Sheila Caffrey
Teacher and Socialist Party member

Schools and colleges have returned with bulging classrooms and packed corridors.

The establishment media’s repeated photos over the summer - of three children sat spaced out on a carpet, or just two children in a computer suite - have been exposed as lies. Classrooms of over 30 and corridors of 100 students, just separated with yellow tape, are the reality.

School workers are calling for a mix of measures to help prevent further cases - and a second wave, which many have predicted with the return of schools.

In June, ‘bubbles’ - group sizes the government suggests are safe for mixing in - were capped at 15. Many schools had much lower numbers than that. However, the government has now lifted this. My primary classroom has 32 children in, and is joined with another the same size! With lunchtime staff, cleaners and education support, we will have 14 members of staff who will be regularly in the classroom through the week. If one person tests positive, this could spread through the 78 people like wildfire.

In secondary schools and colleges, bubbles are containing whole year groups, which could be 200 young people, as well as the members of staff. This far exceeds the 30 we’re told are safe to attend a wedding!

Social distancing in schools is a myth - and the government is still trying to portray it. Most children sit two to a desk, with desks in rows. To fit 30-plus in a classroom, there is space for narrow walkways, but certainly not one to two metres.

Contagion
Any sign of a cough or sniffle will be passed like a Mexican wave from one end to another before the child can even leave the classroom. This will only be exacerbated in winter months with the lack of ventilation in classrooms. Many only have tiny windows, and some are entirely sealed in.

Face coverings became a focus in August as the rise in cases in Scottish schools was becoming alarming. Several schools had already closed their doors after confirmed outbreaks.

The World Health Organisation says face coverings are essential. Scientists and health workers have been recommending them for some time.

But the incompetence and callousness of the government has again been shown. Rather than listening to the advice and evidence, the Tories put it on headteachers a week before return, trying to aim the backlash at schools rather than the government.

Education staff have been calling for testing in schools, with quick identification and then isolation of bubbles, to prevent a second wave. Weekly tests for all staff would help find cases before symptoms show. The same should be available for children and families who can’t access other testing facilities.

The government has provided tests to schools - but only a handful. This is not investing in safety! It is another attempt to create the illusion that they care. All they really care about is the profit demands of big business and getting the capitalist economy moving again.

Like everyone else, education staff can’t wait for things to get back to normal. But these insufficient measures and the risk of infection put us further away from getting back to normal.

Continued on p3
Just another brick in the wall

Dom Brown Covid-19, poorer communities and the lack of adequate food aid are the issues that formed the basis of my application for higher education. I’m in year 12 and currently living with my grandmother, who is a single mother. We have a lot of financial issues, and it’s hard not to feel like we’ll never be able to afford a proper education.

Rashford’s right on free meals

If you missed Marcus Rashford’s fundraising video, you’re in for a treat. The video shows how the footballer used his public platform to highlight the issue of child poverty and the lack of free meals for children in the UK. It’s a powerful reminder of the inequality that exists in our society.

Farlough furloughed

Job retention schemes were introduced to protect workers from losing their jobs, and furloughed employees were paid 80% of their wages. However, many people have been left out of this scheme, and it’s time to take action to ensure that everyone gets the support they need.

Tory tax dilemma

Tory tax policies have been criticized for prioritizing tax cuts for the rich over social programs for the working class. The government’s decision to delay the introduction of a 1% national insurance tax hike has raised questions about their priorities.

Event ban extension not enough: make it longer, forgive the arrears!

The Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) has called for a extension to the ban on evictions, which is set to end on 22 August. SHAC is calling for a six-month extension to the ban, which would provide much-needed support for tenants facing financial hardship.

Outsiders in lockdown: the plight of private renters

As lockdown restrictions are lifted, private renters are facing a difficult situation. Many are struggling to pay rent, and the government has been criticized for not doing enough to support them.

UISPA launches anti-eviction campaign

The Un-Housed Strategies for International Solidarity Against Property Arrears (UISPA) has launched a campaign to protect tenants from eviction. They are calling for a moratorium on evictions, and for the government to provide support for tenants in arrears.

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Disabled during Covid: “It’s as if we don’t exist”

By Chris Bullivant, Associate Editor at the Socialist

Disability rights organisations are getting a lot of attention these days. From disability activists to disabled professionals, everyone is talking about how disabled people are being overlooked and how they have been excluded from decision-making processes. But there is one group of disabled people who are being unfairly treated: disabled people of colour.

