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# the **Socialist**

Formerly **Militant**

# “SEIZE THE TIME!”

- Bobby Seale, Black Panthers

# FIGHT RACISM AND CLASS INEQUALITY

## Fight capitalism



## Join the socialists

**Kris O'Sullivan**  
Birmingham Socialist Party

**A**nti-racist protests are sweeping across the country and the world. A diverse and powerful movement, it feels stronger and more radical than we have seen for years.

This massive explosion of anger didn't just emerge out of nowhere, out of a vacuum. The spark that lit the fuse was the horrific murder of

George Floyd by racist police in the US. But this new movement also represents a fightback against all the racial injustice that hasn't been caught on camera, or has just been swept under the rug by the establishment politicians.

Here in the UK, we have seen an outpouring of working-class black and white youth from the estates and inner cities taking leading roles in the protests and marches. The call is for justice for all the black lives lost at police hands.

And it is also for justice for all those who are still suffering from Grenfell; justice for the Windrush generation at the sharp end of the Tories' 'hostile environment'; justice for the BAME people dying from Covid-19 due to lack of PPE on the front line in the NHS, care homes, and other

key workplaces, and because of the poverty, inequality and racism generated by the capitalist system.

At protests we have seen working-class youth making speeches about how they want full justice in society, free from the oppression of systemic racism, joblessness, homelessness, and a society with no future prospects.

At one of the big huddled masses in the several thousand-strong protest in Birmingham, there was a roaring response of support when Socialist Party members called out the hypocrisy of big business trying to shield themselves with PR campaigns of tokenistic gestures of 'corporate solidarity' - turning their social media logos black, or shining lights on their properties. Big businesses like Amazon with

large black workforces being exploited in dangerous sweatshop-like conditions.

The hypocrisy also includes local Labour councils shining lights 'in solidarity'. Black workers and youth at the protests said they are more concerned with 'being able to keep the lights on in our own homes' than council spotlights!

The establishment politicians, Tory and Labour, have decried the toppling of a statue of a slave trader. These are the same politicians who are looting working-class communities by cutting public services, including mental health, and jobs and homes.

The mood at the protests is not apolitical. The system of capitalism itself is targeted for removal - to eliminate its divide and rule tactics.

We've seen black and white youth quoting Malcom X, Martin Luther King, Fred Hampton and others: for a joint, working-class, multiracial fightback against all the social and economic injustices this system breeds.

All these black leaders were advocating, or moving towards, a socialist solution to the racism and class inequality of this rotten system. For a new generation of black and white youth awakening into struggle, those socialist ideas are more relevant than ever.

Organise the fightback! Join the Socialist Party today!

▶▶▶ **Anti-racist fighters in the US speak to the Socialist p8-9**

▶▶▶ **Editorial p2-3**

▶▶▶ **Protests across the country and world p4-5**



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Send us reports of your workplace and community campaigns, short letters on working-class issues, or ideas for other articles.

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"The philosophers have only  
interpreted the world, in various  
ways; the point is to change it."

Karl Marx

# Black Lives Matter protests sweep country: How can the movement win?



## WHAT WE THINK

“We have outgrown you, despite your best efforts to keep us in the same place. You are in power, but you are outmoded. You're the old form of human. And the new form is coming for your neck.”

These words from musician El-P point to the hopes of the new working-class youth movement being born. To smash racism and the class inequality that together press on the necks of young people, this movement must organise and draw all the lessons and ideas from the movements that have gone before; the slave revolts that led to the abolition of slavery; the civil rights movements, the struggles against the fascists in Britain, and many more.

Ultimately, these struggles show that leaving the power to run society in the hands of the existing rulers, the boss class, is to condemn us to having to keep fighting racism. And that mass, united, working-class action and organisation, around a programme of anti-racism and anti-capitalism, to fight for socialism, with the working class taking power, is necessary.

### Biggest protests for years

The brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police has sparked a phenomenal worldwide anti-racist movement. In the US, these are the biggest protests in history. In Britain, the Tories' official figures estimate that 137,000 people have participated in protests over the last week since 31 May. But Socialist Party members estimate that over twice that number have been present on the 35 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests we have supported.

These have been the biggest protests in some of the towns and cities for years or even decades. Waves of courageous young people have poured onto the streets to make their voices heard in a sea of human solidarity. In many areas, but not all, the majority are black. But in all areas it is working-class young people who dominate these protests - serious and determined to unite in opposition to racism and inequality. The murder of George Floyd was

the trigger but the issues go far beyond that. The protests have demanded justice for many of those murdered by police or in prison in the US - but also in the UK: Rashan Charles, Edson da Costa, Mark Duggan, Sean Rigg, to name only a few; but also for Belly Mujinga, a rail worker who died from Covid-19 after she was denied PPE and safe workplace arrangements by her employer.

Police racism is a major mobilising issue. Police stop and search disproportionately targets black people. We need police accountability through democratic control by working-class communities, including the youth as well as the trade union movement. Who else could be trusted to make decisions about policing?

However, the police presence has largely been minimal on these protests. There have been attempts to use both health fears and law and

order issues to undercut support for the movement. But the Tories already enjoy very low levels of support and trust, and cannot explicitly attack anti-racist protests - a reflection of the widespread solidarity that exists.

They have not been able to use the corona laws to stop fearless young people joining these protests. That is not to say that Covid is not taken seriously - masks and gloves are worn by almost everyone, and distributed free of charge. This is more than the Tories can manage in the care home killing fields they have created.

But these protests cannot wait until the Tories grant permission for resistance and solidarity. As they developed, the recent youth movements in Chile and Hong Kong showed young people losing their fear as the necessity of fighting back was revealed.

The toppling and dumping of the statue of slave trader Edward

Colston in Bristol has been jumped on by Tories and the right-wing press to try to conflate the protests with alleged 'criminality' and undercut their support.

Colston shipped an estimated 84,000 people from Africa to the US as part of the establishment of capitalism there. The best monument to replace that outmoded relic is a movement to end capitalist oppression and exploitation.

This is why the slogan, "the UK is not innocent" has been taken up. Many young people recognise the need for fundamental change in the running of society.

Their future is under threat of being sacrificed for capitalist crisis, just as their childhood has been, with the slaughter of youth service and youth clubs, the trebling of university fees, the insecurity of zero-hour contracts and the lack of council homes and rent control. Capitalism means crisis - it is this system that is outmoded.

The Grenfell tragedy, Windrush, the treatment of refugees, institutional racism, austerity, inequality, low pay, university fees, and of course Covid-19, especially how capitalism's inequality has made BAME people vulnerable to the virus, were among the issues discussed and chanted about.

Coronavirus has revealed all the brutal truths about capitalism - showing how big business bosses and their Tory representatives prioritise profits, and are therefore utterly unable to keep society safe, while workers have been shown to be the ones keeping society going and defending safety.

As yet, this movement is not organised and has no democratic structures to discuss a programme of demands. But the issues motivating working-class young people are so huge and far-reaching that the

movement cannot disappear, even though the initial protests might ebb for a period.

The absence of any organised political voice in support of these protests other than the Socialist Party has been noted. We have been welcomed, running out of leaflets although we printed tens of thousands in the time we had to prepare, so that we could contribute to the necessary discussion on how to take the struggle forward. Almost 1,000 protesters have bought a copy of the Socialist newspaper, and even more have signed up to say they want to find out about becoming a member.

The Labour Party leadership has been absent from the protests and from giving its support.

### Bristol

Bristol protesters have correctly pointed out that they had to remove the Colston statue because of the failure of the council, or the first elected black (Labour) mayor, Marvin Rees, to carry out this necessary removal.

Rees said that although the statue had been an "affront" throughout his life, he could not "condone criminal damage".

The criminal damage to life done by Colston and the ruling class he represented as a Tory MP is what this movement cannot condone - it had to act.

The Tory Party exists to defend capitalism with all the cold cruelty that means - from slavery, to austerity, to Covid failures.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer told LBC radio: "It shouldn't have been done in that way, [it was] completely wrong to pull a statue down like that." With this comment, and also in his approach to Covid, he has shown that he is not prepared to stand up for working-class people and defy the Tories - in bronze or in parliament.

The movement will have to build its own leadership through a testing of ideas and organisation as it develops. London Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan hopes to gain influence by ordering reviews into racist policing and racist statues - there are a lot of both. This shows the potential strength of the movement to push for change.

But Khan is no friend of working-class young people, having just cancelled free bus travel for under-18s because the Tories demanded it. He does not have the courage of this movement.

In his election campaign in 2016 he revealed where he stands when he said: "I like the fact that London is home to 140 billionaires. I like the fact that there are 400,000 millionaires". You cannot stand on the side of both the billionaires and the working class and Khan has shown in both words and actions that he is not on our side.

To be on the side of this movement means drawing on the conclusion of Malcolm X and the Black Panthers: "You can't have capitalism without racism".

What does that mean for building the Black Lives Matter movement? It means building a mass united movement of working-class people with anti-racism at its heart; that fights for workplace safety and PPE for all who need it; for fighting trade unions; for free education; for democratic working class control of the police, and for a future for all young people. It means building a new mass party of workers and young people because we can't trust the capitalist politicians with our lives and our future.

And it means fighting for the alternative to capitalism - socialism (see p9). Capitalism is outmoded. It can't offer us a future. Join the Socialist Party to help us raise these ideas in the new movement.



London photo  
Mary Finch



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working-class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which organises across the world.

Our demands include...

### PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

### WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle for an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £12 an hour without exemptions as a step towards a real living wage of at least £15 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings. Scrap zero-hour contracts.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Scrap Universal Credit. For the right to decent benefits, education, training,

or a job, without compulsion.

- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

### ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

### RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.
- For the right to vote at 16.

### MASS WORKERS' PARTY

- For a mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union and single market. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

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# MASS PROTESTS ERUPT

## London: over 100,000 on the streets - things will never be the same

A sea of protesters, wave after wave, poured out of the stations. They'd stuck to the 'stay at home' rules for months. Now their accumulated anger burst out.

What brought 50,000 to protest in Hyde Park in central London on Wednesday 3 June? What brought 100,000 to Parliament Square on Saturday 6 June? Or 100,000 again to the US Embassy in Battersea, south London on Sunday 7 June? The crowds were huge - you couldn't move at points - but all wore PPE, of course.

The racist murder of George Floyd was the start of a litany of issues. Cardboard placards and chants for Belly Mujinga - the London rail station worker who died from coronavirus after being spat on at work - were also everywhere.

One of the young Socialist Party members on the protest said he'd never experienced a protest like it. And no wonder. The people who came to these protests have changed in the last three months; the pandemic has changed them. They're less tolerant of injustice, and know who keeps society going: the working class.

Every demand the Socialist Party raised with protesters was enthusiastically welcomed. Across the three days, 600 queued up to find out about joining the Socialist Party.

600 also bought a copy of the Socialist. When protesters saw our headline - 'Fight racism, class inequality and capitalism' - they dived at us to buy it. "That's what I'm talking about - fight racism and class inequality, bruv!" said one protester.

When they saw our placards - Malcolm X saying "You can't have capitalism without racism," and the Socialist Party's demands for "Jobs and homes, not racism" - they snapped them up. "Yes! Exactly! This is what I've been debating with my boyfriend - we can't just fight racism, we have to fight the whole system," said another protester.

We ran out of placards and posters, such as the huge demand. We ran out of leaflets after distributing thousands and thousands. And £1,400 was donated to the Socialist Party's fighting fund.

