EDITORIAL
To win back working-class trust Labour must take the ‘Liverpool road’
> p3

Boris Johnson says austerity is over. But who believes this pathological liar?
As London mayor and Tory MP, Johnson promoted cuts to council services and supported tax cuts for the super-rich.
The Tory austerity axe has fallen hardest on council budgets. But shamefully, right-wing, Blairite councillors in Labour councils have carried out these Tory cuts, hammering both young and old.

Stripped away is the veneer of a civilised society; one in ten libraries have been closed, along with parks, playgrounds, youth clubs and children’s centres.

It is working-class communities which have borne the brunt of these brutal council cuts. With the impact of job cuts, zero-hour contracts, rising rents and falling pay and benefits, there is little left of a safety net to cope. Scandalously, there are more foodbanks than McDonald’s outlets in Tory Britain.

An extra 500,000 children have been thrown into poverty as a result of austerity cuts. Schools and children’s services are being asked to cope while their budgets and staff are axed. Social care service cuts have left overstretched families struggling to cope with elderly parents and relatives. As the bar to access services is lifted higher, the poorest are left starving to die of neglect.

Homelessness is a vivid sign of austerity - every town centre a shop window for abandoned rough sleepers. And thousands of job cuts have left council workers overworked and underpaid.

To add fuel to the fire we are all asked to pay more for less. Council tax bills are set to rise above the rate of inflation, and councils are introducing new charges and increasing others.

So as councils prepare to set budgets next month, everyone - Johnson, the Labour leadership candidates, trade union leaders, councillors of every shade will be asked, “what are you going to do to stop council cuts?”

Over the last decade, heroic struggles of council workers, working-class communities and a handful of anti-cuts councillors have fought to protect jobs and public services. There have been important victories, but resistance has remained isolated.

We are campaigning for the council trade unions to ballot for national strike action to stop the cuts. And we call on Labour councillors to join the resistance by setting no-cuts budgets and demanding the return of the billions stolen by the Tories since 2010.

A mass campaign to mobilise working-class communities, drawing on the historic victory of the Militant, socialist-led Liverpool City Council in the 1980s (see page 3), must be central to the fightback against further Tory cuts and the rebuilding of our austerity-hit communities.

Time to take a stand - pages 10 and 11
After more than 45 days of strikes and 62 weeks of ‘gilets jaunes’ protests, French workers’ appetite for struggle endures. The unions counted 250,000 on the national day of action in Paris on 17 January. The demonstration was angry and very determined, but also with something of a festival atmosphere. Workers marched - often in uniform - behind union vans decked out with banners, flags, loudspeakers and mannequins.

Strikers compare Emmanuel Macron’s confrontation over pensions to Maggie Thatcher’s assault on Britain’s miners. They see it as an attempt to break the unions and clear the way for unfettered capitalist thievery.

There is majority public support for the strike. It’s fighting a generalised attack on all workers’ pensions: slog longer, get less. But the transport workers have carried the burden of continuous stoppage almost alone.

Long strikes have also developed in schools and some other workplaces. And hundreds of thousands more have walked out on several national days of action. But the strike is not generalised yet.

Rhythm

The movement’s rhythm is becoming intermittent as strikers regroup. But local actions and some small, unrelated strikes still erupt daily, as yet without coordination, like bubbles in boiling broth.

With no recent feeling of a decisive defeat or betrayal in a strike movement, morale remains high. And some are starting to question how to draw more workers into the struggle.

Gauze Révolutionnaire, the Socialist Party’s sister party in France, sold dozens of its newspaper ‘Socialisme: the podcast’ - often in uniform - behind union vans decked out with banners, flags, loudspeakers and mannequins.

Indeed, strikers cheered when we proposed these ideas at the closing rally of a suburban Paris march on 18 January. However, union leaders have restricted their demands to preventing the pension ‘reform’.

The 200 or so marchers on this local demo were appalled to hear of the extended pension age in Britain. They also applauded the idea of a similar strike in Britain to resist Johnson’s new anti-union bill and continued austerity.