Disabled people of colour face multiple forms of discrimination and prejudice. They are often stigmatised as “not really disabled” and are not given the same rights and opportunities as other disabled people. This can lead to a sense of isolation and powerlessness.

Disabled people of colour also face systemic racism and ableism. They are often subjected to acts of violence and discrimination. This can lead to a sense of fear and anxiety.

Disabled people of colour are also more likely to be unemployed and underemployed. This can lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Disabled people of colour are also more likely to be housed in institutions. This can lead to a sense of captivity and loss of autonomy.

Disabled people of colour are also more likely to be subjected to ableist stereotypes. This can lead to a sense of invisibility and dehumanisation.

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Don’t blame asylum seekers for Tory cuts
Fight against capitalist austerity

ERIC SEGAL KENT SOCIALIST PARTY
AND DAVE CARR

The plight of refugees fleeing war, oppression, and poverty, was grimly highlighted by the recent tragedy of a Sudanese migrant, who died attempting to cross the English Channel in a flimsy dinghy.

Tory Home Secretary Priti Patel sided with any responsibility for this unnecessary death by blaming “abhorrent criminal gangs” – even though in this case the migrant, and his friend, acted alone.

But criminals can cash in on migrants’ plight simply because migrants cannot apply for asylum in Britain without being physically present. Without a legal route, illegal and dangerous crossings of the Channel or the Mediterranean Sea by migrants inevitably mean more deaths.

The French authorities must also shoulder blame since migrants’ camps around Calais - to quote a French parliamentary report – are driving migrants into the sea. Macron’s government, like his predecessors, does not want asylum seekers and has evicted them from camps and refused them state support.

Of course, obtaining residency and citizenship in Britain and other European countries is a different question if you’re super-rich. A sizeable investment in a company or property will qualify for a ‘Golden Visa’; no questions asked.

Demонised

Hypocritically, right-wing politicians—having crippled vital public services through tax concessions and quantitative easing, etc—demonise migrants by saying our crumbling welfare services will be overwhelmed by refugees.

Yet this Tory government immediately found an enormous ‘money tree’ to prop up British capitalism during the current coronavirus crisis – with no mention of ‘how are we going to pay for it?”

Unfortunately, in the absence of a fighting alternative to austerity cuts, the ‘we can’t afford them’ argument can resonate with some working-class people who can’t get proper housing or access to inadequate public services.

The Tory leader of Kent County Council, councillor Roger Gough, stroked resentment of unaccompanied asylum seeker children by saying, ‘increased numbers arriving, particularly during lockdown... has ultimately put an inevitable strain on Kent’s finite social care resources... putting the council at risk of not being able to provide their duty of care to these children.”

Central government spending cuts – passed on to the public without a fightback by councils – have created huge pressures on local services such as housing and education. Without a fight to stop the cuts and fully fund services, it is easy for right-wing politicians to scapegoat refugees.

It is therefore essential that support for refugees is linked to the fight against austerity - for homes, jobs and services for all.

The Socialist Party campaigns for a mass council house building programme, for rent controls, for a £12 an hour minimum wage, for an end to the cuts and privatisation of public services, and more besides (see page 3).

The key to such a fightback is the mobilisation of the seven million-strong trade union movement that potentially can unite the working class around such a programme. The wealth exists to provide help for refugees. However, it should not come from those already suffering from austerity but from the enormous riches of the super-rich capitalists – both in Britain and internationally.

Globally, the capitalist profit system creates huge inequalities of wealth and health provision, inflicts mass unemployment and poverty on billions of people, destroys the environment, and creates and sustains devastating wars.

The only way to permanently end the refugee crisis is to fight for a democratic socialist world to end the wars, poverty and persecution that force people to flee, and create a world in which people can move, live and work in decency and with dignity.

Anti-racism demo and rally Saturday 5 September, Assemble 11am, Market Square, Dover

Nottingham: Socialists and anti-racists oppose right-wing march

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Around 300 trade unionists, socialists, anti-racists and anti-fascists mobilised for the local trade union council’s counter-protest to oppose a right-wing march into Nottingham city centre on 22 August.