The Socialist Party hosted an open mic on our portable mega sound system. When we mentioned capitalism, it was booed. When we mentioned socialism, it was cheered. I got up to speak on the open mic and said I was a socialist. "Yes!" I heard behind me.

We said: build a united movement against racism and link the struggle to defeat it with the fight for jobs, homes and safety for all. And other protesters who spoke on our

mic agreed. How could they not? Working-class youth - black, Asian and minority ethnic, and white - had come to protest in their tens of thousands.

Marches set off across central London, going where they pleased. The police didn't dare try to stop them. It feels like if this movement gets organised, and links up with organised workers, things will never be the same again.

Ian Pattison

## Oxford: "we have to dismantle the system"

We spoke to a young organiser of the Oxford protest, Sasha Johnson.

Why do you think so many people have come? "The younger generation want change. We don't want a system that doesn't serve equality. Sense of solidarity and unity of the working class."

What are your aims? "To have representation in our schools of our history, that all children should learn. I'm fed up of oppression and the working class feels the same. We have to challenge all injustice. We won't accept lip service from the councillors and the police, who say they support us but who stop young black men and strip them to their pants in the street."

How do you see the protests developing? "We have to start our own system, as the working class we are working to survive. We have to dismantle the system to get equality."

Nick Chaffey

## Birmingham: like nothing seen before

The protest on Wednesday 3 June was nothing like I'd ever been to. Thousands were listening to the Socialist Party's rolling mic, run by Deji Olayinka. Firefighter Dave Pitt got the crowd chanting.

15,000 working-class youth - black, white and Asian - came from the council estates. We sold out of everything. I emptied my car of every random leaflet I had left in there and they took the lot.

120 people left their names to find out about joining the Socialist Party, and we raised £140. We sold 50 copies of the Socialist.

There were big cheers whenever anyone mentioned Grenfell, criticised gentrification or attacked imperialism. For most protesters, it's gone beyond solidarity with the US. It's about Britain - and the world.

Lenny Shail

Around 5,000 turned out on Thursday 4 June. The original meeting place had to be moved because it was too small.

The atmosphere was peaceful yet angry. Even the West Midlands Police commissioner issued a statement supporting the demo and sending condolences to George Floyd's family.

The many speeches from ordinary protesters at the Socialist Party's open megaphone clearly showed the pent-up anger at years of low-level and not-so-low-level racism that is the daily lot for so many.

Clive Walder

## Bristol: slaver statue thrown in river

Bristol's College Green had over 10,000 protesting on Sunday 7 June. Many expressed great frustration and anger about "having to protest again and again to be free to exist," and highlighted that the "people on top count on our silence to keep the status quo."

The peaceful crowd then kneeled in total silence, before starting to march. In its path was slave trader Edward Colston's statue on Harbourside. The statue fell, its hands and feet tied, eyes covered. Protesters threw it in the river, while black marchers climbed on the empty base and rejoiced before the cheering and electrified crowd.

We sold dozens of copies of the Socialist - and gave out all our 2,000 leaflets in minutes.

Paola Sanchez

The removal of Colston's statue was symbolically very important for Bristol. He transported 84,000 black men, 19,000 of whom contracted disease and died before even arriving, on the 'Middle Passage' from Africa to the Americas.

It said on the radio that Colston and his associates made Bristol a wealthy city. Wealthy for them and their families, maybe. A semi-secret organisation called the Society of Merchant Venturers profited from this human misery and exploitation. Its descendants still operate today, owning vast amounts of wealth and real estate across the city.

The protests brought out a far

larger number of black and working-class youth than we have been used to seeing for some time.

Chris Parry

## Bradford: this is just the beginning

I was proud to stand with hundreds of protesters in Bradford's central square on 3 June, taking the knee to protest against racism and police brutality. What was overwhelming was the atmosphere of pure anger and the will to act.

It feels different to other protests. This movement feels more determined.

The Socialist Party was the only organisation that brought political material - our campaign stall was swamped and every 'join the Socialist Party' card was filled in.

We did get some harassment from the police for having a stall, but stood our ground. None of the protesters had a problem with us having the stall. They queued at it to sign up.

All the speakers at the protest called for this movement to go beyond demonstrations. The main rally cry from the working-class youth present: this is just the beginning. Young people are learning that it takes a fight, not just a march, to change things.

One of the main speakers, a young black student, said racism started from slavery

and those who enslaved black people needed to create a false ideology of "backwardness" against black people. In the speaker's words, this was used to "pit us against each other." We echo this sentiment - capitalism needs racism to sustain the wealth and power of a tiny minority.

Under capitalism, the mass of ordinary people must be losers in order to prop up a handful of winners. Racism is one of the main battering rams used against the working class to do this. The Socialist Party is serious about building a mass movement against racism, and we equip ourselves with a socialist programme to defeat capitalism.

Amy Cousins

After a smaller protest on 6 June, around 500 turned out on 7 June. This time there seemed to be more politicised placards, quotes from Malcolm X, and slogans pointing to the systemic nature of police violence. We ran out of leaflets, and more people signed up to find out about joining the Socialist Party and bought the Socialist newspaper.

Iain Dalton

## Wolverhampton: it's not just race, it's class

Over 1,000 workers and young people on 7 June. The Socialist Party dished out posters and leaflets with demands for a mass movement to defeat racism and the capitalist system that breeds it.

Unfortunately, this approach was not shared by many of the platform speakers, who spoke more about faith and individual self-improvement. Over an hour in, large portions of the crowd felt disconnected from this rhetoric.

With some leaving, we couldn't let frustrated young people walk away disenchanted. "The speaker talked about getting your PhD, but how can we dream of that when we can't even afford university?" we argued. People stopped, signed up and donated handsomely.

When we whipped out our megaphone and invited anyone to have their say, a young black woman energetically took it and led a march around the park and to the police station, lasting over an hour after the official event ended. Those drawn into action for the first time don't want this energy to evaporate.

Josh Allerton

There was an emotional kneel for George Floyd for eight minutes and 46 seconds. People were drawn to the Socialist Party stall and enthusiastic in our socialist ideas to fight racism. We sold many copies of the Socialist alongside donations to our fighting fund.

Bethany Morgan-Smith

## Nottingham

Up to 4,000 on 7 June. Many had an understanding that wide-ranging change needed to happen. Our 700 leaflets were not enough, we raised £100 and sold dozens of copies of the Socialist.

Geraint Thomas

## Newcastle

Around 2,000 people, despite scaremon-

## France: 20,000 rally against Paris's killer gendarmes

Young people and workers have protested across the world. In France, an inquiry verdict on 29 May cleared three gendarmes (military police) of killing 24-year-old black man Adama Traoré. Gauche Révolutionnaire, the Socialist Party's sister party in France, reports on the situation.

20,000 people rallied in Paris on 2 June to demand #JusticePourAdama, to fight against racism, and in solidarity with the movement in the United States.

The lockdown has made us

witness to appalling situations. It's in the areas which are already the poorest and most vulnerable where the repression, restrictions, and €135 fines have been harshest.

Encouraged by the authoritarianism of President Emmanuel Macron and his interior minister Christophe Castaner, the police had ramped up their abuse and racist actions against the youth and wider population. We learnt with fury on 29 May that the pseudo-medical experts had dared to deny that Adama Traoré was killed by the chest-kneeling which asphyxiated him in July 2016.

## Coventry: police kill here too

Several hundred people on Tuesday 2 June. Black youth led the protest on a spontaneous peaceful march across the city centre, rallying outside the police station twice. Chants of "no justice, no peace!" and "I can't breathe; black lives matter!" rang through the city as the huge demonstration blocked roads.

Speakers called for justice for other victims of police violence, including Darren Cumberbatch - a black man from Coventry who died in 2017 after police reportedly punched him ten to 15 times and used a Taser on him. Some also spoke about the fight for black lives across Africa, where they pointed to the mass exploitation of black people across the continent by capitalist colonialism and imperialism.

We sold loads of copies of the Socialist and ran out of our 300 leaflets before the protest ended!

Adam Harmsworth

## Sheffield: biggest demo since public sector general strike

Biggest demo since the 2011 public sector strike rally. Maybe 5,000 throughout 6 June gathered in Devonshire Green. Overwhelmingly young, black and white, rounds of clapping, chanting, taking the knee, minute's silences for those killed swept around the park.

A spontaneous march took off, taking over the streets around the park. With most protesters on their first ever demo, the sense of empowerment was tangible, so much so that they marched again, and again.

Alistair Tice

## Leicester: "we want a revolution"

Over 4,000 people in the city centre on 6 June. It was a mainly young and working-class crowd, very angry and enthusiastic, with the crowd even chanting "we want a revolution!" There was a range of placards saying things like "the system isn't broken, it was built this way."

There was an emotional kneel for George Floyd for eight minutes and 46 seconds. People were drawn to the Socialist Party stall and enthusiastic in our socialist ideas to fight racism. We sold many copies of the Socialist alongside donations to our fighting fund.

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## Nottingham

Up to 4,000 on 7 June. Many had an understanding that wide-ranging change needed to happen. Our 700 leaflets were not enough, we raised £100 and sold dozens of copies of the Socialist.

Geraint Thomas

## Newcastle

Around 2,000 people, despite scaremon-

ging in the media - a huge turnout for any protest in Newcastle. The only thing stopping us from distributing more leaflets, placards, and copies of the Socialist was our supply!

Dan Gilmore

## Cardiff

Around 2,000 gathered in Bute Park after two different planned protests merged. Many people were interested in joining the Socialist Party and 60 bought copies of the Socialist.

Socialist Party Wales

## Brighton

Up to 2,000 in Brighton on 3 June, mainly youth, marched around town along the seafront, ending up outside the police station. Police guarding the station looked on bemused as the crowd demanded they take the knee. Our leaflets were snatched up.

Glenn Kelly

## Northampton

Around 1,000 on 3 June, filling the high street with placards calling for social change. A mass mobilisation outside the BBC radio station in Northampton showed both the palpable anger and unity of the community. Protesters wore masks and there were no instances of violence or looting.

Northampton is home to many migrant communities who have been hit incredibly hard by Covid-19. When you look at the local council's systematic destruction of our services over the past decade and a half it's easy to see how cases rocketed across the town.

Katie Simpson

## Aylesbury

Attended by over 1,000, predominantly youth and overwhelmingly black and Asian. Our leaflets were well received as we ran out.

Steve Bell

## Reading

Well over 1,000 in Reading on Friday 5 June, overwhelmingly working-class young people. The biggest demo Reading has seen since the public sector mass strike of 2011. We sold out of the Socialist newspaper and ran out of leaflets. There was a mood of 'we have to build something out of this.'

John Gillman

## Middlesbrough

About 1,000 mainly young people turned out on 7 June. We

Following the mobilisation, the government has had to formally ban the strangling technique, and claim it has always had a "zero-tolerance" policy on racism. Prime Minister Édouard Philippe has also had to suspend some police officers after Facebook groups of 8,000 and 9,000 cops were found to include hyper-racist discussions.

As the Socialist went to press on 9 June, a second rally in homage to George Floyd and against police racism was due to take place.

"La lutte continue" - the struggle goes on!

quickly ran out of leaflets. The mood was very angry - Middlesbrough is one of the most deprived towns in Britain and Europe.

Alan Docherty

## Swansea

1,000 gathered, one of the biggest demonstrations we've had in years. The crowd was enthusiastic about our ideas. Again the rally was overwhelmingly young and working-class. All our leaflets, placards and copies of the Socialist went.

Gareth Bromhall

## Southampton

It felt like 1,000 people were present. People wore masks and social distanced where possible. The atmosphere was electric. Every page of our sign-up sheets was overflowing with names. When we asked protesters what they thought was important to eradicate racism, the main answers were education, conversation, activism - and systemic change.