In one sense, Macron has already lost. His party, La République en Marche, is facing a drubbing in the March local elections. So much so that he has changed the rules on how election results are announced to mask it. And the lead ‘En Marche!’ candidate in the Noisy-le-Grand Paris suburb, for example, is running without his party’s name!

However, there is a vacuum on the left. Workers pour onto strike demonstrations or gilets jaunes marches. But there is not yet a political coordinating body, a workers’ party, to unite the movements and challenge Macron himself.

Those movements include the famous gilets jaunes. Having defeated Macron’s petrol tax, their demands now include the abolition of all regressive taxes, such as VAT. Their ‘Act LXII’ marched through Paris on 19 January. We joined around 15,000 protesters.

The march endured serious police provocation. Armoured ‘CRS’ riot cops encircled it, intimidating the gilets jaunes and imposing a painfully slow pace.

In the end, frustrated, the march broke away from the police, and the hated CRS attacked with tear gas and arrests. Police repression is once again becoming a burning issue in France, and not just for the gilets jaunes.

The presidential election is still two years away. The strikers are catching their breath, but the reform is not law yet, and they have zero intention of stopping. “On ne lâche pas,” they chant: “we’re not letting go!”

A conclusive blow does not seem possible for either side for some time yet. But the advantage is with the workers. A democratic, fighting union strategy (see interviews, p15) and steps towards a mass workers’ party are the key.
The five Labour leadership candidates at the first regional hustings pursued a common theme - how can Labour win the trust of the working class. Rebecca Long-Bailey said she was “salespeople for socialism”.

It’s fitting that this search for a road to the working class took place in Liverpool, with its militant tradition. But it’s a tragedy that no mention of the city’s vital socialist lessons was made by the candidates. The warning signs were there: in the 2019 council elections Labour’s losses were overwhelmingly in working-class areas in the north west and north east. In 2018, Labour also lost councils in working-class areas in the Midlands.

Why? Since 2010 almost 800 libraries have been closed; there’s been a 73% cut in spending on youth services; social care is a social crisis; councils have cut over 800,000 jobs in that period; almost 200,000 council homes have been lost. The most savage cuts have been in Labour-held areas.

In 2010 the Con-Dem Chancellor George Osborne demanded that Labour councils do the Tories’ dirty work and make the cuts at local level. In this way they would be complicit in ensuring that it was working-class people who should pay the price for the economic crisis caused by the bosses and billionaires – accepting the logic of capitalism. And they did. That is a major factor as to why Labour has lost the confidence of working-class people.

In the general election, Liverpool elected Labour MPs - most of whom are in the socialist campaign group. But it’s not the case that Liverpool was always a Labour city - it was won. Despite a history of working-class struggle, from 1979-83 various coalitions of Tories and Liberals held power in the city.

But a socialist programme for working class struggle against the Tories turned that around. Under the leadership of the 47 socialist councillors, with the Socialist Party’s predecessor Militant playing a key role, fighting to get back what Thatcher had stolen from the city defeated the Tories.

A conscious membership of a mass Labour Party was built through campaigns in the factories, workplaces and on the doorsteps - with general strikes, mass meetings and the confidence in a socialist alternative. The fact that all decisions of the council were made democratically, with those in opposition allowed to put their point of view, was an important factor. But so too were the material gains of the working class from those socialist-led struggles. Labour in Liverpool ‘sold’ socialism by making it a concrete question: 6,300 families rehoused; 4,800 houses and bungalows built; 7,400 houses and flats improved; six new nurseries; 17 community comprehensive schools established; £10 million spent on school improvements; five new sports centres built, one with a swimming pool attached; 2,000 additional jobs provided for in the council budget; 10,000 people per year employed on the council’s capital programme; three new parks; rents frozen for five years.

An important step to winning back trust would be for Labour to take the Liverpool road. That requires fighting for what the Tories have stolen from the working class. Long-Bailey has written that “we can take charge and build a very different future for ourselves, but only if we grasp our most powerful collective weapon: a government for and by the people.”

