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NOT SAFE IN TORY HANDS

FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

When is action inaction?
When the Tories do a massive U-turn on lockdown and extending the furlough, but are too split and rotten to make it effective in protecting our health and livelihoods.

Make no bones about it, this was a huge climbdown and will have further widened the massive chasms within the Tory party. Just look at them squabbling over when the lockdown

will end. In truth, just like Brexit, they have no roadmap. The main reason behind their ineptitude is that their system, capitalism, is in deep, deep crisis with no clear way out.

Yet they cling on. A child could tell you that prioritising profit in health has bad outcomes - apart from for the profiteers. Serco has swallowed £12 billion, and we still have no functioning test-and-trace system. Stressed-out, worn-out NHS workers fighting for a 15% pay rise could probably think of a much better use for that money. Left to the Tories, the health service is in danger of being clapped out.

And it is laughable - or cryable - to hear Tory MPs say that it's concern for the poorest kids that has motivated them to keep the schools open. The vote against extending free school

meals sort of gave that away. This is about keeping parents at work to keep the profits flowing for big business.

It is also obvious that you can't ask people to self-isolate if that means their children will go hungry. So the next U-turn we need is for work or 100% pay, including a massive programme of socially useful job creation to staunch the youth joblessness threat. Work could also be shared out - with no loss of pay.

Such a programme, including democratic working-class and trade union oversight of all measures taken under the pandemic, is essential, and must be organised and fought for, including with strike action where necessary.

It's argued that you can't prioritise health and jobs at the same time - but you can. What

you can't do is prioritise the health and living standards of the majority while also, as the Tories do, defending the obscene profits of the mega-rich. Let's remember, while we experienced a decade of austerity, pay-outs to the shareholders of the 100 biggest companies doubled to £110 billion a year!

At the end of July, Britain's billionaires' combined fortune was £156.6 billion, up 34.7% on last year! A one-off 50% wealth tax would raise billions. But nationalisation - under democratic working-class control and management - of the top 125 companies and banks that dominate the economy would really provide the basis to begin planning production, and using resources to prioritise health and living standards.

UNISON: WHY THE SOCIALIST IS BACKING HUGO PIERRE >>> p8-9

CORBYN SUSPENDED - TIME TO FIGHT FOR A NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY >>> p2-3

POLAND: MASS PROTESTS AGAINST ABORTION BAN >>> p15

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

Corbyn suspended

Time to fight for a

new mass workers' party



The suspension of Jeremy Corbyn shows the determination of Starmer to annihilate the last vestiges of 'Corbynism' - as the Socialist Party warned would be the case. Corbyn has broken no rule and has always opposed antisemitism. For Blairite Labour general secretary David Evans to suspend him for stating antisemitism within Labour has been 'dramatically overstated for political reasons' is an incredible attack on the right of Labour Party members to express their views. Labour Party Deputy Leader Angela Rayner has even admitted that what Corbyn said is true, but he should still be suspended for saying it!

Since Starmer was elected leader, many have already left Labour. Now a further avalanche of Labour Party members are tearing up their membership cards in protest. It has been reported that staff from all departments at Labour HQ have been moved to dealing with resignations, such as their numbers. In response, leading figures on the Labour left, including Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, have pleaded with those who are angry to stay in the Labour Party and "stay calm".

Unity doomed to failure
The Labour Party members who are resigning have a clearer idea of the reality facing the Labour left than the leaders appealing for calm. Seven leaders of affiliated trade unions, including Len McCluskey, have produced a joint statement opposing Corbyn's suspension. Unsurprisingly, the right-wing led unions - including Unison, GMB and Usdaw - have not signed. Unfortunately, however, even the statement from the left-led unions is extremely weak. It's only proposal for action is to plead with Starmer to work with them on finding a "fairer, unifying way forward".

The last five years have shown beyond any doubt that this strategy is doomed to failure. Under Corbyn, Labour was not transformed into a workers' party, but remained 'two



Corbyn rally in Derby, 2016 STEVE SCORE

The opportunity to transform Labour into an anti-austerity, socialist party was thrown away

parties in one', with a pro-capitalist right which continued to dominate the Labour machine, and a potential anti-austerity party around Corbyn.

When the right were forced to retreat, it was not through trying to assuage the Blairites, but standing up to them. Unlike the leadership of Momentum - supposedly set up to build support for Corbyn's policies - which retreated at every stage, the leadership of Unite, the biggest affiliated trade union, did sometimes play that role. Nonetheless, the opportunity to transform Labour into an anti-austerity, socialist party was thrown away, as endless compromises were made with the pro-capitalist right of the party in the hope of pacifying them.