Michelle Francis

## Hull

Over 500, overwhelmingly young, on Wednesday 3 June. The speeches were full of anger at police brutality in the US, but also racist policing and racism in Britain.

The speakers were all inspirational and harrowing, with personal experiences and anecdotes about their encounters with racism. But there was also the feeling of solidarity from such a large protest.

We gave out every Socialist Party leaflet we had, drawing the link between capitalism, austerity and racism.

Matt Whale

## Durham

Over 500 people gathered outside Durham Cathedral. Most of the demonstrators were young women. Socialist Party leaflets were eagerly accepted by everyone until we ran out of them.

In contrast, the far right held a counter-demo of about 50 in the Market Square under the statue of rich mine owner Lord Londonderry to 'protect' it.

Alan Docherty

## Caerphilly

Around 300, mostly youth, mostly working-class. Despite the wind and rain, we sold out of the Socialist and handed out our full supply of leaflets.

Socialist Party Wales

## "WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT RACISM AND CAPITALISM WITH SOCIALISM"

Extracts from a speech by Deji Olayinka, Birmingham Socialist Party, at the protest on 7 June.

My name's Deji. I'm a member of the Socialist Party. And I'm here for the same reason as all of you lot.

Because we've seen too much injustice. We've seen too much brutality. And we've seen too much harm being done to our communities, and to our world around us.

It's not a bug - it's a feature. It's systematic. The country's 'democracy' is a sham. The laws are there to protect the elite. They're there to protect capitalism. They're there to protect the rich who control everything.

But they don't protect our communities. They don't protect us. It's a racist elite that chooses the laws. It's a racist elite that chooses police violence. Because it protects their stores and it protects their wealth.

We don't own these stores, we just work in them. We don't choose these laws, these laws aren't for us.

We need to change the system. We need to protect our communities. And we need to protect ourselves.

We need socialism to fund our libraries. And we need socialism to fund our gyms. And we need socialism to fund our community centres.

This country has weaponised racism for profit. This country's elites got their wealth off the back of slaves. They got their wealth off the back of Africa. And they're still profiting from it.

In America, in the UK, in the Caribbean, in Africa - we are all one people. We are all living under the same system. And nothing will change until we change this system. Until we get rid of racism - until we get rid of capitalism.

We've got to organise. Like the Haitians, when they overthrew slavery. We've got to organise and

overthrow capitalism, in this country, and in the world.

We need to educate ourselves after this demo. Because these people, they promised us education, but all they've given us is tests, and scores, and bullshit qualifications.

We need to learn about the Black Panther Party. And we need to read about Huey P Newton. And we need to read about Freddy Hampton. And we need to learn about the Black Panthers' revolutionary programme. And we need to read Karl Marx - because they did!

We'll learn that racism won't go without changing the entire system. Because it's not just a few bad apples, it's structural problems.

Fred Hampton was a leader of the Black Panthers. And he built a Rainbow Coalition, uniting white people, Asian people and black people, against racism, sexism and capitalism.

I'll finish with his words. "We're going to fight racism, not with racism, but with solidarity. We're not going to fight capitalism with black capitalism, but with socialism."



Deji Olayinka  
photo Brum SP

## Socialists call for trade unions to join the fight

The PCS union represents workers doing all sorts of jobs for the government. Socialists in that trade union, including members of the Socialist Party, are organised in the PCS 'Broad Left Network.' At the 4 June meeting of the union's elected leadership, the national executive committee, Broad Left Network supporters Dave Semple and Fiona Brittle brought up the mass protests triggered by the murder of George Floyd.

We raised a motion urging the union to state support for "the demonstrations that are being called across the UK, with suitable social distancing and other protective measures, including in Cardiff at the weekend, Belfast on Monday, and Glasgow and London on Wednesday, to show visible solidarity with those protesting in the USA. PCS encourages members to take part in further protests in a safe way..."

Unfortunately, some other members of the national executive committee argued against this support, claiming the demonstrations are unsafe. Reluctantly, we agreed to 'remit' the motion for further discussion by the union's senior officers, who argued we must consider how such activity can be supported in the era of social distancing. Better this than risk the motion being voted down.

Fighting racism means fighting capitalism, and it's the organised working class which has the power to do both (see p8-9). This means it is urgent for the trade unions, including PCS, to give full support. Yes, we need to keep safe - but on the streets is where we show that black lives matter!

Dave Semple  
PCS union  
national executive committee member (personal capacity)



## Stand firm for safety

Continued from back page

Few schools are providing PPE, leaving pupils and staff in the far-cical situation where they are expected to wear masks on the bus to school, but take them off when they are in class!

The main guideline being followed to minimise the risk of virus transmission is the setting up of individual 'bubbles' of 15 or fewer children who should stay together with the same staff. But with physical distancing impossible to consistently achieve with younger children, it's almost inevitable that if one child brings the coronavirus into that 'bubble', then the remaining children, and their staff, may well be infected.

Too many schools are putting staff under pressure to work when they feel themselves, or their relatives, to be at risk. Where schools refuse to allow staff to work from home, then this must not be left as an individual issue.

Unions as a whole must declare that this refusal means the school has failed to acceptably account for risk overall, and the press and public alerted. Communities on the march against racism need to know which local schools are refusing to protect black, Asian and minority ethnic staff who feel at risk.

Any attempt to declare that the 'five tests' have been achieved or that a safe wider return can now be supported by unions would be a huge mistake.

Let's expose the hypocrisy of a government that has cut school budgets over years, but now suddenly pretends to be interested in 'disadvantage'.

Yet they are ending free school meal vouchers, while still failing to deliver on their promises to provide additional laptops and routers for families who need them to access online learning. They are forcing the low-paid back to work, instead of guaranteeing the wages of those who have no access to childcare.

United opposition would have been easier to achieve if the NEU had clearly declared that, in the absence of the five tests, no school was safe to return to.

But the struggle to defend staff and community safety has to continue, even if it now has to be school-by-school, area-by-area. Staff must continue to be supported to assert their rights to either refuse to return, or, once experience exposes the serious danger they face, to leave an unsafe workplace.

For the safety of our colleagues and our school communities, let's continue to organise around a clear and principled stand, and insist that safety must come first.

Get all the latest union news...  
nationalshop  
stewardnetwork  
NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net

## Oppose the Welsh government's reckless return to school plan

# No return until its safe

Socialist Party Wales

The Welsh government has announced a return to school for all students in Wales on 29 June. This must be opposed by all unions in Wales. No teacher, teaching assistant or school worker must be forced back to work in unsafe conditions. There must be no return to work unless it meets the 'five tests' laid down by teaching unions.

A premature return to school risks the safety of pupils and teachers, especially those with vulnerable relatives, and a new upsurge in Covid cases in our communities. The Welsh education minister, Kirsty Williams, has said that one-third of students at a time will be in school. But this is still a dangerous gamble with the lives of parents, children and teachers.

"That means that the teacher will have contact with every single child in a class of 30 plus. They are even more likely than teachers in England to come into contact with the virus, and then pass it on to the other children and indirectly to their parents" said one primary teacher when she heard the announcement.

National Education Union Cymru (NEU Wales) pointed out that the R rate in Wales has not decreased in the last three or four weeks, and currently stands at 0.8. Any fluctuation upwards could have serious repercussions.

A Welsh primary teacher commented: "Our basic demand is for a safe return at the appropriate time with social-distancing measures that protect children and teachers. It seems that the Welsh government is also giving in to the pressure for employers to provide a child-mind-

ing service to allow their workers to return to work rather than listening to the scientific advice that insists that there should be no return in the current circumstances".

The whole trade union movement should rally around teaching unions to defend their right to keep themselves, their pupils and our communities safe by refusing to return.

The government is also intending to extend the school summer term by a week, cutting the summer holidays in return for an extra week in October half term.

This should be rejected. It discriminates against poorer pupils' families who will find it easier to play outside during the summer while richer families can fly off to sunspots in October.

While correctly criticising the Welsh government's proposals,

none of the education unions have said yet that they will fight them. There needs to be a clear united statement by all the unions opposing the return to school on these terms, and a clear lead for teachers to refuse to return, if necessary using Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (which gives all workers the legal right to refuse to work in dangerous conditions) in a co-ordinated campaign of action. Teaching unions should organise with parents who are also unhappy with these proposals.

Emergency union meetings should be organised for members to raise their concerns and to plan a campaign of opposition.

■ Full article at [socialistpartywales.org.uk](http://socialistpartywales.org.uk)



## Parents organise to scrap the plan



Ross Saunders, a parent of two small children and a Socialist Party member in Cardiff, has set up a campaign group opposing the Welsh government's plan to open all schools in Wales on 29 June.

The group now has over 3,000 members, and is organising an

online meeting of parents and a car cavalcade. Ross was interviewed by BBC Wales Today and ITV Wales (pictured above). Below are extracts from those interviews.

"I was amazed. It seems like one day the Welsh government is saying we should only be mixing with

members of one other household and the next day they're saying children from hundreds of other households can all mix together in school.

"Lockdown has been hard. It's hard on parents. It's hard on the kids as well. But we do it because that's

what we need to do to keep safe.

"My fear is that all of that hard work we've done in the weeks previously is now going to be thrown away because of one reckless decision by the Welsh government. That's why they've got to scrap the plan".

## Test-and-trace fiasco

# THE RINGING OF THE CASH TILL

Serco has been awarded a lucrative £45.8 million (possibly up to £90 million) test-and-trace contract with the National Health Service (NHS).

A leaked email from Serco's chief executive officer, Rupert Soames, reveals the company's desire to carve out a profitable slice of the NHS's funding cake.

"If it succeeds... it will go a long way in cementing the position of the private sector companies in the public sector supply chain," says Soames.

But, he cautioned: "There are a few, a noisy few, who would like to see us fail because we are private companies delivering a public service. I very much doubt that this is going to evolve smoothly, so they will have plenty of opportunity to

say I told you so."

Soames is right to doubt Serco's ability to run the scheme. This "world beating" operation - which according to Boris Johnson should have been up and running by 1 June - according to its chief operating officer Tony Prestedge (previously a Santander banker), won't actually be functioning properly until "towards the September or October time".

Meanwhile, hardly a day passes without one of the 25,000 workers employed on the scheme expressing in media reports their frustration and disappointment over the lack of training and not having anything to do.

Soames is the brother of former Tory MP Nicholas Soames and grandson of the late



It will go a long way in cementing the position of the private sector companies in the public sector supply chain

Tory PM Winston Churchill. As a former member of the notorious Bullingdon Club at Oxford University, he must be used to trashing and screwing things.

## 'In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity'

If measures such as mass testing, contact tracing and quarantining had been implemented back in January, then tens of thousands of 'excess deaths' could have been avoided.

Johnson and co have compounded this catastrophe by ignoring existing public health structures in local government and primary health services to carry out testing and tracing. Instead, the government has dished out lucrative contracts to commercial companies. This includes Serco, which has a track record of public service delivery failure.

The government has handed out pandemic contracts worth more than £1 billion to 177 private companies, mostly without even going through the motion of public tendering, but instead awarding them directly using emergency powers.

Accountancy company Deloitte, along with fellow mega-accountancy firm KPMG, has been contracted to conduct testing. Both companies are already embedded in the NHS, having designed NHS Improvement, which oversees NHS trusts.