Even before the next general election local government offers Labour a chance to do this. Liverpool’s socialist history shows how.

No-cuts council budgets and the building of mass united struggle for the money stolen from the working class are central to whether Labour can become a party of the working class and relevant to the fight against Johnson’s attacks.

In the coming years, Labour’s strength will come from the city. That’s why Labour must be socialist.

To win back working-class trust, Labour must take the Liverpool Road.
8 years:

Average difference in life expectancy between the rich and the poor in UK

Rich live longer:

Wealthy people live eight years longer than those with low incomes. The richest can expect to live an average of 80.8 years for women and 79.7 years for men, while the poorest can expect just 75 years for women and 73 years for men.

Badault shops for “copper plate” hotel swimming pools:

Myriam Badault, the marketing executive’s “perfect lunch companion”, shops for “copper plate” hotel swimming pools.

Rich live longer:

Wealthy people live 8 years longer than those with low incomes. The richest can expect to live an average of 80.8 years for women and 79.7 years for men, while the poorest can expect just 75 years for women and 73 years for men.

Police issue counter-terror guidance against campaigners:

PROTESTING IS NOT TERRORISM

Half of England’s private renters suffer stress or anxiety due to housing:

A&E waiting times are at all-time high, as someone who’s been in a hospital bed for a month will be able to claim up to £305 a day, new rules have been set to help people keep track of the costs of their illness.

Trade unions demand that the government withdraws Prevent strategy:

If left unchallenged, both school and university protest groups “will be used to dissuade and intimidate students and workers from our activities and campaigns. Left-wing trade unions might even face being banned from their peers in schools and university campuses.

Trade unions should be demanding that the government withdraws Prevent strategy.

The collapse of outsourcing company Carillion in 2018 was decried as “a story of recklessness, bullying and greed”. British taxpayers are now paying the price every day.

The collapse of outsourcing company Carillion in 2018 was decried as “a story of recklessness, bullying and greed”. British taxpayers are now paying the price every day.

Greggs bonuses stolen:

Greggs recounted a £200 pittance.

£200 pittance was stolen from Greggs by a worker.

Big Ben bunkum:

Chief cutter Boris Johnson is working to get three quarters of London’s largest clock back on the dial by 2021, as he fumbles to meet his target.

Big Ben bunkum:

Chief cutter Boris Johnson is working to get three quarters of London’s largest clock back on the dial by 2021, as he fumbles to meet his target.

Doubling in value for landlords: investment in private-sector contracts.

Big Ben bunkum:

Chief cutter Boris Johnson is working to get three quarters of London’s largest clock back on the dial by 2021, as he fumbles to meet his target.
Fight continues after win against academisation in east London

Dira Simplex
PCS national executive committee member (personal capacity)

On 18 January, reps from across many different sections of public and Commercial Services (PCS) union met in Manchester. We discussed the growing crisis of leadership in the union, and international and devolved-nation committee meetings discussed how to secure more PCS reps into the Broad Left Network.

Boys at the meeting agreed an early programme and candidates for the upcoming PCS national elections. This includes agreeing to support existing national executive committee members and Socialist Party member Marion Lloyd for PCS national chair. It also agreed to adopt a programme of a level up in civil servants and private sector work in opposition to the government's contempt. It also agreed to raise a huge cost due to Tory austerity. 

The NUS has been held up to 20% since 2010. More than a hundred thousand jobs have been lost.

Boys Johnson’s elected Tory government, despite its pledges to end austerity, has continued efforts to undermine the civil service sector and its traditions, and conditions of pay, pension, and devolved-nation civil service committee.

Our existing union leadership, which draws from PCS Local 6, has progressively made clear its antagonism to the government's neoliberal reforms. The NUS and PIU are convoked to support each other, and to take up the robust language regarding self-organisation. The conference agreed to work with NUS to help the organisers to develop the political and programmatic action of the union's programme in the fight against academisation.