Starmer was therefore able to walk into the leadership of a party which was already dominated by his co-thinkers. Mandatory reselection of MPs has not been introduced, and the democratisation of the party, including the restoration of the role of

the trade unions, was never carried out. The biggest rebellion of Labour MPs since then has been the 34 MPs who voted against the 'Spy-Cops' bill, which gives state agents the right to break the law while spying on socialists and trade unionists. This shows how small the left of the Parliamentary Labour Party still is, five years after Corbyn's initial leadership victory.

Even before Corbyn's suspension, the left had been remorselessly removed by Starmer from any positions they still had. Now, given further confidence by the complete passivity of the leaders of the Labour left, Starmer and those around him are trying to ground the left into the dust. Constituency Labour Parties have been banned from passing motions that criticise the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report and Corbyn's suspension. A stepped-up crackdown on social media posts has been planned.

Starmer is determined to demonstrate to the capitalist class that

Labour is once again 'New Labour', and can be relied upon to act in the interests of the elite - the 1%. Popular fury against Johnson's incompetence is growing. Starmer sees his role, however, not in harnessing working-class anger to fight for socialist policies, but the exact opposite. He is auditioning to be a more competent representative of the capitalist class in government should Johnson be forced out.

Starmer safe for the bosses
Starmer's trenchant opposition to teaching unions' demands that schools close during the new lockdown is the latest example of his backing for the agenda of big business rather than the workers' movement.

Appealing to Starmer to reverse his decision, Len McCluskey has emphasised the importance of party unity. However, unity is only an asset if it's around a programme in the interests of the working class. The only unity Starmer will accept is on the basis of the complete and utter capitulation of the left, not even able to make the mildest criticism of his pro-capitalist agenda.

The working class in Britain is facing a resurging virus, a lockdown, and the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. To leave it without any political voice would be a serious dereliction of duty.

Instead of pleading with Starmer, left trade unions should immediately institute a call for a conference, to be a council of war of the workers' movement - inside and outside of the Labour Party - to fight this attack, and to discuss how to ensure workers have a vehicle that does fight for their interests. While that discussion takes place, not a penny should be paid by the affiliated trade unions to the Labour leadership.

The Socialist Party is arguing that what is required now is for the left trade unions to found a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme. Some will argue that it would be better for the left trade unions to stay inside Labour and use their social and financial weight to



Left trade unions should immediately institute a call for a conference, to be a council of war of the workers' movement

launch a campaign to try and pull it back to the left. There is no question that serious opposition to the right would be an improvement on the current policy of supplication, but, having failed to transform Labour into a mass democratic workers' party while Corbyn was leader, we do not think it can be belatedly accomplished now.

The unions' financial weight is limited, with annual union affiliation fees accounting for under 15% of the party's income. In addition, the tens of thousands of people who were inspired by Corbyn's election to become active are now thoroughly demoralised by the retreats and defeats of the last half decade.

The development of a new workers' party would do more to fight for workers' interests at the ballot box - and also to turn the heat up on Starmer and the Labour right - than would be possible with a campaign within the confines of the Labour Party.

If a lead does not come from the top, there will be many workers and young people who will be prepared to take steps in that direction. The Socialist Party is fighting for a new mass workers' party, and appeals to all those who agree to join us in that struggle, including those tearing up their Labour Party membership cards in disgust.

May elections
As a starting point, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, involving the transport workers' union, the RMT, the Socialist Party, and others, is back in action and preparing to stand in elections next May against pro-capitalist, pro-cuts Labour candidates. Local steering committees - involving representatives from trade union branches and community campaigns - are starting to be formed.

The rest of the labour movement - the left union leaders in particular - must act. The determination of the right to make Labour safe for capitalism could not be clearer. If now is not the time for similar determination from the left to fight for a mass workers' party, when is?



TUSC prepare to stand in 2015 election PAUL MATTESON

Socialist Party

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. 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!

Do you agree? Join the fightback!
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AN NHS CLINICAL CONTACT CASEWORKER

Covid-19 infections are spreading fast because England's 'test and trace' reached only 60% of the contacts of confirmed Covid cases in recent weeks. That compares with 97% of contacts reached by local public health departments.

The results keep getting worse as the number of positive cases rise. Although Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have problems with their systems, they get better results than the privately-run English system.