Organised under the main slogan of ‘Justice for all’, and led by an organiser apparently with links to the so-called ‘Democratic Football Lads Alliance’, publicity for the march and a motorbike ride raised veteran mental health and child wellbeing.

But it was actually a cover for various groups, including anti-migrant propaganda with a video comparing the homelessness of veterans (which is shameful) with the myth of ‘immigrants’ being put up in five-star hotels.

The composition of the event was a ‘mixed bag’, with a number of far-right supporters from around the country, ‘God Loves Donald Trump’ supporters, those who want better veteran support, and antisemitic conspiracy theorists QAnon.

The event attracted 500 marchers and a rumoured 250-300 bikers who rode around the city.

However, by the time the walking march arrived at the police-designated spot, its numbers had reduced to around 250-300. It seems that some of the marchers were uncomfortable with the people on the event, and presumably the shouting of passers-by.

The organisers had claimed that they were going “to take over Nottingham”, which did not happen as the square was held by the trade union council protest, and attempts by small groups of the far right to confront the counter-protest were seen off.

The police had allowed the event to take place, and they let right-wing infiltrators take photographs of the anti-racism protesters, saying there was nothing they could do.

Trade union council stewards were blocking their cameras and getting counter-protesters to make their views known, forcing them to leave.

Although not before photographs were taken.

The march eventually made its way back to the BBC building in Nottingham’s outskirts and held its rally there instead.

Role of unions

The Socialist Party was well represented on the counter-protest and we leafleted in the weeks beforehand, contacting trade unionists personally to build on the trade union council’s own mailing.

However, the only two trade union branch banners were brought by Socialist Party members. There is a serious need for more trade unions to take up the struggle against racism and the threat of the far right directly, fighting for workers’ unity and for full funding of services for all.

There is a pressing need to put forward real demands, such as ‘jobs and homes not racism’ and opposition to all cuts, which are our trade union council policies. This can undercut any support the divisive far right may gather. Some counter-demonstrators were just shouting “Nazi scum off our streets”, which is an inadequate response.

The Socialist Party and many trade unionists have consistently opposed cuts to services such as in child services and mental health. The far right have no record of doing that and need to be exposed.
Striking Tate workers in the PCS union trumpeted “Coronavirus - no reason to fire us!” as it was claimed that she hadn’t phoned in before her shifts to inform of her absence. However, as she tried to point out, she phoned on two separate occasions when she did not get an answer. When her condition worsened and she struggled to breathe, no allowance was made for her inability to phone in.

Even with her extreme illness, she tried to keep in touch with her bosses to ensure that the business was kept informed of her condition and her inability to return to work. B&Q then invited ‘Jane’ to a stage one meeting while still being signed off sick with a doctor’s note. This was escalated to a stage two disciplinary when she didn’t attend, even though she was too sick to attend.

Initially, ‘Jane’ wasn’t sure how to proceed as B&Q does not allow an employee the right to appeal a disciplinary decision unless they have been employed for 18 months. This goes completely against the accepted code of practice outlined by conciliation service Acas. However, as an employee can’t take a company to an employment tribunal, even if it is subject to the two years of continuous service, current employment law is stacked completely in the bosses’ favour.

‘Jane’ got in touch with Socialist Party members in Usdaw who helped her draft a letter of appeal. In it she outlined that B&Q had not acted in a fair manner by not giving consideration to the fact that ‘Jane’ could not call in because of the restrictions of coronavirus. She also challenged B&Q for acting unfairly in escalating the issue by holding it against ‘Jane’ for not attending a meeting while she was still signed off as ill. Despite B&Q’s own no appeals policy, it invited ‘Jane’ to an appeal meeting, showing that its unfair policy can be overturned when put under pressure.

‘Jane’ and a Socialist Party member in Usdaw then participated in the appeal meeting, in which they challenged B&Q for not following its own policies. They also disputed going through with a disciplinary action on an employee ill with Covid-19, which exacerbated her condition with unnecessary stress during her illness.

The result of the appeal was that ‘Jane’ was reinstated with pay backdated to her initial dismissal. This is not only a victory for ‘Jane’; it shows that B&Q, indeed any company, can bend the knee when shown an organised resistance. It is a victory like this that shows the vital role that trade unions can play in defending workers’ rights, and thus the need for workers to join and organise with a trade union.