The meeting organised by senior management of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.

The meeting in Manchester, which she chaired, agreed to bring a PCS 'Broad Left Network is not just a member of the union's leadership, more than a tired phrase for the national elections; its goal will be to raise the confidence and importance of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.

The meeting in Manchester, which she chaired, agreed to bring a PCS 'Broad Left Network is not just a member of the union's leadership, more than a tired phrase for the national elections; its goal will be to raise the confidence and important of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.

The meeting in Manchester, which she chaired, agreed to bring a PCS 'Broad Left Network is not just a member of the union's leadership, more than a tired phrase for the national elections; its goal will be to raise the confidence and important of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.

The meeting in Manchester, which she chaired, agreed to bring a PCS 'Broad Left Network is not just a member of the union's leadership, more than a tired phrase for the national elections; its goal will be to raise the confidence and important of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.

The meeting in Manchester, which she chaired, agreed to bring a PCS 'Broad Left Network is not just a member of the union's leadership, more than a tired phrase for the national elections; its goal will be to raise the confidence and important of the union's resources or oversight of the process. We were clear that we could not be part of the process if Royal Mail management against the wishes of their members.
International looks at events regional and world politics for years in train disastrous events that shaped anti-war protests powers, assassination of the top middle East. And the backdrop to the and bloody record of meddling in the region with grave results. Imperial-of events that led to the accidental Iraq in recent days. This was despite his recent role in the so-called ‘international laws’ when it forces to bomb Iraq’s cities and tanks, The then US president, George Saddam Hussein was closed down under US program was closed down under US Saddam Hussein was captured in December 2003 and executed after a show trial three years later George Bush arrogantly declared “victorious accomplished” and promised peace and prosperity for the Iraqi Saddam Hussein vice. An interim constitution approved and parliament with a generally Sunni dominated coalition government were elected in June 2005, Shias in a minority. Saddam Hussein’s emerald impres- included, the executions of majority Saddam Hussein members. Saddam Hussein was allowed to stay in Iraq in 1973 after internal unrest that led to a purge of Saddam’s Sunni-domi leadership to find accommodation with the discriminated-against Sunni militia forces in Iraq make up an im- Atrocities were followed by counter offensives of ‘collective punishment’ of tens of millions. The protest movement of recent months has proven to be a profound challenge to US and British-led occupation. It is now being taken seriously and US forces are facing an increasing number of attacks, with reports of suicide bombings and car bomb explosions. The protests are being led by a wide range of groups, including students, workers, and women. The US and UK governments are under increasing pressure to withdraw their forces from Iraq. The protests are also being supported by the international community, with many countries calling for an end to the occupation. The protests are a clear indication of the growing anti-imperialist sentiment in the Middle East and beyond. The protests have inspired similar movements in other countries, including Iran, Egypt, and Turkey. The protests show that the US and UK occupations are not tolerated and that the people of Iraq are determined to fight for their freedom. The international community must support these protests and work towards a just and lasting solution to the crisis in Iraq.
CAMPAIGNS

TIME TO MAKE A STAND

Defend jobs, services and communities

Cambridgeshire County Union oppose Plaid Cymru cuts

Below we print extracts from the resolution by Cambridgeshire County Union to the council’s ‘budget巡查’ on the 2020-2023 budget.

We note the severe cuts budget for 2020-2023 as set by another Conservative administration which will see Cambridgeshire County Council to stand up and defend services, jobs and our communities from Tory cuts passed on by the Labour Welfare Assembly government.

We make no excuses for again calling on Cambridgeshire County Council to set a legal no-cuts budget.

We have consistently argued for this as a means to maintain services that are not only necessary but also valuable for our communities, especially for those who suffer a double whammy - of job losses or increased premiums in work, and cuts and increased prices.

It is a political choice whether to choose a council to serve your hands and say there's nothing you can do. But in 2020 the council has junked a shared public council, which has forced them to agree to the 2020-2023 budget above the council is proposing to make. The word council has been subverted by the needs efficiencies and savings.