Branded as 'NHS Test and Trace', most of the money goes to private contractors, including Serco, Sitel and Amazon. It uses the NHS logo, but is not linked to existing NHS organisations.

Calls from its 0300 number get answered far less often than if made from a local number. The caller could be at the other end of the country, making it harder to win the confidence of the person being called.

Finding out from someone with a positive test who they could have passed the virus to is just the start. These contacts must be called to tell them to self-isolate for 14 days.

Many need proper support to do so - full pay, practical and sometimes mental health support. But only those on the lowest incomes qualify for the inadequate £500 payment.

Testing is failing - it's a privatised mess



TOM WOLF/CC

Local GPs, who know their area and those most at risk, didn't get results at all at first. Now they do, but without information on why the test was done, whether the person has symptoms or anything else that would help them interpret the result.

Laboratories testing for infectious

diseases used to notify results to local public health departments for contact tracing. One of the last acts of the Gordon Brown New Labour government in 2010 was removing this responsibility.

Laboratories were only required to notify nationally. Tony Blair had

already moved specialist public health laboratories into NHS trusts that became increasingly cash-strapped under Tory austerity.

Positive test results have soared since 'Eat out to help out', schools and universities returning, and autumn weather driving people indoors. This

was all entirely predictable, but test and trace seemed unprepared.

Clinical contact caseworkers were recently informed they would be joined by "experienced call handlers" to cope with the "surge in demand". Guardian columnist George Monbiot revealed many of these "experienced call handlers" are young people on the minimum wage with just four hours training.

They're expected to handle calls to people who may be struggling with serious Covid symptoms or who have a close relative who has just died - while working alone at home. This is the "world-beating system" Boris Johnson boasted he was setting up in May.

This chaos is run by Tory peer Dido Harding, herself married to millionaire Tory MP John Penrose, who claimed "chaotic parents" were responsible for children going to school hungry.

Not a penny more to Serco and other profiteers. Nationalise them without compensation, except to small shareholders in genuine need, so local health workers and communities control track and tracing. Full support for those who need to isolate.

What now for the fight against austerity? - one of the sessions at socialism2020.net
Online forum 20-23 November

Spycops inquiry finally opens

- 1,000 left-wing groups spied on
- Youth against Racism in Europe and Militant Labour targeted
- Capitalists need a police force that will defend their system

The 'spycops' inquiry has finally opened, six years after Theresa May, then Tory home secretary, set it up. May was forced into establishing the inquiry when one ex-police spy, Peter Francis, went public about his years-long infiltration of Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE) - a mass democratic, anti-racist youth organisation - and Militant Labour (now the Socialist Party).

The inquiry therefore had little choice but to accept Socialist Party

members Lois Austin and Hannah Sell, then leaders of YRE, as 'core participants'. Socialist Party member Dave Nellist is also a core participant. A 2002 BBC documentary revealed that West Midlands police spied on him, at the behest of M15, when he was Labour MP for Coventry South East from 1983 to 1992.

Being a core participant doesn't get you any information. None of the police files have been released.

Those accepted as core

participants are a minute fraction of the socialists and trade unionists that have been spied on. Around a thousand organisations were spied on by the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) that employed Peter Francis.

The inquiry has not released the names of those organisations, nor has it given us the real - or even the cover - names of the spies. However, the vast majority spied on were on the left. Only four right-wing

organisations are known to have been infiltrated by SDS.

None of this is a surprise. 500 Scottish miners were finally pardoned on 28 October, 35 years after vicious police brutality was systematically used against striking miners.

The state, including the police, is not neutral, but ultimately plays a vital role in maintaining and defending the dominant interests of the capitalist class. Today, Britain's billionaires are a third better off than they were a year ago, while mass unemployment soars. The capitalists' need for a police force that defends their system is clear.

While the spycops inquiry opens, Boris Johnson is proposing a bill which protects current and future spycops from prosecution if they commit crimes while undercover. They will be allowed to do so, for example, against trade unionists in order to maintain 'economic wellbeing'.

What does that mean but protecting the 'wellbeing' of the bosses when workers go on strike? Disgracefully, the Keir Starmer leadership of Labour - who also want to play their role in defending the capitalist system - did not vote against the bill.

Socialist Party core participants in the inquiry will be using it to expose the class character of policing. We demand an end to all political policing, and for a police force that is genuinely democratically controlled and accountable. Fully achieving this is part of the struggle for a socialist society.