But results at the drive-through testing centres have gone missing or have been sent to the wrong people. Deloitte denies directly running such sites, but only "supporting" the roll-out of testing. However, following a catalogue of failures at the Chessington testing centre in Surrey, nearby Epsom hospital asked the health department that the hospital itself takes over the testing.

Deloitte has also been contracted to supply PPE. One manufacturer described Deloitte as "useless", while another said,



Low-paid Barts health workers in 2017 on strike against penny-pinching global giant Serco photo Paul Mattsson

cuttingly: "If there is a fire, you don't call the auditor, you call the fire service."

Some contracted companies have previously made political donations to the Tory party, such as Randox Laboratories, which donated £160,800 between 2011 and 2018. Randox, which employs Conservative MP Owen Paterson as a £100,000-a-year consultant, received a contract worth £133 million.

Serco, which has been awarded an ini-

tial £45.8 million contact tracing contract, sponsored an event at last year's Tory party conference.

Faculty, the AI company contracted to mine confidential patient data for the government's pandemic response, is closely connected with Johnson's notorious, poorly-sighted chief advisor, Dominic Cummings. Also connected is Cabinet minister Lord Agnew, who has a reported £90,000 worth of shares in Faculty.

## Serco - a toxic legacy of service delivery failure

As the Socialist has previously reported, Serco recently accidentally shared the contact details of 300 contact tracers, in breach of its own data protocols.

This cock-up is not a one-off. Last year it was fined almost £23 million in a settlement with the Serious Fraud Office over reportedly overcharging the government for offenders' electronic tagging.

In 2018, Serco's breast-cancer screening

hotline failed to issue 450,000 women invitations to attend important screenings. It emerged that the hotline was being run by call handlers with only one hour's training.

Also that year, Serco planned to evict hundreds of asylum seekers from private accommodation in Glasgow without court orders.

In the summer of 2017, low-paid workers in Barts NHS Trust (members of Unite

union, including Socialist Party members), employed by Serco, were engaged in months of bitter strike action to secure the London Living Wage.

Serco has its fingers in many government contract pies, including running six prisons and an immigration removal centre.

Serco posted revenues of £2.8 billion in 2018, and an underlying profit of £93.1 million.

## Under the microscope

Coronavirus pandemic news in brief



### ■ Hancock's half-hour

"There is no privatisation of the NHS on my watch", said serial bullshitter health secretary Matt Hancock in January. But now the Department of Health and Social Care has admitted it handed a record total of £9.2 billion last year to private companies. This is significantly up on the £8.77 billion private vultures siphoned in 2017-18, and doesn't include the extra £1 billion-plus the Tory government has thrown at private companies in the current pandemic. Lest anyone should forget, private companies' business models are not based on charity but on the pursuit of profit, principally to enrich their large shareholders and CEOs. Typically that means poor pay and conditions for their workforces and poor service delivery.

### ■ Fees insult

The government has blood on its hands after it failed to protect vulnerable care home residents from coronavirus.

To add insult to injury, the mainly privately run care homes are now demanding increases in residents' fees - over £100 a week in some instances - to cover the cost of providing PPE and agency staff.

Around 40% - over 6,000 mainly privately run care homes in England - have suffered coronavirus outbreaks due to the government emptying infected elderly patients from the NHS into care homes, combined with a lack of testing and PPE for staff, and an increasing use of agency workers to cover staff absences.

Care homes should be brought back in-house, and the billions in government cuts from the sector reinvested in full.

### ■ Jobs slashing tax dodgers

Almost one-third of big businesses who have received a total of over £5 billion from the government's coronavirus loans scheme are linked to tax havens, according to thinktank TaxWatch.

These include job-slashing British Airways, whose parent company is based in Jersey, and digger-maker JCB, whose parent company is located in the Netherlands.

### ■ Holiday hunger

While chancellor Rishi Sunak continues to bung bail-out money to companies registered in tax havens, his generosity with our money doesn't extend to 1.3 million children in England who face summer holiday hunger.

The government has said it will axe the national voucher scheme worth £15 a week in July - introduced in March to help low income families with schools shut under lockdown.

According to the Food Foundation, some five million people in households with children have had difficulty feeding them during the coronavirus crisis.

As the Socialist has previously reported, the privately run scheme, administered by global company Edenred, has led to unacceptable delays in sending out the vouchers - which can't be used for online shopping. The government should fund a much more generous scheme run by local authorities.

### ■ Lockdown debts

The charity StepChange has estimated that 4.6 million UK households have accumulated an additional £6 billion of debts during the coronavirus lockdown, which began in late March.

This breaks down into £1,076 of arrears and £997 of debt on average for each adult, caused by job losses and reduced working hours and pay.

Some 1.2 million people were in arrears on utility bill payments, 820,000 people on council tax, and 590,000 on rent. Around 4.2 million people had used credit cards, overdrafts or high-cost payday loans to survive.



# US protester speaks to the Socialist

**Emery Addams** from the Independent Socialist Group (US) - co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in England and Wales - spoke to us about the significance of the mass anti-racist protests shaking the US, outlining the programme and organisation necessary to end racism.

**This is the biggest anti-racism mobilisation since the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. The capitalist media has focused on riots and violence, despite the bulk of the action being peaceful protest. How has this uprising developed so far?**

At this stage, violence almost exclusively stems from the police. Despite these attacks, the movement has won incredible victories from the capitalist class in a couple of weeks that were almost unimaginable a month ago. Not only have all of the officers responsible for George Floyd's murder been charged and fired, but the momentum is being pointed at the police as an institution.

This can be seen through the push for schools to cut ties with the police, the \$100-150 million that has been cut from the Los Angeles Police Department budget, and the calls from the majority of Minneapolis city council to 'dismantle' their entire police force.

A multiracial movement is emerging that treats racism and police brutality as issues against which all people must fight. US workers and youth are finally seeing what they can win when they act. The task for the movement now is to organise for even larger victories.

**Are protesters only angry about racism?**

Absolutely not! This movement was born out of the material conditions of the working class - the pandemic response that favours capitalist profit over workers' lives, the recession, and the ever-present realities of police brutality.

Protesters are angry about how capitalism controls and so easily ends their lives. They're protesting for more than the removal of individual racist and murderous cops. Protesters are fighting for a change in the system as we know it.

As socialists, we know that this change can only be achieved by replacing the brutal capitalist system with a democratic and equitable socialist one.

**There have been further police attacks since the murder of George Floyd. An unarmed Latino man was killed in California, and many protesters have been beaten, tear-gassed, shot at and rammed with vehicles. How has this affected the mood?**

As of 7 June, at least 12 people have been killed due to police violence at the protests, with countless others facing mild to severe injuries and arrest. This hasn't slowed the movement. If anything, it has highlighted to protesters the exact reason they are fighting.

This has also further mobilised nurses, already radicalising due to the pandemic. As police violence grows, nurses are leaving their long shifts fighting Covid-19 to immediately provide medical assistance to injured protesters.

The realities of the triple crises of Covid-19, the ongoing recession, and police brutality have created an environment of solidarity amongst the working class - only strengthening the movement.

**Meanwhile, in some cities, police have taken a hands-off approach, or even joined protests. What does this represent?**

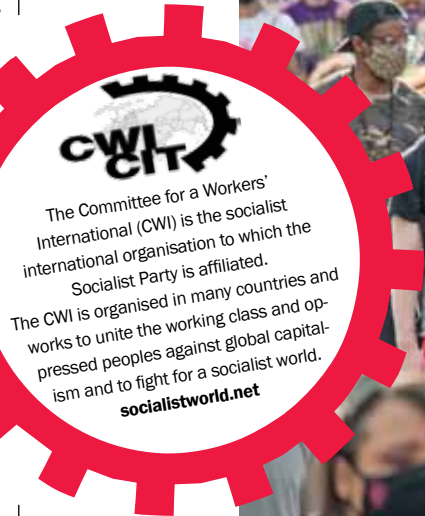
These are essentially public relations stunts employed by some of the smarter police departments. It allows them to both attempt to pacify protesters, and to push the narrative of 'good cops' vs 'violent protesters.' In numerous cases, the exact same police who kneeled or marched with protesters attacked them just hours later. For the most part though, protesters aren't willing to blindly accept this. Regardless of the performative actions of the police, protesters have continued to push for genuine, systemic change.

**A white bar owner shot and killed a black protester in Nebraska. Some might see this movement as a conflict of white versus black.**

It's important to note that the protests are widespread and very multiracial. We should also recognise the real source of racism as we know it - capitalism. Racism deliberately perpetuated in the media, education, pop culture, etc., shapes people's attitudes, then reinforces attitudes and unequal conditions through laws. This makes violence against people of colour easy in order to exploit and control the working class as a whole.

These same divisions are created between different genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities and nationalities, and allow the capitalists to pit workers against each other to the benefit of the ruling class. When we fight each other, we can't unite and fight back against our common exploitation by the capitalists. The only way we can overcome racism for good is to fight for socialism - with an organised movement of the entire working class.

**There are calls from some quarters to make certain police tactics illegal and cut police funding. Would this stop police violence?**



# BLACK AND WHITE YOUTH RISE UP AGAINST RACISM



Stopping police from using incredibly dangerous tactics and weapons is a reform we support. Cutting police funding, which is wildly expensive and out of control in the US, would also help many communities transfer needed funds to schools, housing, healthcare, and so on, which would do far more to resolve crime and inequality than policing.

But no reform under capitalism is guaranteed to last. As soon as we look away, the capitalists will roll back the victories we won. The police, as an institution, functions to protect the capitalists, and (often violently) repress the working class. No amount of policy reform within the capitalist system will change this. To truly stop police violence, we need democratic community control of public safety by the working class.

**Some organisations are also demanding boycotts of businesses owned by known racists, favouring businesses with black or non-racist owners. Would this resolve inequality?**

In the 1960s Fred Hampton, deputy chairman of the national Black Pan-

ther Party, accurately said: "You don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity...you don't fight capitalism with no black capitalism; you fight capitalism with socialism."

While certain individuals would be supported in the short term by buying from black-owned businesses, this would do nothing to solve the problems of workers who don't own businesses, which is the majority of society. Instead, imagine what a week of a full economic shutdown from a general strike could win us! Organised action by workers that impacts the capitalists' profits can win systemic change for workers of all races. Individual shopping choices don't hold the same power.

**The Black Lives Matter movement fizzled out after its 2014-16 peak. How can young people and workers organise to build the anti-racist movement this time?**

We're seeing intense energy in the streets right now, but that can fizzle out quickly if the movement isn't organised around concrete demands. These demands must draw together

workers of all races and ethnicities.

The movement also needs to be organised with democratic structures for discussion, debate, and coordination. We can organise neighborhood committees - elected groups who would decide tactics and future action - create a programme to direct the movement, and elect delegates to city-wide, state-wide, and nationwide committees for larger-scale discussion and coordination. Similarly, a key part of escalating this struggle and maintaining momentum is for the working class as a whole, including unions, to get involved. We need to organise our workplaces through new union drives, and use our unions to defend members against racist incidents and negotiate better conditions for all workers.

We also need workplace action, including slowdowns, sickouts, walkouts, and strikes in solidarity with the anti-racist movement, requiring specific demands to be met before we return to work. This economic pressure would force the capitalists and their politicians to concede to demands such as convicting cops, defunding and demilitarising the police, and more.

**Socialists fight against racism in every form, wherever it crops up. But decades of struggle have not ended it. What is needed to finish the job?**

Many movements have been co-opted and demobilised. Capitalist politicians, especially Democrats, will promise reforms, push the momentum of the movement into the nearest election cycle, and then drop those demands the second they're in office.

