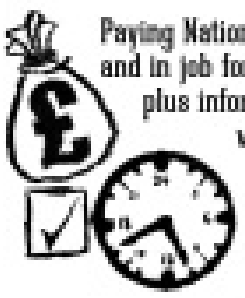


pre-tax income of £109+ per week **and** 3 months+ in work or 13 weeks continous

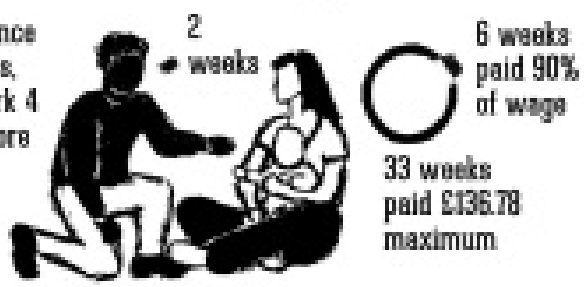
After four days of illness, as long as you tell work. After 7 days a doctor must sign you off. You can get 28 weeks in a year

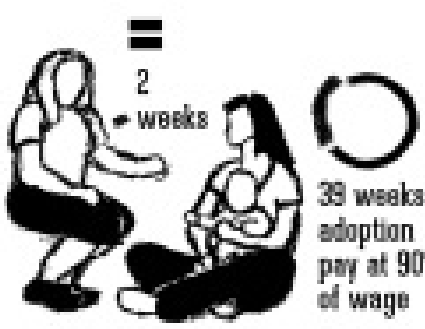


## time off for a baby

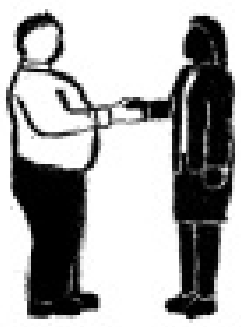


Paying National Insurance and in job for 26 weeks, plus informing work 4 weeks before




## joining unions



You are within your rights to join a trade union



It is illegal for your boss to threaten or bribe staff not to join or to go for a different union

SOLFED.ORG.UK

# Fighting police violence in London

## www.londonagainstpoliceviolence.wordpress.com

South London communities and groups are coming together to form a London Campaign Against Police & State Violence. The aim is to support victims of police assault and to link them in a London-wide campaign. Equally important is the monitoring of police harassment in our communities and people of colour in particular.

The group came together around the case of Jason O'Connor, a young black man who was brutalised by Walworth Police on his home streets of Camberwell. On 9th June 2013 he was assaulted in a phone box after he questioned a police request to stop & search. He was punched and elbowed to the ground, head-locked, pepper-sprayed, kicked and repeatedly kneed in the groin. Since nothing was found on him that could justify the attack, Jason is now being charged with 'obstructing the police'. Supporters accompanied Jason at Walworth Police Station and twice at Camberwell Magistrates Court. Inside, they filled the public gallery and in front they unfurled banners saying: Police - Law Breakers. The case is ongoing.

Campaigners returned to Camberwell Magistrates to support another black man, Anthony James, who resisted security guards throttling a wheelchair-bound friend of his. The flimsy charge of assault dragged on in the courts for over a year with Anthony attending two court appearances. The case was finally thrown out by the judge after the security guard who Anthony allegedly pushed, failed to appear in court: he was on holiday. Facing a public gallery full of Anthony's supporters, the judge stated that the case was a waste of public resources and instructed that Anthony James be reimbursed for his travel costs. No mention of the countless of hours he spent preparing his defence or the constant stress of having charges brought upon him. Years of repression have made Anthony homeless and scarred for life, but he is free from the hands of the court system.