● Go to socialistparty.org.uk and read the next issue of the Socialist for updates during the inquiry

Poll tax: how a mass movement was won - one of the sessions at socialism2020.net
Online forum 20-23 November



PAUL MATTSSON

Furloughed worker speaks out: Let down by insecure contracts

I was working when lockdown was announced. We turned up the volume on the telly, put the subtitles on and everyone went quiet.

After the announcement one lad went on a break, had a good cry and came back with his Halloween make-up running everywhere. It is just the stress of it all - it has broken people down and they feel like they can't do this anymore.

I missed out on furlough by two days last time. I had a cleaning job in a beauty spa, but because I was two days from my first pay cheque, I missed out.

Revenue and Customs refused to accept my employment contract as evidence. This time I am a few weeks into a four-week contract. I could be furloughed for a week and then laid off.

Fortunately, my manager told me that she will extend my contract so I can be on furlough. But people shouldn't have to rely on that.

Many individual managers are trying to do the right thing. They have the weight of twenty-odd people, the weight of their staff's livelihoods and their own on top of them.

Some of my colleagues have been considering setting up a temporary ride-share, informal taxi service. They can't afford a 20% pay cut. No one should be in that position, forced to put themselves at risk, just to make ends meet.

Mental health is my main concern. If I spend another month inside and not working I'm concerned how I will be able to stay positive.

JAMES

BAR WORKER

A lockdown that doesn't include education?



DANIEL HURST/CC

● Teacher speaks out: Covid rising in schools

Since schools re-opened, virus levels are nine times higher among primary pupils and 50 times higher among secondary pupils. Before half term, attendance in state secondary schools was 86%, and lower still in areas where the R rate is high - more than 500,000 students absent, the majority self-isolating due to Covid.

It is abundantly clear that schools are not 'Covid-secure' and are fueling the second wave of infections. I am a secondary school teacher, the atmosphere in schools is fear and anxiety.

The constantly shifting guidance, and rolling absences, make focusing on teaching and learning near impossible. Getting quick and reliable information on who has tested positive isn't happening. Huge numbers of students are being sent home at short notice, often in the middle of a school day.

The advice from Public Health England is very weak. Students in the same classroom as someone with the virus told not to isolate, because they sit over two metres away on the seating plan. This makes a mockery of the idea of 'bubbles'.

My most vivid memory last term was a student being led from my classroom in tears after he was found to have a high temperature. "I've got it, I've got it," he sobbed.

The current situation is not sustainable. The insistence of both Boris Johnson and Labour leader Keir Starmer that schools must remain fully open is shameful.

The National Education Union (NEU) call for schools to close during the upcoming lockdown, and then to re-open on a rota basis, is correct. Now is the time for the union to organise to force the government to listen to our demands.

A SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN YORKSHIRE



WOODLEYWONDERWORKS/CC

● School worker speaks out: Now is time to deliver

One after another, scientists and experts name school reopening in explaining how we got here to a second peak. Yet we're apparently staying fully open.

Schools have already drawn up fully planned out, detailed and comprehensive plans for remote learning.

If the debate is about providing education, then surely this is the time to deliver on promises of broadband access and laptops, and a return to school for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. Enable us to be a vital part of breaking the infection chain.

VICKY PERRIN
CALDERDALE UNIONIS LEAD SCHOOL STEWARD
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

● Uni teacher speaks out: Impossible situation we should never have been in

The decision to keep universities open during the new lockdown is inconsistent and confusing, like much of the government's strategy. We are told: "Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives."

● Schools: Time to ballot for union-wide strike action

Kevin Courtney, National Education Union (NEU) general secretary, rightly asked: how can a national 'lockdown' be effective if it doesn't include schools?

Staff and parents are signing petitions and emailing in their thousands to demand Boris Johnson thinks again. But to change his mind, we need to go further and ballot for strike action.

Socialist Party members in education (spined.co.uk) have written this motion. Put it to your school or district meeting.

We agree that:

- The government is putting the health of school staff and school communities in danger by insisting that schools remain fully open, despite infection rates rising so quickly that ministers themselves have decided that a 'lockdown' is needed
- The government is ignoring clear scientific evidence showing both the effect that school closures would have on reducing the 'R' number, and the role of young people in spreading Covid-19, particularly in poorly ventilated indoor spaces with a high concentration of individuals, such as classrooms
- The union has been right to demand that:
 - For a lockdown to be truly effective, it must include schools
 - During such a lockdown, schools should again return to teaching only priority and vulnerable pupils as was done in the 'first wave' of the virus
 - To minimise ongoing safety risks, when schools are open more widely, they should operate on a rota basis instead of with full classes
- We encourage our members to

support the union's campaign to call on politicians, employers and school leaders to endorse and implement these demands.