We must refuse to accept surface-level concessions, and organise a multiracial movement of the working class outside of the capitalist political parties to fight racism and all other forms of oppression.

This movement should work to build a new workers' party that has democratic structures and a socialist programme. The capitalists are beginning to see the power of the working class. This is no time to slow down - join us, and continue the fight against racism and for socialism.

■ *In the US contact us at [independentsocialistgroup.org](http://independentsocialistgroup.org)*

■ *In England and Wales at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)*



**Only by taking wealth and power out of the hands of the tiny capitalist elite would it be possible to lay the basis for a new society free from the muck of racism**



**Hannah Sell**  
Socialist Party general secretary

The current Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is the biggest wave of protests against racism since the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. The most radical leaders of that movement drew the conclusion, as Malcolm X put it, that "you can't have capitalism without racism", and that meant fighting for socialism.

Black Panther leader Fred Hampton summed it up: "You don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity. We say you don't fight capitalism with no black capitalism; you fight capitalism with socialism."

Today the world is different. There has been a black President of the US, the most powerful capitalist country on the planet, and many major corporations have, for example, declared their solidarity with the BLM movement. The fundamentals remain the same, however. Racism is intrinsic to capitalism.

Capitalism is a blind, unplanned system driven by maximising the profits of a few, and based on the exploitation of the majority. Today, according to Oxfam, the richest 85 people on earth have more wealth than the poorest half of the world's population. They include one black African, although white men predominate.

Their role in society, however, does not stem primarily from their colour. They are part of a tiny super-wealthy ruling elite whose interests are completely tied to an inherently racist capitalist system.

Jeff Bezos, the richest man on earth, has declared his 'solidarity' with BLM, but that will not alter in the slightest his maximising his profits via the brutal exploitation of his low-paid workforce, 65% of whom in the US are from BAME backgrounds.

In countries like Britain and the US the profits of the capitalists have soared while the working class - which is the big majority of the population - has seen its share of wealth driven down over decades.

BAME workers have been disproportionately affected. This has been laid bare by the Covid crisis - where BAME people are more likely to die from the disease, largely because they are more likely to be among those who have had to work through the crisis without adequate PPE, and are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions.

At the same time, police harassment and brutality remains a fact of life, particularly for young BAME men.

The capitalist elite are a tiny minority and, in order to maintain a social base and therefore power, they attempt to 'divide and rule'. They

encourage workers from Britain to believe that it is anyone but the bosses who are responsible for their low wages, for example.

Racism is such a central part of the capitalists' divide-and-rule arsenal because of the whole history of capitalism. Karl Marx famously said it came into being "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt". He was referring primarily to the horror of the slave trade that laid the foundations for capitalism.

With slavery came the development of racist propaganda designed to justify the enslavement of African peoples. Racist ideas were then adapted to justify the colonial oppression of large parts of the world by the imperialist powers. Direct colonial rule ended as a result of magnificent revolutionary independence movements that swept the planet in the twentieth century. Brutal economic exploitation continues, however.

Capitalism is based on nation states, with an accompanying national consciousness, used by the capitalists to maintain their social base. The statue to the slave trader Edward Colston, which Bristolians chucked where it belonged at the bottom of Bristol docks, was not erected until 170 years after he died. This was part of a campaign by Victorian capitalism to invent a history that justified British imperialism's exploitation of the globe, and its workers at home.

Malcolm X was right when he said that capitalism could never stop being racist. Today capitalism is a system in deep economic crisis, with growing national tensions, and is less able to take society forward than ever.

The BLM movement, however, which has spread so rapidly worldwide, indicates the determination of a new generation to build a new world. The movement is marked by its internationalism and its overwhelmingly working-class and multiracial character. It marks an important step in the search for an alternative to capitalism.

Only by taking wealth and power out of the hands of the tiny capitalist elite would it be possible to lay the basis for a new society free from the muck of racism.

This requires nationalising the major corporations and banks that dominate the economy under democratic workers' control and management, in Britain and internationally, in order to build a socialist planned economy that could provide a decent future for all - starting with decent housing, well-paid work, and free education.

By adopting such a programme, the next generation can stand on the shoulders of giants, and complete what Malcolm X and the Black Panthers started.



# Non-essential retail to open - organising at work is essential



**Ryan Aldred**

Usdaw Plymouth and Districts  
General branch secretary  
(personal capacity)

Boris Johnson has announced government plans to relax lockdown further, with a wider opening of non-essential retail on 15 June.

The mood among many workers in retail at this news will understandably be very mixed. There will be those who are keen to get back to work as quickly as possible as they can't afford not to.

Most retail workers will have been inflicted with a 20% pay cut, as the government has only provided 80% of pay through the job retention scheme.

Considering wages in the retail sector are low, with many on minimum wage, coupled with the abundance of zero and low-hours contracts, retail workers will have been hit disproportionately hard during the pandemic.

Likewise, given the ever-growing list of recognised names disappearing from the high street altogether, some will be anxious to get back to work to avoid the risk of a looming redundancy. With the government being pushed to consider plans to buy stakes in some

ailing companies, union leaders should fight for companies that have fallen victim to the pandemic to be brought into public ownership to save jobs.

Many will be worried, and rightly so, with new transmissions even in lockdown still totalling 2,000 per day. Already some supermarket bosses have recklessly scrapped policing social-distancing measures, and have quickly moved away from limiting the number of customers in-store, despite the continued lockdown.

Non-essential retail bosses will undoubtedly try to get away with rushing to return to business as usual, as they try to catch up on rent arrears for the last quarter, as well as clawing back lost profits. The Tory government has released plenty of guidance. But guidance is the key word, as none of it is enforceable, leaving things massively open to abuse by bosses.

In a press release on 26 May, Paddy Lillis, general secretary of shopworkers' union Usdaw, said that businesses will "pay little attention to government advice". The union leadership should make it abundantly clear that it will not tolerate unsafe working practices.

Even government guidance has conceded that "no one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environ-

ment." Where workers are put at risk, they should organise walkouts under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

As the risks cannot be completely mitigated, workers should demand higher wages and a hazard bonus.

Workers should be encouraged to join a union and challenge unscrupulous employers. Workers and health and safety reps should emphatically insist on conducting risk assessments to guard against corners being cut, and to ensure that safety is put firmly before profits.

They should also consider putting forward reduced opening hours to ensure price changes, restocking, merchandising and stock checks can be done safely. Any non-essential tasking should be scrapped, along with performance targets, until the pandemic has passed.

It has also been reported that the government is considering suspending Sunday trading laws, under the smokescreen of helping key workers to shop. But in reality, it is to try and boost the economy, at the workers' expense. Sunday is the only day of the week that stores cannot be open for 24 hours a day, and shorter working days on Sundays should be defended so that workers have more time with their families and time off.

## Debenhams: Workers made to pay for Covid-19 crisis - nationalise to save jobs

**Iain Dalton**

Usdaw Broad Left chair

As a warning of the coming recession we are now entering, Debenhams went into administration in April last year, with 22 stores closing, and all but 39 of the remaining stores having rent reductions. Fast forward a year, and Debenhams is back in administration again, with more store closures looming.

First, the company disgracefully announced the closure of its Irish business, comprising 11 stores - while transferring its profitable Irish online business to the UK parent company, as well as all of the leases and assets in stores. The workforce was to receive no redundancy pay from the company.

As we've reported, workers in the stores, members of Mandate, the main Irish retail workers trade union, held protests outside stores and the Irish parliament. Since an attempt to remove assets from the store in Cork they have been holding pickets outside stores to block this.

But meanwhile, here in Britain, where a greater number of stores are due to close - 17 in total, with a few more still hanging in the balance - there has been no such campaign from Usdaw. During this crisis the union's only public action has been to issue a press release calling Usdaw "the trade union for Debenhams staff", and to call on Debenhams to recognise Usdaw.

Given the brutal way it has treated Mandate members in Ireland, where the union was recognised, it's a totally utopian position to think they'll listen to Usdaw doing less!

Since then the company has announced more than 1,000 jobs within the company are to go, as it

starts to reopen its doors on 15 June, both in head office and in services in-store, such as cafés that won't be opening under social-distancing guidelines. The company is refusing to continue furloughing them, and is making them redundant with immediate effect, without any notice or consultation period.

Understandably, these workers, who didn't know their jobs were at risk until they were told they were redundant, are outraged. The restaurant manager of the Debenhams store in Sheffield told the local newspaper: "We all just feel really let down... some of my staff have worked there for more than 20 years... Debenhams is still getting help from the government. I don't understand why they need to let us go right now when they could have kept us on for another month and we'd still get furlough pay."

Debenhams is just one of a number of companies entering into administration at the moment. The latest additions to the list have been footwear company Aldo and lingerie company Victoria's Secret.

Unless a concerted campaign to defend jobs in the retail sector is waged, Debenhams may end up being the first of many big retail chains which stays in business by making workers' pay. That's why Usdaw supporters in the National Shop Stewards Network have called for a day of action of protests outside Debenhams stores on 15 June.

We'll be expressing our solidarity with Mandate members in Ireland fighting for their jobs, as well as calling for Debenhams to be nationalised to save jobs. Usdaw should be urgently raising the question of public ownership to save jobs, as outlined in the 2017 Usdaw conference proposition adopted after the collapse of BHS.

## Workers' union and campaign group fight Derby Rolls-Royce job cuts

**Ian Hunter, Derby Socialist Party**

Rolls-Royce announced the figures for proposed redundancies at 11 sites in the aerospace division on 3 June. 3,000 redundancies are planned across the UK sites with 1,500 of them in Derby. There is a strong possibility of more redundancies to follow. Applications for voluntary redundancy will be open to all, with the first workers expected to leave in mid-July.

The recently-launched 'Derby supports Rolls-Royce workers' campaign group, in which Socialist Party members are active, organised a socially-distant protest outside Derby Council House on 5 June. The protest received general public

support and local media coverage. However, while slogans and chants of 'Save Derby jobs' are important, a strongly-focused continued campaign to present alternatives, such as an alternative production plan and nationalisation, is essential, in addition to efforts and actions to mobilise the community to oppose Rolls-Royce's plans.

On 9 June Derby Socialist Party branch will host a public meeting via Zoom on the Rolls-Royce issue, with a shop steward from the plant among the speakers. The struggle to preserve employment for these workers via an alternative plan must continue.

■ Full article at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)



## Homerton Hospital - withdraw private contract

Homerton Hospital in north London has awarded its contract for cleaning, catering, portering and security back to private contractor ISS for another five years! Workers at Homerton have been fighting ISS during the pandemic for proper sick pay and better pay. Workers compelled ISS to pay workers their usual pay if forced to self-isolate, but about half of current ISS staff don't get proper sick pay during normal periods.

A trade union petition signed by thousands of Homerton Hospital staff, patients, and members of the public, also called for ISS workers to be given full NHS rates of pay, and the conditions that go along with it,

like real occupational sick pay and better annual leave.

There has been no consultation over the contract extension with the workers' or their union Unison.

Unison is calling for the immediate withdrawal of the contract, and for a consultation to begin about provision of services currently provided by ISS. The Socialist Party says all these services should be brought back in-house with workers on trade union agreed pay and conditions.

Get all the latest union news...  
**nationalshop**  
**stewardsnetwork**  
NSSN bulletin: [shopstewards.net](http://shopstewards.net)





photo Isai Priya

# As a health worker, I had to march against racism

**Maggie Fricker**  
Southampton Socialist Party

**L**ike all health workers, coronavirus has dominated my life. We've been concerned to see people returning to crowded workplaces, beaches and beauty spots.