As bosses look to cut back on staff, using coronavirus as a cover, the workers’ movement must coordinate challenge and action and challenge bosses to protect jobs, and ensure that workers do not pay for the coronavirus crisis.

Glasgow IKEA worker, trade union rep and Usdaw executive committee member Richie Venton has been sacked for opposing the company’s sick pay policy of removing wages from those forced to self-isolate with Covid-19, putting them on the measly £8.95 a week statutory sick pay instead.

Richie demanded full pay, and informed members of the new policy before management did. IKEA are also attempting to bring in lower absence thresholds.

This should include protests outside IKEA stores, and, if necessary, strike action. Already, a meeting of Glasgow IKEA workers has voted unanimously to be balloted for strike action. This should be authorised by the Usdaw executive committee.

As bosses look to cut back on staff, using coronavirus as a cover, the workers’ movement must coordinate action and challenge bosses to protect jobs, and ensure that workers do not pay for the coronavirus crisis.
****

The text is a political commentary on the UK's welfare system and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It discusses the impact of Universal Credit, the government's response to rising poverty, and the role of unions in advocating for workers' rights. The commentary highlights the demands of workers, the capitalist class's resistance, and the need for a democratic workers' control of workplaces.

**Key points**

- The author critiques the government's response to the pandemic, highlighting the lack of support for vulnerable groups.
- They argue that the capitalist class is resistant to change and that the future offered by capitalism will be characterized by unemployment and low wages.
- The commentary calls for a democratic control of workplaces, with a focus on ensuring a decent living wage of at least £12 per hour.
- The author calls for a mass popular movement to plant a democratic workers' state in the UK, where workers can control workplaces and the state.

**Conclusion**

The commentary concludes by emphasizing the need for a democratic control of workplaces and a mass popular movement to transform the UK into a socialist state.
How we built the Socialist Party in Staines

My name is and I joined the Socialist Party because it seemed to be the only logical way to change the world. This is why I'm a socialist, even just lining the pockets of the government. I've always been a socialist, and now I want to be a happy member of the party. I joined the Socialist Party to be part of an organisation where those involved openly share their ideas, and believe that we can live and work in a better way for everyone.

Before any of our new members start writing their first party letter, we should empower us to find a new way of life. This is why I'm a socialist, even just lining the pockets of the government. I've always been a socialist, and now I want to be a happy member of the party. I joined the Socialist Party to be part of an organisation where those involved openly share their ideas, and believe that we can live and work in a better way for everyone.

The only antidote is socialism

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No to polluting incinerator, dumped in working class Edmonton

Liverpool: NHS privatisation and core closure

Our local NHS campaign stall has even more protection for a pay rise. Let’s turn our incinerator into something else.

Scrap hospital parking charges

No more private parking. The Liverpool Socialist Party invites all NHS workers to attend the stall and discuss how they can fight for their rights.

Black Lives Matter: Fighting injustice, fighting for our rights

Ford U-turn: Tories could cave on NHS pay

Our 30 August campaign stall for a NHS and care workers was busy. People agreed that this was a good start to pick up the fight for NHS and care workers who are on the front line and are under threat. Our slogan was: “No U-turns. No govt cuts.”

Caroline Jones, Youth Officer

Black Dragons: more jobs and better pay for NHS

Our local Black Dragons campaign stall is doing a fantastic job in the run-up to the NHS 73rd anniversary. We can’t wait to see the pickets outside hospitals in the morning. It’s a great day for the NHS in all our localities.

Celbridge: new NHS hospital will mean more jobs and higher wage for NHS workers

Our local NHS campaign stall in Celbridge is doing a fantastic job in the run-up to the NHS 73rd anniversary. We can’t wait to see the pickets outside hospitals in the morning. It’s a great day for the NHS in all our localities.

Liverpool: NHS privatisation and core closure

On our campaign stall, people stopped to talk about a pay increase for the NHS staff, and outlined grievances about the closure of Liverpool care system. We need to stand together against the closure of our hospitals and core services and demand a pay rise for all.

Trotscy online rally - watched across the world

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TV: ONCE UPON A TIME IN IRAQ

No one could watch this five-part documentary series about the Iraq war and come away with the feeling that the war was anything but a catastrophe for the people of Iraq, the Middle East and humanity as a whole.

The film is composed of a series of direct-to-camera interviews with Iraqi civilians, US soldiers and members of the western press corps - interwoven with footage of the incidents that are documented and clips of news coverage from the belligerents’ news outlets.