While the budget settlement has provided urgent, new £1.7 million will be cut from care services affected by the budget and will hurt. Any apparent pause in austerity will keep increasing. This could increase punctuality and will not begin to reinstate the services which have been improved by devaluing care paid for by the Labour authority since their election in 2011. The cabinet coopted him in another year’s ‘successful’ administrative efficiency. That evening it was revealed that 132 local hospital beds were being lost due to a lack of social workers - this department is sure to make cuts to services that were suggested by the government to make their own cuts.

Any apparent pause in austerity in services will only be temporary, and will not begin to mitigate the decline in services and job loses and the above-inflation raises in council tax.

We will continue to put pressure on Labour councillors, and the authority, to change their tactics and take up a legal no-cuts budget to defend services and the Tory failure.

Swansea - Socialist Party challenges labour cuts and tax hikes

It has been an annual event. Swansea Socialist Party in the city council to set a no-cuts budget. The council has repeatedly challenged the council on this, which has organised a Swansea council cabinet meeting. We put forward a legal no-cuts budget solution to the imposition of Tory austerity.

A few council members voted for the budget but only because they have seen what the consequences will be. A few of our councillors have voted for the budget but only because they have seen what the consequences will be.

Any apparent pause in austerity will keep increasing. We are opposed to increasing the housing benefit levels and will be seen as a step towards public ownership.

If you think bus and rail services are crap, sign our petition to take them back

The Sheffield City Region Mayor, Dan Jarvis, MP, last year proposed to introduce bus regulation under a framework modelled on Transport for London in 2007, and is currently consulting on options to improve bus services.

We did a campaign stall outside Rotherham Interchange with a petition supporting regulation of buses as a tool to provide public ownership and the potential for regulation of small and medium sized operators to help bring local services.

The stall was very successful, especially when we asked stalls who you think bus and rail services are crap, sign our petition to take them back.

We collected near to 100 signatures and agreed amount of door to door visits for the Socialist Party fighting for an uninterrupted public transport in the UK. In the local elections in 2019, the number of Labour followers has also increased. We have a group of 40 people at least who work on the campaign in the area.

One woman explained that she had grown up in a house in the north of England and had a very low income. She felt it was important that the people of the north of England have access to public transport.

Tom Lyon
South Yorkshire Socialist Party

Time to make a stand

Defend jobs, services and communities

Set legal no cuts budgets
BURNS occupied such an important and popular position in his own time that we can only guess at what he might have done if he had not been called to his early death. Burns Night is a celebration of his memory, and the commemoration of his work is seen by many as a way of remembering his life and achievements.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.

Burns was a poet who wrote about subjects that were important to him, and he used his writing to comment on the social and political issues of his time. He was a radical, and his work reflects his concern for the rights of the working class and the injustices of class society. Burns was also a skilled musician and a skilled worker, and he was able to combine his love of music with his commitment to social justice.
INDIA: HUKE GENERAL STRIKE BUT A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Jagadish Chandra
New Socialist Alternative (CWI in India)

What could have been a real opportunity for the left to mount a challenge against the Modi regime was instead frittered away, without any serious attempt to build a struggle.

Following that missed opportunity, traders and vendors were up in arms against the notorious Goods and Services Act, which resulted in massive job losses in the service sector of the economy to the tune of almost five million jobs. This too went largely unchallenged.

It is in this context that the second victory of prime minister Narendra Modi in the May 2019 general election has to be evaluated.

Soon after, Modi went on to abrogate the constitutional guarantees to the people of Jammu and Kashmir - which of course led to mass protests in the occupied territories that are still being brutally suppressed.

Many of those in opposition to Modi's regime are either under house arrest or behind bars.

With this forced silence and with a parliamentary opposition that had no idea of putting up a fight, the left gave up even the thought of extra-parliamentary struggle.