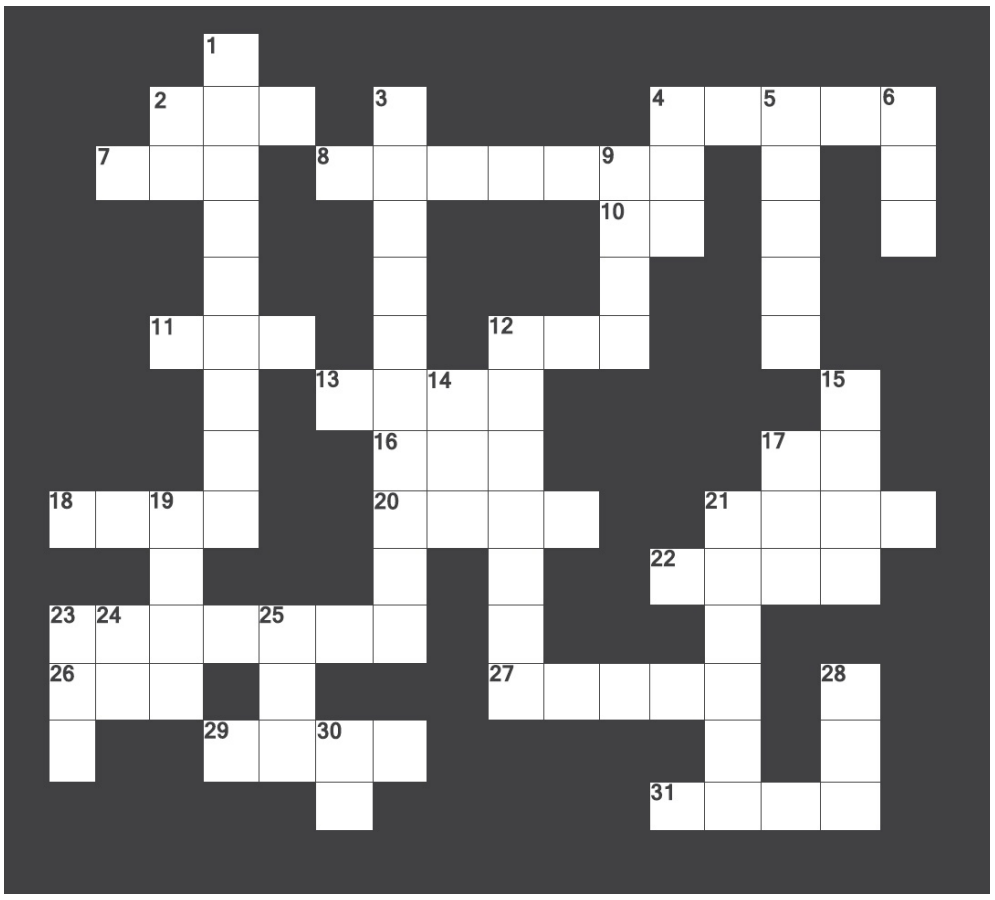
London Campaign Against Police & State Violence is bringing together families, communities and campaigners. The following groups have offered their support: Global Women's Strike, Pan-African Society Community Forum, South London Antifascists and South London Solidarity Federation. We call on all victims and witnesses of police brutality to contact lcapsv@gmail.com and join us in a collective stand against Police & State Violence.

# Sudoku

Fill the grid so that every column, row and 3x3 square includes all the numbers from 1 to 9.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 6 | | 8 | | | 4 | 2 | |
| | | | | 6 | | | | 7 |
| 3 | | 9 | | | 5 | | | |
| 4 | | 8 | | | | 9 | | |
| | | | 6 | | | | 4 | |
| | 7 | 6 | | 8 | 9 | | | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | 9 | | | 1 | 6 | 5 | 8 | |
| | | | 3 | | | | | |

# Class struggle Crossword



Be the first to correctly complete the Class struggle Crossword and receive free SF goodies. Send your completed answers along with your address to solfed@solfed.org.uk.

**Across:**

(2) Angry Parisian Month (3)
(4) Begin a dispute (5)
(7) Watering hole (3)
(8) Singing Swedish mound (3,4)
(10) Thinking (2)
(11) I like it wild
(12) It's nigh (3)
(13) He made the grade (4)
(16) For our fallen comrades (3)
(17) Southern parent (2)
(18) Agent of capital (4)
(20) But how to be? (4)
(21) Against the machine (4)
(22) Welfare (4)
(23)Not without rules (7)
(26) What bosses do to us (3)
(27) The great money _____ (5)
(29) Spanish manager (4)
(31) reformist gait (4)

**Down:**

(1) Agricultural digits (4,5)
(2) Southern parent (2)
(3) You've got mine forever (10)
(4) This street is a nightmare! (3)
(5) Property is _____ (5)
(6) ...If you ain't been called a _____ (3)
(9) Workers' king (4)
(12) Employ (7)
(14) Get ____ of it! (3)
(15) Against; the system (4)
(17) Friend (3)
(19) Class traitor (4)
(21) Syndicalism's theorist-musician (6)
(23) But is it? (3)
(24) During a work-to-rule (2)
(25) T-shirt icon (3)
(28) ____ cat (3)
(30) Iron (2)

# About the Solidarity Federation

www.solfed.org.uk

The Solidarity Federation is a revolutionary union initiative: an organisation of workers which seeks the abolition of capitalism and the state.

Capitalism because it exploits, oppresses and kills working people and wrecks the environment for profit worldwide.

The state because it can only maintain hierarchy and privilege for the classes who control it and their servants; it cannot be used to fight the oppression and exploitation that are the consequences of hierarchy and the source of privilege.

In their place we want a society based on workers' self-management, solidarity, mutual aid and libertarian communism.

That society can only be achieved by working class organisations based on the same principles - revolutionary unions. These are not trade unions only concerned with "bread and butter" issues like pay and conditions. Revolutionary unions are means for working people to organise and fight all the issues - both in the workplace and outside - which arise from our oppression. We recognise that not all oppression is economic, but can be based on gender, race, sexuality, or anything our rulers find useful.

Therefore, revolutionary unions fully support and encourage organisation in all spheres of life that consciously parallel those of the society we wish to create; that is, organisation based on mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, direct democracy, and opposed to domination, hierarchy and exploitation in all forms. We are committed to building a new society within the shell of the old in both our workplaces and the wider community. Unless we organise in this way, politicians - some claiming to be revolutionary - will be able to exploit us for their own ends.

The Solidarity Federation consists of Locals and Industrial Networks which seek to take on the functions of revolutionary unions – supporting our organising efforts where we live and work. Our activities are based on direct action - action by workers ourselves, not through intermediaries like politicians and union officials; our decisions are made through participation of the membership.

We welcome all workers – including the unemployed, retired, stay-home parents and students - who will work within our Aims and Principles and seek to create revolutionary unions to fight the class struggle.