Towards the end of episode five you will hear Tony Blair pontificating that “removing Saddam will be a blessing to the Iraqi people.” Everything you will have seen and heard up to that point will have confirmed that this is a wicked deception.

The most affecting, and valuable, part of the programmes are the interviews and footage in which Iraqis are given the chance to recount their experience of their country’s descent through the circles of hell. We meet people like chain-smoking, wise-cracking Walid, Metallica fan and heavy metal singer turned translator, who eventually fled to Canada, having become a target thanks to his work with western journalists. We meet Alaa, who took a piece of shrapnel in the face aged 12, on her way home from an exam. She lost an eye. Her closest friends lost their lives in the same attack. It is hard to watch the footage of the immediate aftermath showing the horror, grief and rage of the families of the casualties. “I hope what happened to us happens to America as: “The story of the Iraq war - which centres on the rise of the Iraqi insurgency and Isis/Daesh, the degeneration of civil society into generalised sectarian conflict, and the captur- ing of the state by epically corrupt sectarian politicians.

It’s not that the programme makers absolve the western leaders of responsibility. The Bushes, Clinton, Blair, Obama and Trump are all implicated - quite correctly - but the narrative strongly suggests that, despite the obvious humanity of the Iraqis we meet, the nation is a pressure cooker of irrational sectarian hatred.

John Nixon, CIA intelligence analyst and Saddam expert, opines that “Saddam had his hand on the lid.” Dexter Filkins, US correspondent says: “For a long time I thought it could work,” but, he says with a shrug, “it’s the Middle East.”

The series ends as mass protests against Iranian influence, corruption and sectarianism erupt across Iraq. In the narrative presented by the programme makers, I think this is supposed to show that the cycle of upheaval and violence will never end.

For us socialist internationalists, who can never duck out of our duty of solidarity to the victims of our ruling class, it is a sign that the struggle for democratic rights, national liberation and decent lives for all will always find a way to assert itself.

Once Upon a Time in Iraq is available on BBC iPlayer for ten months.

We see his troops torture and humiliate civilian Iraqis. “It was a dehumanisation deal...” he says, as his eyes flick around the studio. His methods were taken up by his superiors for use against Iraqis who “openly defied American authority”. An Iraqi elder who saw the reign of terror first hand says “Sassaman lost his mind”.

This is part of the problem with the programmes. There is more than a hint of the narrative which emerged after the Vietnam war - which centres on the ‘grunts’ who were tasked with laying waste to an entire nation. Rudy Reyes, US Marines reconnaissance soldier, claims that he killed many people at a checkpoint his unit set up because the illiterate Iraqis couldn’t read the warning signs to stop. This is highly questionable since illiteracy was virtually unknown in Iraq before the war. When asked if it was all worth it he says, somewhat unconvincingly, “Yes. What’s the alternative?” He’s looking for work as an actor now.

One of the most telling sections of the series deals with the New York Times men on the spot, Dexter Filkins and Ashley Gilbertson - “Dex” and “Ash” to the soldiers they were embedded with during the 2004 assault on the city of Falluja, in which 600 civilians were killed. Ash identifies so strongly with the mission that he decides he needs to get a picture of a dead insurgent sniper in a mosque. He tells us that he wanted to get evidence that would justify the US targeting of mosques (he doesn’t say so but also schools and hospitals) on the grounds that Isis fighters were using them as military positions.

During the course of the attempt to photograph a dead fighter a US soldier is killed. We learn this bomber’s name, and meet his buddies in the unit and his parents and sister back home. We see childhood home movies. None of the 600 civilian dead is named. 75 US troops died in the assault, out of an attack force of 8,000.

The series is undoubtedly worth watching - but with enormous caveats. It seems strange that a BBC documentary makes almost no reference to the British role in instigating and prosecuting the war, let alone war crimes committed by British troops. The Kurdish population of Iraq are mentioned once, despite their enormous significance to the politics of Iraq since the independence of the country.

You get a somewhat simplified, overarching narrative of Iraq’s experience of war and the dismantling of the public infrastructure of schools hospitals and utilities, the rise of the Iraqi insurgency and Isis/Daesh, the degeneration of civil society into generalised sectarian conflict, and the capturing of the state by epically corrupt sectarian politicians.