● In order to make clear to the government that we are no longer prepared to see our legitimate demands ignored - and to protect the health and safety of our members and our communities - the union must ballot for industrial action

● We call on the NEU executive to call an emergency meeting to resolve that the union launches a union-wide ballot, disaggregated by employer, to allow those branches where there is the necessary support to take coordinated strike action, and action short of strike action

● Industrial action should be taken to insist that, until such a time when the union believes conditions are safe:

- Schools are included in future lockdowns and circuit breakers
- Schools otherwise operate on an agreed rota basis, instead of with full classes
- All staff in higher risk groups can work from home
- Schools operate according to agreed and regularly updated risk assessments
- School staff should be regularly tested as part of improved test-and-trace arrangements, including full isolation of 'bubbles', to combat school outbreaks.
- School staff, who will be working hard to support learning at home and in school, are protected against unreasonable workload demands - classroom observations, Ofsted inspections and other unnecessary supervision to cease during the pandemic;
- Government provides funding for additional resources, spaces and staffing cover, as well as full pay for parents and carers who are unable to work owing to childcare
- Assessment arrangements for 2021 are adjusted in line with union demands.

But many staff commuted across regional boundaries, often on public transport, to deliver teaching that they could have done from home. So much for 'if you can work at home, you should'.

Unlike the spring lockdown, where the majority of students returned to their family homes, university students will be spending lockdown in cell-like conditions, spending most of their time in the same room. There is real concern for student mental health and wellbeing if they don't have some in-person contact.

Students could be forced into these conditions much longer, including over Christmas. Teaching staff are conflicted - torn between concern for student wellbeing, their own health and safety, and containing the virus.

We should have never been in this position. Sage advised the government at the start of September to delay bringing students back to halls and onto campus.

The government and university management have failed. They can't be trusted to provide the resources needed. Staff and students must unite and fight for what we need.

BEA GARDNER
SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION (UCU) EXECUTIVE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

'Workers' control in the workplace' and 'Campus chaos: a crisis made by capitalism' - two of the sessions at socialism2020.net
Online forum 20-23 November

Birmingham NHS porters’ 48-hour strike against shift changes

BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Porters at Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham struck for 48 hours on 30-31 October, in opposition to enforced shift changes where trust bosses want ‘flexible working’ at the expense of workers’ pay, health and work/life balance.

Showing how management do not need to dictate shifts, the workers’ own rota kept the upbeat pickets well staffed from 6am until late across the two days. Many car, bus and ambulance drivers honked their support.

Heartlands is now part of the University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB) NHS Trust, which is chaired by Blairite ex-Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, who has prioritised appearing on Strictly Come Dancing. But the low-paid porters are refusing to dance to her tune.

Rota changes

Currently, the Heartlands porters work on a fixed shift system - same times and days each week - but UHB bosses are taking a one-size-fits-all approach in trying to plough through rota changes, so they match those already made at the trust’s Queen Elizabeth hospital. But what right do the bosses have to rip up longstanding agreements and make changes with no regard for the health and safety of the porters?

Night-shift porters would now have to do more day shifts, resulting in big pay cuts. The porters could also be asked to work at any of the trusts’ four hospitals. The changes would mess up childcare arrangements

too. One picket pointed out that the proposed rota would result in him not being able to see his young child for over a week. Another worker said how the bosses’ ‘consultation’ on the changes had been just a familiar box ticking effort.

UHB bosses sent Queen Elizabeth porters to Heartlands to try and limit the effect of the strike, but with limited success as they did not know the layout or systems in place. UHB also emailed the trust’s auxiliary health-care assistants asking if anyone was available for shifts “to assist with patient transfers”.

Workers should have a say in how their shifts are allocated, so detrimental changes cannot be enforced. The NHS needs adequate funding so there is enough staff to sufficiently cover days and nights. Porters recognise there are problems within the NHS, however they are not due to the staff or current shift patterns, but to lack of investment and mismanagement. Many porters have problems with their passes as they don’t allow access for all the areas they need in order to do their job!

Further negotiations with the porters’ union Unison are set to follow the strike, with another walkout likely if management still refuses to back down. Unison needs to send reps to the other three UHB hospitals - Queen Elizabeth, Good Hope and Solihull - to call for all hospital workers not to undermine the official dispute. In addition, the union should arrange meetings with other health unions, particularly Unite, to build support for the action.



