

MARGINAL NOTES

Supporting the struggles of precarious workers in West London

Making links, breaking chains

Like Dickens said – or very nearly – it is the best of times, and the worst. As to the best bits, Labour has a strong anti-austerity message that has real resonance in working class communities. Polls (if you can trust them) are favourable, and there's a good chance of coming to power with a radical agenda that can really change the lives of the vast majority for the better.



Uber drivers protest against lack of wages and workers' rights

Now for the bad news: working class organisation, both historically and typically expressed in terms of trade unions, are at historic lows. This disconnect between workers' activity and the electoral success of left politics is a relatively new phenomenon, and is analysed [here](#).

A welcome exception to this has been the collective action by some of the most exploited parts of the working class: what's sometimes called the precariat; people frequently working zero hours jobs in what's often called 'McJobs'. Over recent months, they've fought back: Deliveroo and Uber Eats riders, Uber drivers, workers at McDonalds and TGI Fridays;

cleaners at UCL... the list goes on. Many work in our borough, others live here. They're part of our community.

Brentford and Isleworth Labour Party members have been inspired by these workers: many risking the little security they have to defend their pay and conditions. They're often young and reflect the diversity of the people in this borough. We've had reps from TGI Fridays and Uber driver strikers to speak at our meetings, supported their [days of action](#) and passed resolutions in support of them. But we want to do more.

This is, not least, because so many workers in the borough have to contend with appalling working conditions. "Good news if you work *in* Barbican, less so *in* Hounslow Central" – that's the byline for a unique [London Underground map](#) which uses the average wage in the vicinity of each tube station to compare earnings across the capital, showing the low wages people here face. This is despite our proximity to Heathrow Airport – indeed, a list of jobs being advertised there included just one at or above the London Living Wage.

So, Brentford and Isleworth Labour Party decided to do this – launch a newsletter carrying news and analysis of these actions, to build support for them and keep party members informed of what's happening in this new frontier of the union movement. It's for local Labour party members, union activists – anyone who wants to know what's happening in this area, is engaged in these

struggles or wants to support them.

Contact us with your thoughts on what we're doing, if you're involved and want the extra platform (we'd love to help) or want to get involved. We're aiming to make this a monthly venture, but it's very much dependent on the input we get from ... well – you.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Uber Eats couriers fight back

Last autumn saw Hounslow Uber Eats couriers strike for three days against pay cuts along with colleagues across the UK. Later in the year couriers based at Hanworth McDonalds went on strike again against a further attack on their pay – read the full story in [this interview](#) with one of those involved.

A living wage for airport staff

Baggage handlers and check-in staff working for GH London (formerly Azzurra) at Heathrow Terminals 2 and 4 will strike from 26-29 April. They have suffered a six year pay freeze and seeking to secure a minimum pay rate of the London living wage. We encourage readers to support their picket lines. More info from their union Unite [here](#)

Defending migrant workers in Hounslow

Employers frequently use the vulnerable status of migrant workers as a further lever to suppress wages and undermine workplace conditions. Past and present, migrant workers have always faced the threat of immigration raids on their workplaces and homes. In Hounslow earlier this year activists from the Anti Raids Network [blocked](#) Home Office vans with snatch squads from leaving from their depot at Eaton House. Arrests can lead to deportation, and Brentford and Isleworth Labour Party recently heard from Ali Tamlit, one of

the [Stansted 15](#) protestors who faced anti-terrorism charges for stopping a deportation flight taking off.

Southall remembered

April and May see a series of [events](#) in Southall to mark the deaths of Gurdip Singh Chaggar and Blair Peach 40 years ago, the vibrant struggle against racism and fascism in the area then and its renewed relevance now. The events are organised by the [Southall40](#) initiative and supported by a range of trade union and community organisations. One of the key events is the march against racism through Southall this Saturday 27 April (local shops are requested to close out of respect).

Historic struggle

[Trico - A Victory to Remember](#) is the tale of the epic 21-week equal pay strike at the Trico-Folberth car parts factory in Brentford in 1976. Written by ex-striker Sally Groves and Vernon Merritt it continues to garner thoughtful reviews from [local history blogs](#) to [activists](#) in the West London factories of today.

Car workers film

On Friday 3 May in Greenford the Angry Workers group who have been documenting and agitating around working conditions in West London will be [screening](#) a premiere of “Air to Breathe” – a documentary about 40 years of trade union opposition at the Opel/General Motors car plant in Germany.

And finally...

1 May is International Workers Day, so why not join one of the activities on the day, such as the annual [march and rally](#) to Trafalgar Square or cleaners' union CAIWU's double decker [bus tour](#) of dispute hotspots?