N

Dave Murray
Essex Socialist Party

socialistparty.org.uk

the Socialist

3-9 September 2020
Every weekend evening, in Isra-
el’s biggest protest movement
since 2011, angry protesters have
besieged the official residence
of Israeli Prime Minister
Benjamin Netanyahu demanding his
resignation. The loudest chants
are “Big business and government are
mafia!”

On 31 July, over 30,000 demonstrat-
ed around Netanyahu’s residence.
Small groups of demonstrators held
banners from 200 bridges across the
country, waving Israeli flags along-
side black flags. Other demonstra-
tions have taken place in Tel Aviv and
Netanya, where Netanyahu has his
second luxury home.

On 21 August, in Jerusalem, 5,000
protesters demanded Netanyahu re-
sign, and over 10,000 the next night,
when police made unprovoked at-
tacks and 30 arrests.

Netanyahu faces trial over three
separate corruption charges con-
cerning his dealings with Israeli and
foreign billionaires. Weekly demon-
strations have been held for years in
the town of Petach Tikveh, opposite
the home of the Attorney General
(who is responsible for the conduct
of the investigation of Netanyahu’s)
crimes) demanding the prosecution
of Netanyahu and his resignation.

Changing protests

Employers’ organisations started
funnelling money into the protest
movement in an attempt to depoliti-
cise it and channel it to their inter-
est. They built stages with expensive
PA systems, on which small busi-
nessmen made speeches demand-
ing increased government aid to save
their firms from bankruptcy. When
this infuriated the demonstrators,
the movement has shifted striking social workers
onto their stages.

These demonstrations were led
by a retired general and composed
of middle-class, pro-establishment
older people who depauperate at the
damage being done to the Israeli
government by the right-wing popu-
lar list Netanyahu regime.

But the ranks of these protests
have been massively swollen over re-
cent months by young people, many
of whom have lost their jobs due to
the coronavirus epidemic.

Unemployment has risen to 20%. And many young people are offi-
cially self-employed victims of the
gig economy. This group has been
given no financial support to survive
the crisis.

They have been infuriated by Ne-
tanyahu’s lavish expenditure - con-
structing the largest cabinet in Israeli
history, with 36 ministers - all with
their own drivers and bodyguards -
while the coronavirus crisis throws
hundreds of thousands of Israelis
into destitution. This younger group
now dominates the demonstrations,
which have become much more as-
sertive, marching around the prime
minister’s residence and blocking
key road junctions.

The initial response of Netanyahu,
who denounced the demonstrators
as leftists and anarchists, and sent
police to attack them with water can-
non, backfired. It provoked an in-
crease in the defiance, the anger and
the size of the demonstrations.

Faced with increasing opposition,
Netanyahu tried to rebuild his social
base by ordering stimulus payments
of NIS700 ($220) to be made to every
adult. This attempt to buy off popu-
lar opposition did not go down well.
One million Israelis are now unem-
ployed and two million are living in
abject poverty.

In the past, Netanyahu attempted
to divert attention from social move-
ments at home by fomenting conflict
with the Palestinians. But this time
he has attempted to divert attention
by announcing a peace treaty with the
despotic feudal regime in the
United Arab Emirates.

This has also given him the op-
portunity to jettison his commitment
with annex parts of the West Bank - a
commitment made during the last
general election to pander to the
hard-right ultra-nationalists, but
which he had no intention of imple-
menting, as the status quo is far more
advantageous to Israeli capitalism.

While this took the news head-
lines away from the protests, it has
distressed the demonstrators. So
Netanyahu attempted to escalate the
conflict in Gaza.

Realising that repression of dem-
onstrators has become counter-produc-
tive, the police have ended the policy
of wholesale attacks on demonstra-
tors, attempting to let the demon-
strations run their course.

These demonstrations have had
a carnival-like atmosphere, with the
only clear demand being Netan-
hyahu’s resignation. But the demand
for “anyone but Netanyahu” does not
provide a way forward for the
movement.

The Blue and White Alliance was
set up last year with a programme of
“anyone but Netanyahu”. It won 25% of
the votes in the March 2020 elec-
tions and then proceeded to go into
coalition with Netanyahu! The coal-
tion faced collapse in August over
failing to agree a financial budget,
but a new election was avoided by
extending budget negotiations for
100 days.