PHOTO BIRMINGHAM SP

Lockdown 2 looms: Usdaw needs a fighting leadership



RYAN ALDRED
USDRAW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CANDIDATE
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

It is vital now more than ever that a fighting programme be put forward in Usdaw, the shopworkers’ union, with the announcement of a second lockdown. The upcoming union elections are going to be an important battleground which can shape the union and retail sector in this volatile period.

At a time when workers have been in most need of the union, thousands of reps, totalling a third of all elected Usdaw reps, stepped down, feeling that the union was failing to provide the support that supermarket staff needed to address the many issues that have arisen in quickly changing workplaces.

Back members

With a second lockdown coming into effect, supermarket staff need a union which will back its members rather than leaving them to fend for themselves. But the initial statement by general secretary Paddy Lillis is totally inadequate.

National officers should be negotiating hazard pay for all workers forced to work through dangerous conditions, while also demanding wages more befitting of their status as key workers.

Back in 2016, the union adopted the call for a £10 an hour minimum wage, but with the cost of living rising that demand needs to be revisited. Considering year-on-year inflation

measured by the RPI index, £12 an hour would be a comparable position today, a position that Broad Left candidates will be arguing for.

As key workers, supermarket staff are well placed to demand at least £12 an hour, particularly when considering the bumper profits that many of the supermarket chains reported in recent months, exploiting the panic buying initiated by the call for lockdown in March. Why should bosses be the ones to benefit when it’s us workers risking our lives?

While supermarket bosses have reaped the profits, on the other side of the coin many non-essential retail bosses have used Covid to cull thousands of jobs, hundreds of stores have been forced to close permanently, and dozens of high street names have vanished forever. With this lockdown taking place during what is usually one of the busiest times of the year in terms of sales for most retailers, a strategy to safeguard jobs and provide a lasting solution to the crisis looming in non-essential retail is needed.

The books of ‘struggling’ companies should be opened to trade union scrutiny to ensure that workers aren’t being needlessly sacrificed for the sake of the shareholders. A determined campaign needs to be developed to protect all retail jobs, with calls and campaigning for nationalisation under workers’ control and management of companies such as Debenhams that have failed to maintain workers’ livelihoods.

We need an end to zero and

low-hour contracts, which is only going to come about through determined union action and a leadership willing to put forward such a strategy. We need to attract the hundreds of thousands of retail, distribution and allied workers who are not yet organised at work, while winning back those who have been let down by Paddy Lillis’s failed partnership approach.

Amy Murphy

In contrast, Amy Murphy, Usdaw’s president for the last three years has been a breath of fresh air; regularly visiting picket lines and showing support to all workers who take to dispute and fight to better their conditions. Amy has steadfastly supported the membership and this will need to continue if Andrea Watts, the Broad Left’s presidential candidate, is elected to continue Amy’s fantastic work.

With an election campaign taking place at a time when supermarket staff are once again risking their lives, we can win over determined union activists who are tired of business as usual.

While non-essential workers worry about making ends meet on 80% of our already low wages, a bold campaign to fight for full pay can attract those who are in most desperate need of a union. With a strategy of public ownership to escape the ongoing retail crisis while defending every last job, we can take this fight to the government which has failed just as utterly to retain jobs as it has in containing this virus.

Transport for London given six-month funding stop gap - but fight against cuts continues

JARED WOOD
RMT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - LONDON
TRANSPORT REPRESENTATIVE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

The mayor of London and the Department for Transport (DfT) have come to an agreement on a six-month funding deal for Transport for London (TfL), that will keep public transport running in London until April 2021.

The DfT has dropped demands to extend the London congestion zone, while freedom passes for over-60s, and free travel for under-18s will now have to be funded from the Greater London Authority’s (GLA) budget, and not from any government support. However, the DfT backed away from threats to force TfL to withdraw these concessions.

It is clear that a weak government facing crises on all sides, and potential splits within the Tory party, did not feel confident to impose an agreement on the GLA at this time. Similarly, the preparedness of both the RMT and Aslef trade unions to fight austerity has forced TfL bosses to promise that the six-month funding deal will not lead to any job losses or detriment to workers’ pay, terms or conditions.

But hidden in the text of the deal is agreement from TfL to become fully self-financed, with no government grant at all, by April 2023. As part of achieving this, TfL has had to agree to continue to implement an existing cuts programme that seeks to make ‘savings’ of £722 million over the five-year business period from 2018-2023. As if that is not enough, the short-term deal demands an additional £160 million of cuts to be made by next April.

