

E-BLAST

nipsa
Youth

NIPSA Youth E-zine

July 2017

The Next Generation

NIPSA Youth was established in November 2010. An idea among a few activists became a discussion among our union, and with help from members and officials at all levels, Trademark and ICTU Youth, NIPSA Youth was formally founded.



The original mission statement was to encourage, support, enthuse, protect and advance the interests of young NIPSA members through communication and action. And it certainly did. Over the years NIPSA Youth became a vibrant and dynamic group, and is now a recognised and respected part of wider NIPSA structures and the local trade union movement. Its members have been actively involved in organising and promoting youth activism, dialogue and education through raising awareness and campaigning on issues affecting young people in the workplace and in the global community.

Through hard work and commitment, NIPSA Youth proved to be a huge success, and has helped a new and enthusiastic generation of NIPSA activists find their place in our union and the wider trade union movement. Current and former members are now involved in almost every area of NIPSA and many hold senior roles at branch and departmental committee level and beyond. You will find us on General Council, the Civil Service and Public Officer

Group Executives, the Global Solidarity Committee, the Equality Committee, the LGBT Group and more. You will hear our voices at NIPSA Conferences, ICTU and NIC-ICTU Conferences, trade councils, political schools, seminars, rallies, trade union education courses, and defending workers terms and conditions at forums such as the Local, Departmental and Central Whitley Committees. You will see us take to the streets to celebrate May Day and Pride. You will find us on the picket lines.

For the past six and a half years, NIPSA Youth has been analysing and highlighting some of the issues faced by young people in our successful publications, Full Blast and E-Blast. Tackling topics including austerity, housing, the NHS, pay-day loans, zero-hours contracts, youth unemployment, homelessness, mental health, suicide and most recently the living wage, these articles seek to inform, stimulate debate and encourage young workers and activists of all ages to find a collective response to what are often complex problems.

In August 2014, the NIPSA Youth Charter was launched, codifying the group's values and goals and asking other groups and individuals to show their support. The charter focuses on three key strands: young people in the union, young people in the workplace and young people in the global community. The charter was supported by many activists from trade unions and civic society, including past and present union Presidents and General Secretaries, and scores of young activists from NIPSA and beyond.

Today, the tentacles of neoliberalism are tightening their grip on every area of our work, life and public services. A bored billionaire is currently wandering the halls of the White House with an itchy Twitter finger and potentially worse, peddling his own poisonous brand of misogynistic, racist, reactionary hate. Closer to home, in the recent snap election the Tories sought to cement their mandate and gain a huge majority in the House of Commons in order to carry out an ideological power grab that would threaten everything in our society from the NHS to higher education, trade unions to the arts, and libraries to leisure centres. Here in Northern Ireland, our political institutions at Stormont are stagnant and toxic. The lights are still on, but no one seems to know for how long. Focus has now shifted to Westminster, as the DUP seek to curry favour and cash in return for propping up the wounded Tories. And meanwhile in the media and online, convenient accusations are levied at young people, labelling them as "snowflakes" or simply "millennials" in an attempt to undermine their authority and legitimacy. Whose agenda does this serve?

But the fight is only just beginning and we will not be silenced. The global response to these societal and political changes has included a resurgence of activism and collectivism underpinned by a renewed sense of vigour and urgency. This was exemplified by Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party defying both the odds and right-wing media narrative by making a 30-seat gain in the recent General Election, in the process completely removing the Tory majority. Numerous political analysts have attributed this to, among other things, a massive increase in political engagement and voter turnout among young people. And the Labour manifesto means that, finally, people have an opportunity to engage with a truly left-wing and progressive agenda. Campaigns such as Right2Water and the Women's March on Washington have recognised the importance and potency of direct action and people power. Our political representatives are now arguably more accessible to the electorate through social media, and therefore can be held to account in a very public and immediate forum. At a local level and beyond, genuinely left-wing political parties are gaining traction with the electorate and providing a workable and achievable alternative to the neoliberal status quo.

The decisions being made today, or more importantly not being made, will impact this generation for the rest of their lives. Today's young people will be faced with severe consequences that affect their finances, health, well-being, reproductive health, education and life choices. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous for young people not to be unionised, organised and operating collectively. It is vital that the younger generation of NIPSA members become activists and get involved in wider union issues. NIPSA Youth's members are the trade union leaders of the future and have a key role to play in securing the development of our union. As the first generation of NIPSA Youth activists come towards the end of their tenure, this is our call for the next generation to step forward and speak up. NIPSA Youth and NIPSA will continue to function and thrive only with a strong and consistent number of committed activists. Now, more than ever, it is critical that NIPSA remains relevant, visible, vocal and angry. NIPSA Youth needs your help to help change the world. For more information on becoming a member of NIPSA Youth or to find out ways that you can show your support, contact Geraldine Alexander at NIPSA Headquarters, or browse to the NIPSA Youth section of the NIPSA website to find out more - www.nipsa.org.uk/NIPSA-in-Action/NIPSA-Youth.

Danny Lowry

NIPSA Youth Vice-Chair

When young people decide to take action they can make what's seemingly impossible, possible.

Zack de la Rocha

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.

Angela Davis

One day, this Establishment will fall. It will not do so on its own terms or of its own accord, but because it has been removed by a movement with a credible alternative that inspires. For those of us who want a different sort of society, it is surely time to get our act together.

Owen Jones

Never has a strong, responsible trade union movement been so needed.

Frances O'Grady

Action is the antidote to despair

Joan Baez