Netanyahu’s right-populist gov-
ernment is not the cause of the cri-
sis of Israeli society, but a symptom
of it. This crisis of Israeli capitalism
cannot be solved by a change of per-
sonnel at the top. It is the capitalist
system which needs to be replaced.

Last month, the nurses went on
strike for one day and won their main
demand for an increase of 2,000 in
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Latest US police shooting outrage...

FIGHT RACISM, TRUMP AND CAPITALISM

The recent police shooting of unarmed black man Jacob Blake in Wisconsin is a brutal reminder of the oppressive policies of Donald Trump’s administration and also the toxic racism built into the ‘DNA’ of US capitalism.

An outpouring of angry, predominately young black and white people onto the streets of US cities following the shooting has been cynically twisted by Trump into a ‘law and order’ issue, to whip up reactionary forces and further his presidential election ambitions.

The Independent Socialist Group in the USA, co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in England and Wales, argues below for a socialist programme to unite the working class and fight back against division arising from the profit-driven capitalist system.

On 23 August, Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by police in Wisconsin. The shooting has left him paralysed. Why was Blake shot? Because he was walking away from a fight he tried to de-escalate until police arrived. Yet when the police arrived, the situation became tragic.

On the night of 25 August, amid protests denouncing the shooting, a member of a pro-police militia, Kyle Rittenhouse, shot three protestors, killing two of them.

Trump has publicly defended his actions and other violence by far-right militias. Despite being thanked for his armed presence by officers before the shooting, and attempting to turn himself in after, Rittenhouse was not arrested until the next day. Further information released shows Kenosha Police Department actively collaborating with the right-wing militia group during the protest, including Rittenhouse.

The police’s kid-glove approach to Rittenhouse and other right-wing forces committing actual violence stands in stark contrast to the numerous acts of racist police violence that sparked the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

This movement has faced repression from local police as well as federal agents. It has raised demands to slash bloated police budgets and enforce real civilian control over public safety.

Both the Republicans and Democrats continue to utilise racist ‘law and order’ rhetoric, and to collaborate to increase mass incarceration and expand police presence in many communities of colour, even in the midst of this historic BLM movement.

From the constant criminalisation of poverty and workers of colour, to continued extra-judicial murders during a national anti-racist upris ing, it is clear that the role of the police - and corporate politicians - is to enforce racism in the interests of the capitalist class.

The capitalist class and its politicians are terrified of the current movement that has united workers and youth of all backgrounds in a common struggle to fight against systemic violence and injustice. They fear the momentum of this movement may lead working people and youth to fight for more far-reaching change.

This is a major reason why many cities under Democratic administrations are responding so brutally to the current protests. We cannot rely on the Democrats or Republicans for meaningful change.

We must ditch the two-party system and organise a party of our own that can help initiate and unite mass protest movements, including an unshakeable commitment to fighting police brutality and systemic racism.

The Independent Socialist Group enthusiastically supports the ongoing anti-racist movement, including justice for Jacob Blake, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and all victims of police and racist brutality.

We call for the following:

● Demilitarise the police
● End ‘no knock’ raids
● Remove police from schools
● Slash bloated police budgets and fund housing, healthcare, and education
● Decriminalise poverty and ban racist police practices
● Solidarity between organised labour and the anti-racist movement. Unions must mobilise to fight systemic racism. Turn out membership to protests. Use resources to help protesters. Adopt the movement’s demands and organise workplace actions to win them
● Elected community committees to organise protest support, medical treatment, legal responses, community self-defence efforts, and responses to police or right-wing escalations
● Community control and oversight of all aspects of public safety, including hiring, firing, training, priorities, and budgets

● See also BLM protests - p12

“…”

HUGO PIERRE,
UNISON NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (PERSONAL CAPACITY) AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

“A what have been significant in response to the latest US police shooting of an unarmed black man, are the actions of sports professionals - striking in support of Black Lives Matter (BLM).

But what if the millions-strong trade union movement get together behind BLM and campaigned to unite working-class people across the USA to fight racism and Trump? This means the unions fighting for a programme of jobs, pay, healthcare, safety, and all the things that matter to the majority.

I believe that here, in the UK, the trade unions must also show a way forward by ending their ‘lockdown’ on activity and give full support to BLM around the demands of jobs, homes, safety - not racism!”