Questions

A guarantee of no attacks on workers up to April 2021 is better than no guarantee, but it leaves many questions that members will demand answers to. In particular, what happens when another £300 million of cuts have to be made over the following two years to April 2023?

With a triennial actuarial review of the TfL pension fund also due in March 2021, it is clear that RMT and all tube unions must be ready to defend jobs and conditions. With discussion due to start imminently about how to achieve self-financing this battle could break out at any time. Many reps and activists are already saying that we must not allow an incremental implementation of cuts, but that we need to fight back immediately to demand full government funding.

Tube workers have delivered massive productivity gains over the past decade, and we will not accept pay cuts and job losses now. Our message must be that the government was able to bail out the banks and super-rich elite after the 2008 banking crisis. They must support workers and public services now. No job cuts, no detriment to pay, terms or conditions. Nothing else is acceptable.



SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

November issue includes...

- The Battle for Unite
- Showdown in Scotland in 2021
- Revolution or reaction

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Optare strikers escalate their action



PHOTO PAUL MATTSOON

IAIN DALTON
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

At a meeting held on the picket line on 30 October, workers at bus manufacturer Optare in Sherburn in Elmet, Leeds voted to escalate their ongoing strike action in their long-running pay dispute from two days a week, to four days a week, starting from 16 November.

Two weeks into the strike, many of the deliveries coming into the workplace have been turned back at the request of the pickets. On the first day of the strike alone, 20 out of 21 deliveries did so. So while management has refused to budge at the negotiation table, they have started trying to reschedule deliveries for other days of the week. Additional cameras have been put up, and extra security hired in an attempt to intimidate pickets.

After having topped up workers’ pay to 100% during furlough, and with a much-reduced demand for orders given the impact of Covid on public transport, the company claims that it can’t afford more. However, Optare workers are paid less than other manufacturing workers, and the company has brought in increasing numbers of contractors, including bringing people into the workplace from Covid hotspots.

Optare’s ultimate owners are the wealthy Hinduja brothers - the two of whom resided, in the UK, Sri and Gopi, topped the Sunday Times rich

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Lockdown 2 and schools - what Hugo has to say

“Schools are going back after half term, and school support staff and teachers will be facing a situation they would never have been in if the government had followed a lot of the scientific advice that it had been given about making sure that the half-term break was longer. A ‘circuit breaker’ could have limited the spread of this disease.

The data that’s been released shows that one of the fastest growing areas for the spread of this virus, one of the fastest growing age groups, is among secondary school children. The figures are only beaten by those in sixth forms and universities.

I agree with the National Education Union’s (NEU) statement which says that schools should be closed during the new lockdown to make sure that it is effective. (See page 5)

Schools are at the heart of our local communities, but they are also, unfortunately, the centre of many of the outbreaks of infections that are taking place. If we had a proper test-and-trace system that was implemented and developed during the lockdown, then the time that we have for a new lockdown would be put to good use.

If I was general secretary of Unison now, I would be wanting to meet with

“**We have to have the threat of industrial action to ensure that our communities and members are safe**”

all of the other trade union leaders to see that we carry out a really thorough campaign to make sure that track-and-trace is brought back into the public domain; that it’s organised by local authorities in partnership with local health protection agencies, to make sure that we have an effective system of controlling this disease - unlike the shambolic situation that we’ve seen until now.

I hope that other education trade unions co-sign the NEU’s petition, and we do whatever we can to present it as a joint one to the government.

However, we know that in and of itself that is not going to be enough, and as trade unions we will have to do what we normally do to keep people safe. If necessary, that means taking industrial action.

Of course, we will campaign and put on whatever pressure we can, but we also have to have that threat of taking industrial action to ensure that our communities, our members, are kept safe from Covid.”

Workers’ control in the workplace is one of the sessions at socialism2020.net
Online forum 20-23 November



HUGO PIERRE PHOTO PAUL MATTSOON

Socialists elected to Unison service groups

Unison members have just elected their service group executive leaderships (SGEs), the bodies that oversee pay and conditions of service negotiations in service groups, including local government, health, higher education and energy.