But we've also felt the anger over the murder of George Floyd. I had to attend the Black Lives Matter rally in Southampton.

My 'daily walk' was joined by hundreds of young people - not of my household but of my class. Although most of us wore masks, social distancing became impossible.

Discussing with some of my colleagues, feelings were very mixed. The importance of following the rules to save lives was uppermost, "unless you're rich or a friend of

Boris Johnson", one commented.

People told stories of being stopped by the police on the way home from the hospital, when white colleagues were left unmolested.

People have lost faith in the government rules, and more are beginning to see the rottenness of the whole capitalism system. People aren't just dying from Covid-19.

The fightback on the streets has started and people's anger is spilling over. We must be there to listen, to discuss and to give a way forward - to fight for socialist ideas against this system.

We need to find ways of doing this safely, with social distancing, and face coverings. But small campaign stalls and leaflets are essential during this period. Opposition to the brutality of capitalism and government failure must be organised openly.

## Domestic violence murder

Another woman's life lost to domestic violence in Doncaster.

As a member of the Women's Lives Matter campaign, I hold the right-wing Labour council, and our rotten Tory government, personally accountable for this woman's murder - for crushing our protests and

taking away our only specialist domestic violence service.

**Women's Lives Matter and Socialist Party member**

■ Socially distanced protest vigil, Doncaster, Saturday 13 June, 3pm, location to be confirmed

## SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party  
June issue special:

**Lessons from the Corbyn experience - the fight for working class political representation 2015 to 2020**

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# Readers' opinion: Mass anti-racist protests - things will never be the same

## ■ Police violence is start of outrage

A Black Lives Matter spokeswoman said the protests were not just about police violence, although the police violence is an outrage. She said there was the feeling that there was no way out, for a whole generation, from never-ending poverty, discrimination and police violence.

She said the lack of infrastructure in black communities is being compounded by discriminatory and racist policing. She said it was about the lack of jobs, good jobs. The terrible state of education and poor healthcare has disproportionately killed black workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This movement could be the spark for a youth movement against capitalism. Boy, do we need it.

**Nancy Taafe**  
Waltham Forest, London

## ■ Statue toppling: Imperialism has gone unpunished

So some young people threw a statue of a slave owner in the River Avon. Tory and sadly Labour hypocrisy knows no bounds.

Centuries of desecration and destruction of monuments around the world by British imperialism has gone unpunished. Theft and looting of shrines, sacred places and monuments by individual wealthy expeditioners are lauded in museums.

Vandalism by breaking off noses, penises, hands, etc of cultural artefacts produced by non-British cultures is embedded in British imperialism's history.

Before any single person is interviewed for the Bristol drowning, let's bring in the hired thugs - or their inheritors - of British capitalism for their turn in the dock.

They didn't just steal heritage, they stole our wealth too.

**Hugo Pierre**  
Unison union black members' seat (personal capacity)

## ■ Racism and class inequality

When socialists talk about racism as a class issue, we don't mean it's only working-class black people who suffer, or that we need more black representatives in our ruling class.

The basis for which racism exists is to prop up a class-based system, where a tiny minority control the world's wealth while the vast majority suffer.

Inequality began at the dawn of class society. But racism towards specifically black people was a founding principle of our current class society, capitalism.

Built on the backs of slavery, capitalism needs to divide the working class in order to maintain control. Divide and rule.

Pit ordinary people against each other to keep them from uniting and

struggling for a better life. Divide and rule are the twin pillars our current global capitalist society stands on.

Yes we fight for more representation, but alone more representation under capitalism is a dead end. There can be no kind of capitalism, reformed or not, in which racism does not exist.

As a human being I want racism to end. As a socialist, I understand this can only come through a complete overhaul of our current system, by uniting the majority of ordinary people to take power off the hands of the current ruling minority.

Of course, battles would still need to be had under socialism. But it is only on the basis of a society that does not depend on the crushing of the many to sustain an elite few, that racism and all its horrors can be smashed.

I am protesting against police brutality. I will continue to fight as a socialist and a member of the Socialist Party to end racism.

**Amy Cousens**  
Bradford

## ■ Statue toppling: Others deserve it

"If we start pulling down statues of 'bad' historical figures, where do we stop?" ask incredulous right-wing commentators. Actually I can see their problem.

Slavery was part and parcel of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Where would statue toppling stop, indeed?

Queen Victoria's statues are all over the place. She oversaw the British Empire and its many, many crimes.

While on her throne, one million people starved to death in Ireland and another million were forced to emigrate, many dying in the 'coffin ships' to America, to satisfy laissez-faire capitalism.

That's just one million reasons for her statues to come down, along with all the other offensive bloodstained representatives of this system. Best place for them is a 'museum of pre-civilisation' - pre-socialist society, that is.

**Niall Mulholland**  
Newham, London

## ■ Black and white, unite and fight

Al Sharpton says that white people have had their foot on black people's necks for 400 years, and black people need to run corporations, same as white people. I suppose he means black people should have a fair chance to exploit ordinary black and white working-class people, same as white bosses do.

I feel like somebody has had their foot on my neck all my life. I've been smashed down by the capitalist system and it doesn't matter what colour the boss was. Racism is very real, as we have seen in Minneapolis.

In the 1960s, the ruling class realised that they needed to cut across the radicalisation and potentially revolutionary movements in black communities that were reaching out to white and all

workers, threatening their entire system.

We had Barack Obama as president. He talked a good game, but didn't achieve much at all for black or any other ordinary working people.

He was too linked to the demands of capitalism, which helped lead to Trump's victory - who now uses racism whenever it suits him.

What we desperately need is working-class unity, to rise up and smash down capitalism and build a world for everyone to live to their best and full height in life with real democracy - socialism.

**Chris Parry**  
Bristol

## ■ Socialist paper on protests

I picked up a copy of your newspaper, the Socialist, at the Black Lives Matter protest in London on 7 June. I was delighted to read a leftist take on issues caused by the coronavirus, especially following all the liberal media dirge.

**Rebecca**  
London

## ■ Peace v violence

'Violence flares across America' and 'peaceful protests across America' are both true, but you can guess which story the media chose to go with. The police and the National Guard can easily turn a peaceful protest into a 'scene of violence' without any help from protesters. Then the media can report it as such.

**Derek McMillan**  
Worthing

## ■ Blairites tighten control

"Corbyn humiliated" was the headline of a delighted Daily Express. Jeremy Corbyn was one of ten nominees for eight places for the Labour's Party's delegation to the Council of Europe. He didn't get one.

Could there be any clearer confirmation of the analysis in last week's Socialist, (see 'Lessons from the Corbyn experience' and 'Blairite general secretary elected' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)), of the right-wing control of Labour?

Those genuine socialists still in Labour must assess the struggle needed to reverse this situation. Draw out the lessons of why the Socialist Party (formerly Militant) were expelled from Labour, in the past.

Seriously consider the reasoning in the latest issue of Socialism Today (see bottom left).

**Keith Dickinson**  
West London

> Do you have something to say? Send your news, views and criticism in no more than 150 words to [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk) or Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT. We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.



**Ken Douglas** 22 September 1961- 4 June 2020

# A TIRELESS AND DETERMINED FIGHTER FOR SOCIALISM

**Hannah Sell**  
Socialist Party general secretary

**T**he Socialist Party collectively is grieving deeply the loss to cancer of our much-loved national treasurer, Ken Douglas. Since the day he joined us, over 35 years ago, Ken dedicated his life to the struggle for socialism - first in Sheffield then in London.

For the last 19 years he worked full-time for the party, achieving his long-held goal. He was an enormous gain for the party's team of workers, first as an editor of the Socialist, and then - since 2007 - as national treasurer and member of our executive committee.

Ken's ill health developed extremely rapidly. Just two months ago he was speaking at a national meeting of our full-time staff, putting forward plans to make sure our finances could withstand the Covid crisis. We adopted his proposals, and they have been vital to enabling us to be in fighting form now, ready to mobilise for, and intervene in, the mass Black Lives Matter protests sweeping the country.

Even as the disease's grip tightened, Ken remained completely himself. He was discussing world events, finance and dialectics with young Socialist Party members the day before his death.

He played a central political and organisational role in our work in countless ways.

Ken campaigned relentlessly to improve the party's finances, always appreciating the self-sacrifice represented in all donations from



**Ken on the Party's campaign stall at the 2017 Durham Miners Gala** photo Newcastle SP

the biggest to the smallest.

In the recent period, in addition to his normal load, it was Ken who led the campaign to find new premises and raise the funds to buy them when we faced eviction from our previous rented headquarters.

Achieving that ran to the wire and, with many other pressures on the party at the time, Ken's broad shoulders carried the heaviest part of the burden of every aspect of the move.

He was the driving force of eve-

rything - from the major tasks to scrubbing our old offices clean before we handed back the keys. He then took on the possibly even more onerous task of making sure we kept our new offices in decent condition!

Ken was a determined fighter for socialism and was very firm against political attacks on our party. Personally, however, he was a kind, modest, self-effacing man who often worked with the family's small white dog - Harry - asleep under

his desk. As the many moving social-media posts show, he touched the life of countless Socialist Party members and supporters.

At the same time as playing such an important role in the party, Ken was also an endlessly loving and dedicated father to his twins, Nancy and Lily, and was devoted to his wife, Paula Mitchell - secretary of the London Socialist Party. He fell in love with Paula virtually on meeting her, and moved to London in short order to be with her.

He was so proud of all his girls. His desk and surrounding walls always featured numerous pictures of his children. Dedicated as he was to the fight for socialism, when the children were young he often felt it was more important for Paula to be able to participate in events than him, and did all he could to enable that.

On top of all these other wonderful qualities Ken was a fantastic cook. He was known as the Paul Hollywood of the Socialist Party - partly because of a certain resemblance - but mainly because he was a truly brilliant baker.

He was also an enthusiastic camper, and many of us spent hours chatting to him, Paula and the girls at Socialist Party summer camps - for the pleasure of their company of course, but also because Ken was bound to whisk up a meal better than most of us can manage with a fully-equipped kitchen.

If you wanted to raise party funds at a social event, you only had to tell people that Ken would be on the BBQ or whipping up the pizzas to have them queueing out the door.

This obituary can only be a very



**Ken campaigned relentlessly to improve the party's finances, always appreciating the self-sacrifice in all the donations**

inadequate attempt to describe a few of Ken's many attributes and what he meant to us. He has been taken far too young, at only 58, and left a gaping hole, above all for his heartbroken family, but also for the whole of the Socialist Party.

It is difficult now to imagine that there will ever be a time when we are not brought up with a sick jolt because Ken isn't there to do all the things he did - from encouraging comrades to study dialectical and historical materialism; to leading megaphoning on Waltham Forest Socialist Party stalls; to training a new generation of finance organisers; to having a kind word with young comrades facing difficulties.

Ken himself, however, was steadfast to the end, proud that he had helped contribute to building our party, and confident that the current generation of young Socialist Party members, and those that are to come, will be capable of building a mass party that can lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Dedicating ourselves to that task is the best tribute we can pay him.

## Always on the front line of struggle in Sheffield

**Alistair Tice**  
Yorkshire Socialist Party secretary

Ken joined Militant in his early twenties against the backdrop of the 1984 miners' strike and the Liverpool City council struggle against Thatcher.

He built a big anti-poll tax union on his own estate as part of 'Manor against the poll tax' which filled two of the 30 coaches that went from Sheffield to the huge anti-poll tax demo in London in 1990.

With his name still known from the anti-poll tax union, Ken was selected as our first

candidate in the 1994 council election for Park ward.