Anger erupts

Then Modi's sinister move to surreptitiously bring in the Citizenship Amendment Bill, and then bulldoze it through parliament with just a mere seven hours debate, triggered the anger of the masses.

It started in the state of Assam, which had already seen the disastrous exercise of a National Register of Citizens. Across the country angry youth spontaneously poured on to the streets with a clear battle cry of "enough is enough". The protests are still raging unabated.

It is very clear from the course of events that the left in general has failed to campaign against the Citizenship Amendment Act, it would have had an electrifying effect among both the organised working class and the non-organised masses, who have formed the bulk of the anti-CAA protests.

The 250 million figure for the numbers participating in the general strike would have easily been doubled had the regime been challenged.

Instead, the left parties, and thus the trade union leaders, were too reluctant to mount an all-out challenge against the Modi regime.

Only after being forced by sections of the rank and file, did they include at the last minute a demand against the CAA - added as the 13th demand and extending the customary solidarity in order to save face.

It was criminal not to campaign against the CAA with all their class might. It shows how out-of-touch these so-called 'communist parties' are with the situation on the ground. They act and behave like any other opposition party based on the middle class, without any perspective of struggle or a combative programme to unite the masses.

They are fetters on the working class and the oppressed, preventing them from finding the road to a revolutionary change in society.

New Socialist Alternative's (CWI India) leaflet, demanding the scrapping of the CAA, explained that the ongoing country-wide protest against the Modi regime is full of radical potential.

The urgent task for the Marxist fighters around New Socialist Alternative is laid out very clearly. We must reach those combative youth and convince them of the need for the struggle to scrap the CAA/NRC/NPR to be fought on class lines, with clear demands.

If the left and the trade unions had given a lead, taking with them the anti-CAA protesters on the basis of a clear programme for the scrapping of the CAA, it would have doubled the size of the general strike photo Diplomat/TesterMan/CC

The withdrawal and replacement of higher currency notes - which was meant to expose unaccounted wealth - failed. Instead, it cost the economy over 1% in total output and led to 1.5 million job losses.

The irony is that 70% of bank employees are organised under the banner of two unions - the All India Bank Employees Association and the Bank Employees Federation of India - aligned to the left parties CPI and CPI(M).

Despondency

The last six years of aggressive, neoliberal economic attacks, mixed with non-stop majoritarian Hindutva communal onslaughts, have sown even the most politically advanced sections.

Given the absence of a leadership with a far-sighted perspective to combat these attacks, the government of Modi’s right-wing Hindutva (promoting the dominance of Hindu culture) regime, naturally a sense of despair existed among some workers and youth.

The twin fiascos of 2016 - demonetisation* and the Goods and Services Tax - that brought enormous misery to the middle class and the poor across the country, went almost unchallenged.

What could have been a real opportunity for the left to mount a challenge against the Modi regime was instead frittered away, with no serious attempt to build a struggle. This is particularly the case with demonetisation which caused more than 100 deaths in the span of ten weeks, including ordinary bank workers.

Instead, the left parties, and thus the trade union leaders, were too reluctant to mount an all-out challenge against the Modi regime.

The 250 million figure for the numbers participating in the general strike would have easily been doubled had the regime been challenged.

Instead, the left parties, and thus the trade union leaders, were too reluctant to mount an all-out challenge against the Modi regime.

Only after being forced by sections of the rank and file, did they include at the last minute a demand against the CAA - added as the 13th demand and extending the customary solidarity in order to save face.

It was criminal not to campaign against the CAA with all their class might. It shows how out-of-touch are these so-called ‘communist parties’ are with the situation on the ground. They act and behave like any other opposition party based on the middle class, without any perspective of struggle or a combative programme to unite the masses.

Attacks

Over the years, as crisis-ridden Indian capitalism has begun to offload its burden onto the urban working poor and the harried rural peasantry, the general struggle of resistance has taken many forms.