As our public representative, Ken took two weeks off work, throwing himself into the campaign outside shops, schools, post offices, and knocking on hundreds of doors. A fantastic campaign resulted in 682 votes (20%) and a dozen new members in the area.

On the back of such energetic local campaigning, and he was never out of the Sheffield Star paper, Ken increased his vote in 1995 to 21.5%, beating the Lib-Dems to come second.

As well as housing, we campaigned against

NHS cuts, collecting tens of thousands of signatures on a petition against the closure of the Hallamshire hospital casualty department, which Ken presented to the hospital Union branch secretary. Then we successfully stopped plans for a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) back-door privatisation of the new Jessop women's hospital that was eventually publicly funded.

In the Residents Against Sarp Pollution mass community campaign to close down a toxic waste site in Killamarsh near Sheffield Ken was again in the frontline, this time literally stood in front of tankers full of dangerous chemicals!

Ken's growth as a public representative, and as a leading Socialist Party member in Yorkshire, led him to attend a CWI international school in Belgium in 1999. There he fell in love with Paula, who quickly became his soulmate.

Ken moved down to London to live with, marry, and have two beautiful twin daughters with Paula, and start a new chapter in his revolutionary life, having made such an outstanding impact in Sheffield that we still talk about it today.

■ The full tribute from Alistair can be read at [socialistparty.org.uk](https://socialistparty.org.uk)



# Why we joined the Socialist Party

**Hopes dashed, until I joined Socialist Party**

## I want to fight against the injustice of capitalism

I come from a single-parent household where my mum worked two jobs to scrape by. I was a latchkey kid and I barely saw her.

My family is Northern working-class. I always felt an unnatural malaise when thinking about the situation we were in.

My granddad worked the docks in Hull. He was actively involved in numerous strikes and would tell me his tales.

I remember being fascinated by the idea that workers' discontents can be shared and turned into collective action.

### Political kindling

My political kindling came quite late. It was at college where I met my sociology tutor, Harrison.

He was a young, twenty-something, Marxist. He said some unsavoury things about the Con-Dem coalition.

He made me realise that our future will be bleak if we do not do something about it. He gifted me one of his copies of the Communist Manifesto and recommended me endless reading material.

At Newcastle University I witnessed politics in action. Some women on my course spearheaded an anti-tampon tax campaign. The

black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Society put together numerous workshops and seminars, and even got Akala to do a 'history of black music' lecture in a packed-out hall.

I was astounded that people I knew were impassioned and mobilised a movement, while studying. Seeing and learning about the concerns of others, and how some of these campaigns were mobilised, pushed me to get more active.

I came across the Socialist Party in Newcastle when I attended strikes by university lecturers and train drivers. I did my own reading on Militant (Socialist Party's predecessor), and bought the Socialist whenever I was at the Monument statue in Newcastle on a Saturday.

I had been a Corbyn loyalist. After the 2019 election, I knew that there would be a Blairite renaissance and had no intention of shifting my politics to suit a blue-shaded Labour Party.

I joined the Socialist Party because I want to further my education and understanding of the injustice of capitalism, and to fight against it. I know this is something I cannot do alone.

**Connor McDonnell**  
East London Socialist Party



photo Mary Finch

I had been a Labour Party member on and off since the mid-1980s. I left when Tony Blair scrapped Clause 4, committing Labour to nationalisation, and rejoined under Ed Miliband.

When Jeremy Corbyn was elected I had hope. Unfortunately, my hopes were dashed, and I left the Labour Party two weeks before Keir Starmer's election.

I looked around and decided the Socialist Party was for me. Two reasons: I agree with the aims of the Socialist Party, and I knew excellent comrades already in the Socialist Party from my activity in civil service union PCS.

It is the best thing I could have done. Since joining I have been involved more actively in a few months than in years in the Labour Party.

At last I feel at home surrounded by socialists fighting for the same aims and objectives. I would urge any non-members to seriously consider joining and building a strong Socialist Party for all workers. Solidarity.

**Dave Rees**  
Birmingham North Socialist Party

**Join the fightback**  
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**SOCIALISTS**

[socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)

or call

**020 8988 8777**

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name and

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**07761 818 206**

to find out more

about joining us today



## Donate so we can raise our message against racism and capitalism

We've printed tens of thousands of leaflets explaining our socialist response to the killing of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police. We have been giving them out - alongside selling the Socialist newspaper - since the protests began, along with thousands of placards, which have appeared on the BBC news.

Socialist Party members have received an excellent response on the protests.

We have often been the only socialist voice on these massive protests - and young workers understand that we cannot produce our ideas without resources, without organisation, which cost money. London Socialist Party organiser

Helen Pattison reported from the 3 June demo: "Hundreds of pounds donated. Lots of £10 notes. 40 pages of sign-up sheets filled in."

If you have not done so, please consider donating online to help fund an alternative to capitalism and the racism inherent in it - at [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate).

We can't mention all the support we've received, but Socialist Party member Chris Newby says: "£250 paid into my iZettle to donate and buy the Socialist" - another reminder of how important card readers are for Socialist Party members on these protests.

**Pete Mason**  
Socialist Party finance organiser

### ■ Donate to carry on Mick and Ken's legacy - the fight for socialism

On the opposite page we pay tribute to the life of Socialist Party national treasurer Ken Douglas. And several weeks ago we announced the sad and untimely death of Socialist Party member Mick Cotter (see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)).

Socialist Party members have donated in Mick and Ken's memory, to help carry on the struggle. Four members - from Chesterfield, Bristol, Kent and Mick's home of Hackney - have donated £180.

A member in Coventry has donated £50 in memory of Ken. An east London member donated £500 with the message: "Dedicated to the late, lamented socialist fighters Ken Douglas and Mick Cotter."

### ■ Coronavirus appeal

£31,608.95 raised so far for our coronavirus appeal, out of a £50,000 target.

The Socialist Party is finding a tremendous echo our demands, which place the blame for the outrageous number of deaths from this virus squarely on the

government and the capitalist system.

A donation of £50 from Wales through to our website came with the message: "It would be a crime not to give at this present time." From Buckinghamshire someone donating £50 said "With respect to you all."



### Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	April-September 2020					Deadline: 30 September 2020				
North West	3,265	2,300										142%
South West	5,057	3,600										140%
Eastern	2,887	2,400										120%
Northern	1,788	1,500										119%
East Midlands	3,950	3,700										107%
Wales	4,030	4,600										88%
Yorkshire	3,854	5,100										76%
London	6,556	9,200										71%
Southern & SE	3,130	4,700										67%
West Midlands	3,374	5,200										65%
Other	2,032	7,700										26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39,923</b>	<b>50,000</b>										<b>80%</b>

### Help fund the fightback

**DONATE TODAY**

Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate) or call **020 8988 8777**

or make cheques payable to Socialist Party,

PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD





Lessons from history

# ROOSEVELT’S NEW DEAL PROGRAMME – REFORMS TO SAVE CAPITALISM

in the seventh article in our series on ‘war, global crisis and working-class struggle’, Socialist Party member **Roger Thomas** explains that today’s talk by establishment commentators of governments introducing a modern-day version of the 1930s New Deal stimulus package to save capitalism, ignores the fundamental problem that US president Roosevelt’s measures did not overcome the inherent contradictions of the capitalist profit system.

The present coronavirus crisis is tipping the USA into an economic depression which threatens the worst economic deprivation for Americans since the 1930s. The crisis has provoked comparisons to the situation then, but also revived the idea of a government ‘New Deal’ to rescue capitalism from the ravages of a severe recession.

The Great Depression saw a catastrophic collapse in economic activity. US GNP (total wealth) fell from \$104.4 billion in 1929 to \$94.4 billion in 1930 - a less dramatic fall than the earlier depression of 1921-22 but, on this occasion, there was no recovery.

The US economy shrank by around a third, and manufacturing industry by a staggering 50%. Corporate profits declined to negative values, and 40% of banks failed (9,490 out of 23,697). There was no insurance on bank deposits so closure meant the loss of the meagre savings of those impacted, especially in rural areas, where large numbers of small farms went out of business.

The effects on the working class were even more staggering. The level of unemployment rose from 3.2% in 1929 to 24.9% in 1933. This was likely to be an underestimate, as the cities were especially hard hit, with 700,000 unemployed in Chicago, for example - an incredible 40% of the total workforce.

In 1931, US Steel led the way by cutting its workers pay by 10%. Many other companies, such as General Motors, followed suit, reducing pay by 20% or more. The pay of women workers was cut even more steeply.

In early 1933 a skilled garment operator was netting just 58 cents for a nine-hour day!

Others were just laid off or placed on short time. With no unemployment relief, unemployment swiftly resulted in the rise in homelessness and the development of shanty towns (‘Hoovervilles’ - named after the president at the time, Herbert Hoover) in the major conurbations as people struggled to rely on

charity for food relief.

In 1930, across the country, 150,000 homes were repossessed. By 1932 this rose to 250,000, and by 1933 more than 1,000 homes were being repossessed every day. The level of homelessness stood at 2 million by 1933. Edmund Wilson - a chronicler of the era - commenting on Chicago, reported: “There is not a garbage dump in Chicago that is not visited by the hungry; 100 people were coming a day to search for food.”

Hoover’s presidency was associated with a lack of concern for the economic victims at the bottom of society. It was considered that financial assistance would sap the ‘moral fibre’ of the working class, while no such stigma was associated with assistance to big business.

Andrew Mellon, the treasury secretary, cynically advised Hoover to “liquidate labour, liquidate stocks, liquidate the farmers, liquidate real estate... it will purge the rottenness out of the system.”

## Intervention

However, as time went on action became necessary. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) was formed, which played a huge part throughout the next decade in dispersing millions of dollars in loans to business and finance. But a human pressure cooker was building up from underneath, which reflected itself in Hoover’s defeat in the 1932 presidential election.

The New Deal is primarily associated with the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who won for the Democrats in 1932. Born into the American ruling class, he went to Groton, the most exclusive private school, and then on to Harvard and Columbia Law School.

In the 1920s, he accepted the established capitalist economic orthodoxy. He opposed banking reform when governor of New York State, and in 1930 opposed Hoover from the right, accusing him of being too ‘interventionist’, for departing from capitalist ‘laissez faire’.

What changed him was the collapse of his old world in 1929 with



US president Franklin Roosevelt signs an act creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, a federally owned public works corporation

the Wall Street stock market crash; if it took radical policies to save US capitalism then he was prepared to do it.

Roosevelt entered office with huge political capital as people were desperate for a change of direction. His first 100 days saw a flurry of new policy initiatives directly intervening into the economy. He employed the idea of an emergency budget to finance programmes to move the economy forward, and banking reform to enforce greater regulation to prevent banking collapse.

The dollar was freed from the gold standard (the dollar had been pegged to a fixed amount of gold) and the export of gold was forbidden, except under government licence from the Treasury.