It has shown itself in many intensified cross-class struggles that have taken place throughout the country, not necessarily led in an organised way or expressing clear demands. But the poor have expressed their anger and frustration in the form of localised bandhs (stoppages), ‘railroko’ (stopping trains) and many times state-wide (stoppages), ‘railroko’ (stopping trains) and many times state-wide (stoppages), culture) regime, naturally a sense of despair existed among some workers and youth.

The twin fiascos of 2016 - demonetisation* and the Goods and Services Tax - that brought enormous misery to the middle class and the poor across the country, went almost unchallenged.

What could have been a real opportunity for the left to mount a challenge against the Modi regime was instead frittered away, with no serious attempt to build a struggle. This is particularly the case with demonetisation which caused more than 100 deaths in the span of ten weeks, including ordinary bank workers.

Instead, the left parties, and thus the trade union leaders, were too reluctant to mount an all-out challenge against the Modi regime.

The 250 million figure for the numbers participating in the general strike would have easily been doubled had the regime been challenged.

Instead, the left parties, and thus the trade union leaders, were too reluctant to mount an all-out challenge against the Modi regime.

Only after being forced by sections of the rank and file, did they include at the last minute a demand against the CAA - added as the 13th demand and extending the customary solidarity in order to save face.

It was criminal not to campaign against the CAA with all their class might. It shows how out-of-touch are these so-called ‘communist parties’ are with the situation on the ground. They act and behave like any other opposition party based on the middle class, without any perspective of struggle or a combative programme to unite the masses.

They are fetters on the working class and the oppressed, preventing them from finding the road to a revolutionary change in society.

New Socialist Alternative’s (CWI India) leaflet, demanding the scrapping of the CAA, explained that the ongoing country-wide protest against the Modi regime is full of radical potential.

The urgent task for the Marxist fighters around New Socialist Alternative is laid out very clearly. We must reach those combative youth and convince them of the need for the struggle to scrap the CAA/NRC/NPR to be fought on class lines, with clear demands.

*Full article on socialistworld.net

The withdrawal and replacement of higher currency notes - which was meant to expose unaccounted wealth - failed. Instead, it cost the economy over 1% in total output and led to 1.5 million job losses.

The withdrawal and replacement of higher currency notes - which was meant to expose unaccounted wealth - failed. Instead, it cost the economy over 1% in total output and led to 1.5 million job losses.
France striker speaks: Real, deep anger needs union strategy

The strike movement against the French government's wholesale attack on pensions has gone on for almost two months. Many transport workers downed tools for 45 continuous days, joined by some other sectors on the unions' national days of action. The Socialist spoke to striking teacher Virginie Pregny, a member of Gauche Révolutionnaire, the Socialist Party's sister party in France, in Paris on 17 January.

Why are you on strike? The strike started because of a so-called 'reform' about the pension system, which will result - if it were to be implemented - in a drastic fall in the pensions workers will earn.

Who has been on strike? All the workers are really under attack. Public and private. The movement started on 5 December 2019, with a huge day of general strike. And then railway workers, and metro and bus workers, kept on the strike. They were then joined by a few teachers. After New Year, more sectors came on strike. So more and more teachers; but also civil servants in the city councils, for example; also some workers in the oil refining industry, dockers, etc.

So this has been a strike of about 40 days? Yeah. Railway workers - and metro, bus workers, of Paris mainly - have been on strike for 40 days. But then in other sectors, the strike hasn't been on indefinite terms for most of them.

What's the mood like among the strikers? Obviously it's very diverse. But the common point is the determination, which is fuelled by the anger at this government.

Are the strikers working with the ministers who demand us to work more, to earn less. And at the same time, they've been caught red-handed hiding how much they earn, not paying their taxes.

For example, the minister responsible for the pension reform - he earns more than €20,000 a month. Come on! And now he's telling us that pensions are too high, that there is no money, and that we need to cut our own pensions. So there is a real, deep anger.

The movement hasn't won yet. It's been a long strike. Is there still militancy? There is still militancy. It's quite incredible. Today the Louvre museum was blocked by strikers. Tomorrow the opera dancers and musicians, who are on strike, will organise a concert somewhere. You have school blockades; road blockades; everything that can be blockaded has been blockaded at some point or the other.

And the interesting thing is that whenever you have an election meeting - by Macron's party candidate [for the March local elections], it is disrupted. The minister for women had an electoral meeting, and it was invaded by strikers, and she had to leave by the back door!

The strike movement against the French government's wholesale attack on pensions has gone on for almost two months. Many transport workers downed tools for 45 continuous days, joined by some other sectors on the unions' national days of action. The Socialist spoke to striking teacher Virginie Pregny, a member of Gauche Révolutionnaire, the Socialist Party's sister party in France, in Paris on 17 January.

Why are you on strike? The strike started because of a so-called ‘reform’ about the pension system, which will result - if it were to be implemented - in a drastic fall in the pensions workers will earn.

Who has been on strike? All the workers are really under attack. Public and private. The movement started on 5 December 2019, with a huge day of general strike. And then railway workers, and metro and bus workers, kept on the strike. They were then joined by a few teachers. After New Year, more sectors came on strike. So more and more teachers; but also civil servants in the city councils, for example; also some workers in the oil refining industry, dockers, etc.

So this has been a strike of about 40 days? Yeah. Railway workers - and metro, bus workers, of Paris mainly - have been on strike for 40 days. But then in other sectors, the strike hasn’t been on indefinite terms for most of them.

What’s the mood like among the strikers? Obviously it’s very diverse. But the common point is the determination, which is fuelled by the anger at this government.

Are the strikers working with the ministers who demand us to work more, to earn less. And at the same time, they’ve been caught red-handed hiding how much they earn, not paying their taxes.

For example, the minister responsible for the pension reform - he earns more than €20,000 a month. Come on! And now he’s telling us that pensions are too high, that there is no money, and that we need to cut our own pensions. So there is a real, deep anger.

The movement hasn’t won yet. It’s been a long strike. Is there still militancy? There is still militancy. It’s quite incredible. Today the Louvre museum was blocked by strikers. Tomorrow the opera dancers and musicians, who are on strike, will organise a concert somewhere. You have school blockades; road blockades; everything that can be blockaded has been blockaded at some point or the other.

And the interesting thing is that whenever you have an election meeting - by Macron’s party candidate [for the March local elections], it is disrupted. The minister for women had an electoral meeting, and it was invaded by strikers, and she had to leave by the back door!
As the super-rich gather in Davos...

END CLIMATE CHANGE
END INEQUALITY
END CAPITALISM!

Global strikes and mass protests against the effects of capitalism point the way forward

On one side, the global rich elite wine and dine at their annual shindig in Davos. On the other, millions around the world face poverty, war and environmental destruction.

According to Oxfam, just 2,153 billionaires have more wealth between them than 4.6 billion people on the planet.

Some of the representatives of these super-rich at the World Economic Forum (WEF) will be hypocritically wringing their hands about global inequality and climate change. Not because they are worried about the lives of the poorest. What keeps them awake at night is fear of the mass global protests taking place in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, and the threat these potentially pose to their profits and the capitalist system they defend.

This year the organisers of the WEF have declared that they want to create a more sustainable world. Companies, they say, must look beyond profits. Even they understand the effect that the pursuit of profit is having on the environment, on inequality and in provoking mass unrest.

But profit-making is in the very DNA of capitalism. It’s a broken system that cannot be made more ‘human’ and ‘sustainable’ by pleading with the ‘good nature’ of individual capitalists.

The only way that the big corporations will look beyond profits is if they are publicly owned and democratically controlled by working people - as part of a planned economy that prioritises the needs of the majority and the environment, and not those of a rich minority.

The massive protests in Chile, Iraq, Lebanon, France and other countries, and the global climate strikes, are all in opposition to the devastating effects the capitalist system and its political representatives are having on our lives. The next task is to build political organisations that can unite working-class and poor people not just against the effects of capitalism but in opposition to the system itself and its replacement by socialism.