The Securities Act brought securities traded on the stock markets under control, and curbs were placed on Wall Street. Prior to this, companies were not obliged to provide information, and often published misleading and incorrect detail of

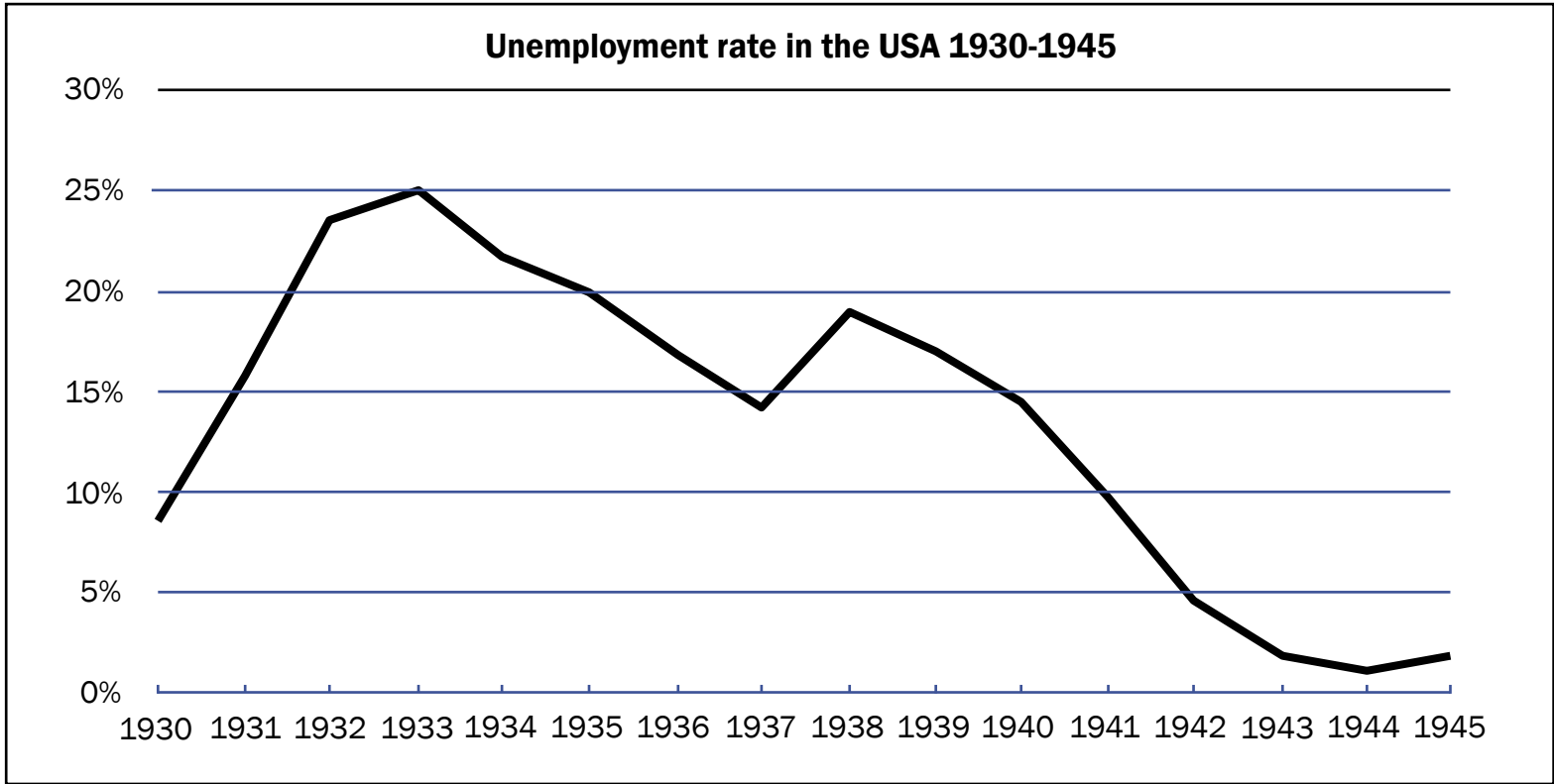
balance sheets, profit and losses, and so forth.

Alongside greater regulation came the Public Works Administration (PWA), which provided funds for a major programme of public works, for things like government buildings, airports, hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, dams, and even projects and construction for the military. In its first year, 1933, 34,599 projects were approved costing \$3.3 billion.

Similar schemes dealt with reforestation and the reclaiming of land lost through flood and soil erosion. The Tennessee Valley Authority (also involving electricity generation) was just one of the large projects.

The Federal Emergency Relief Agency provided money state by state for relief operations, and its Civil Works Administration gave money for relief projects to reduce unemployment.

In industry, the National Industrial Recovery Act established the



The economy plunged back into recession in 1937, following federal government budget cuts and an attempt to balance the books. The economic contraction was greater than 1929

National Recovery Administration (NRA), which was to set agreements within different industrial sectors to reduce overproduction, and stabilise the markets by encouraging set prices and wage agreements.

Big business was content, as it set minimum wages and allowed employers to circumvent the unions by encouraging the development of company unions.

The head of the NRA, General Hugh Johnson, saw the organisation as bringing business and government together to pull the country out of depression, and the unions just didn’t figure in his endeavours.

The effect of the direct intervention into the economy was seen in a stabilisation of the economic position of the working class. Many were now back in work, and were anxious to share in this improving economic situation, and see some improvement in wages and conditions.

## Workers’ struggles

A number of unsuccessful union drives developed, but in 1934 three disputes blew open the situation in the workplace, and showed a growing confidence among workers to stand up to the bosses’ repression and the ‘open shop’ (ie non-union) regime.

The disputes at Toledo Auto-Lite, led by the centrist (vacillating between reformism and revolution) American Workers Party, the Minneapolis Teamsters general strike, led by Trotskyists, and the San Francisco Longshoremen, led by the Communist Party, showed the way.

A split had developed in the American trade union movement (the American Federation of Labour - AFL) between a bureaucracy of conservative officials and an emerging layer of militant workers who wanted to increase the power of the trade union movement. The latter came to be represented by the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). The AFL leadership suspended the unions belonging to the CIO and in 1938 the CIO broke away, founding the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The AFL tended to comply with the strictures of the NRA, which meant compromises and, more often than not, defeat. The CIO, on the other hand, wanted to unleash the movement’s potential.

It also had a consequence. Roosevelt’s popularity was waning, and his opportunity of a second term was in jeopardy. US capitalism was failing to deal with the aspirations and frustrations of thousands of workers.

The result was the Wagner Act, which removed company unions and brought in protections for young workers (agricultural workers and government employees were excluded). However, union ‘closed shops’ (ie employees must be union members) and ‘agency shops’ (non-union members must pay union fees if covered by a collective bargaining agreement) were later banned by the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act.

The Wagner Act gave private sector unions the right to organise, which was swiftly taken up. For example, the United Auto Workers union (part of the CIO), grew to 88,000 in February 1937. By March it had risen to 166,000, over 250,000 in April and 400,000 by October. This was achieved on the back of sit-down strikes (factory occupations) which surged as unions made to press home their advantage.

The economy plunged back into recession in 1937, following federal government budget cuts and an attempt to balance the books. The economic contraction was greater than 1929, with unemployment rising again and peaking at 10 million.

Production and profits declined and full employment only returned in 1941, with the USA’s entry into World War Two. The economic disaster forced Roosevelt and Congress to reinstate government spending programmes.

Federal expenditure increased sharply. In 1929 it accounted for 3% of GNP, but by 1939 it had tripled. In his pamphlet ‘Marxism in our Time’, Russian revolutionary socialist Leon Trotsky commented: “The



The treasury secretary, advised Hoover to “liquidate labour, liquidate stocks, liquidate the farmers, liquidate real estate ... it will purge the rottenness out of the system.”

New Deal itself was possible only because of the tremendous wealth accumulated by past generations. Only a very rich nation could indulge itself in so extravagant a policy. But even such a nation cannot indefinitely go on living at the expense of past generations.”

Indeed, the New Deal could not overcome the basics laws of the capitalist economy. The capitalist “does not produce for the sake of production but for profit”, said Trotsky. New Deal interventions could only manage the crisis and not resolve it.

## Junk bonds

In the US today the Federal Reserve (central bank) has intervened to save companies threatened with going to the wall. It has bought up corporate debt on an unimaginable scale, including the purchase of high risk ‘junk bonds’. US companies have issued \$560 billion worth of bonds in recent weeks.

This explosion of deficit financing means the country’s accumulated debt currently stands at 110% of US GDP (total output). While capitalism can continue with this situation for a period to manage the crisis, at some time it will be compelled to present the bill to the working class. This will trigger enormous class battles potentially on a scale like those of the 1930s.

What changed the situation for American capital then was the fear that their own social system was in jeopardy, and individual capitalist self-interest was not going to save the economy.

On the contrary, it threatened the profit system with mass working-class movements and social revolution. Therefore, for the more far-sighted capitalists, the price of enormous state intervention was worth the costs.

Similar thoughts are moving sections of the capitalists today. But just as in the US in the 1930s, Covid ‘new deals’ today will not solve capitalism’s underlying problems. Only a socialist planned economy can offer a way forward for the working class.

## BAME coronavirus deaths - an indictment of capitalist inequality

Public Health England has recently published its long-awaited report into why death rates from Covid-19 are highest among BAME people. This grim statistic has also formed part of the backdrop to the mass Black Lives Matter protests in the UK.

According to the report: “The largest disparity found was by age. Among people already diagnosed with Covid-19, people who were 80 or older were seventy times more likely to die than those under 40. Risk of dying among those diagnosed with Covid-19 was also higher in males than females; higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least deprived; and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups.”

As Jim Hensman’s recent article in the Socialist (Black and Asian Covid-19 deaths: An indictment of capitalist inequality) explained, this latter disparity is not due to genetic factors making BAME people more susceptible to coronavirus. The main factor is social inequality.

For instance, overcrowded accommodation is a key risk factor. According to a 2018 government survey, 2% of white British households experienced overcrowding compared to 15% of black African, 16% of Pakistani and 30% of Bangladeshi households.

Moreover, black and Asian people are disproportionately represented in low income jobs such as care home workers, transport, food processing, retail, security work, and such like, which are more exposed to coronavirus than professional and managerial jobs.

This is also the case in the NHS workforce where 21% of staff are BAME, and more BAME staff are employed in frontline roles. According to The King’s Fund: “Minority ethnic-group staff are systematically over-represented at lower levels of NHS grade hierarchy, and under-represented in senior pay bands.”

A higher proportion of BAME people are working class, and it is class inequalities which drives up coronavirus deaths.

It’s clear from an examination of the statistics that racism interacts with class inequality. Both are inherent in the capitalist system, which needs to be ended and replaced with a socialist society that can lay the basis for eliminating all inequalities.



# TORIES BACKTRACK IN ENGLAND STAND FIRM FOR SCHOOL SAFETY



**Martin Powell Davies**  
NEU member and Socialist Party  
national committee

**T**he stand taken by staff and parents has helped make sure most primary schools in England have failed to open as widely as the Tories had intended. And now the government has been forced to backtrack on plans for all primary pupils to return to school before the end of summer.

Under pressure, the government has had to accept that there is no way to cram even more primary children into the same school building without increasing group sizes. Even the Tories knew they couldn't get away with that!

Survey results from the National

Education Union (NEU) estimate that 44% of schools did not open further at all on 1 June, with the north west having the lowest rate at only 8%. About a fifth (21%) opened to some more year groups but less than the four asked for by the government – nursery, reception, year one and year six. However, about a third (35%) did.

And according to the Department for Education, only one in four eligible pupils returned.

The National Education Union's insistence that schools cannot open safely unless their 'five tests' are met has been central to forcing the Tories back. And those tests are still far from met.

The 'R' rate seems to be rising and calculated to be above the critical 1.0 figure already in the north west and south west.

Test results often still take days to be returned – seriously undermining tracing and isolation procedures that rely on speedy intervention before more people are infected.

The contact tracing arrangements themselves are still far from working reliably – and might not be until September.

If a positive result is reported by a child, parent or staff member, then there must be testing and closure of the whole school and reopening only when unions and parents consider it safe.

■ continued  
on page 6

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