Seven Socialist Party members have been elected to the SGEs to provide a fighting, socialist voice: **Helen Couchman**, Community; **Adrian O’Malley**, **John Malcolm** and **Steve Bell**, Health; **Mark Evans**, **Joy Taylor** and **Angela Waller**, Local Government



Why I am backing Hugo Pierre for Unison general secretary

COUNCILS FACE DIRE FUTURE WITHOUT FIGHTBACK



PHOTO PAUL MATTSOON

A UNISON LOCAL GOVERNMENT BRANCH SECRETARY (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

It was two years ago that Northamptonshire Tory council invoked a Section 114 notice. Under this measure, it indicated it could only afford to spend money on essential services - in other words, it had run out of money and was, in effect, declaring itself bankrupt.

Given that the financial situation of most councils in England, Wales and Scotland is considerably worse than in pre-pandemic 2018, Northamptonshire may have been the first council (for twenty years) to declare itself bankrupt, but it will certainly not be the last if mass opposition is not built to oppose council cuts.

Unison needs a strategy to defeat Tory cuts and demand funding. And of the candidates standing to be the new general secretary of Unison, only Hugo Pierre has the programme that can achieve this.

Unison estimates that there is a current shortfall in funding of councils of £10 billion for 2020-21. And this figure is growing day by day, as councils have to fund shortfalls in income, such as losses of charges and taxes, and increased expenditure due to Covid-19, but are not fully reimbursed for this by central government, or by the Welsh and Scottish devolved governments.

Unison says that if £10 billion of cuts were made equally to all council services, £1.9 billion would be slashed from children services, £1.1 billion from environmental services (which includes cleansing and refuse collection) and £3.5 billion from adult social care (that is already in crisis).

The devastating reality of these cuts

could be a loss of 51,000 children’s social workers, 141,000 adult care workers and 46,000 refuse workers. If the funding of social care (as has been the case in the past) and public health was protected, other services such as housing, planning and environmental services would face cuts of 54%!

Shortfall

This devastating shortfall in funding to councils, coming as it does after ten years of Tory cuts passed on by the SNP in Scotland and Labour Welsh government to councils, will be a potential extinction event for many local authorities. While the dinosaurs could not be blamed for not seeing the asteroid coming, and of not understanding the impact it would have, that is not the case with Labour, Plaid Cymru or SNP councillors. They were fully aware of the consequences of administering Tory cuts for council services and the working-class communities they were elected to serve.

The Tories to date have successfully used Labour, Plaid Cymru and SNP councillors to do their dirty work for them. Labour councillors have been compliant in assisting the Tories in reducing council budgets to line the pockets of their super-rich friends. They also, by disillusioning working-class and middle-class voters, contributed towards the Tory general election victory last year.

However, despite their protestations to the contrary, there is something councillors can do to stop council cuts. But unfortunately, to date, Unison, which is affiliated to the Labour Party and is the biggest local authority trade union, has not called on Labour councillors to refuse to implement Tory cuts. It has not even

attempted to organise national action to defend council jobs and services. Motions to Unison’s national conference or local government conference calling for national action against council cuts are ruled out of order (and never debated by conference) on the grounds of legal jeopardy.

If Unison’s bureaucracy spent as much effort defending council services as it does trying to prevent the union discussing them, we would be in a far better place. The reality is, the current national leadership has not put any pressure on Labour councillors to refuse to implement cuts. Unison currently has no strategy to defeat the cuts, other than to ask Tory ministers and lobby Tory MPs to find the additional resources to fund the shortfall.

The evidence is clear. Good arguments about the merits of local government will not win the day. The Tories want to dismantle and reduce the cost of local government as much as they can get away with. With no threat of national industrial action, there is no pressure on this Tory government to make a U-turn as it has on many other issues.

Fighting leadership

Hugo would ensure that the union’s energies are focused on how to organise national action to defeat the cuts, as opposed to the current leadership which spends its time finding a way to stop it happening.

Hugo also calls for Labour, SNP and Plaid Cymru councils to implement needs-led no-cuts budgets, and for councils to join with Unison, and the other local authority unions and other councils, to build a mass campaign of opposition to Tory cuts.

If Labour councillors, MPs, MSPs

in Scotland, and MSs in Wales, back cuts, then Hugo says Unison should withdraw funding from these individuals. Very importantly, if Labour councillors won’t implement Unison policy, then Hugo calls for branches to have the right to decide democratically to support other labour movement candidates who will, even if they are not in the Labour Party.

At present, little pressure is put by Unison on these Labour Blairites and other councillors to defend council services, with some notable exceptions at branch level, particularly where Socialist Party members in Unison have an influence. This would not change if one of the other candidates was successful, because even if they wished to put pressure on councillors (they don’t mention that they want to do this), they don’t have the programme to do it. It would be business as usual for Labour councillors doing the Tories bidding.

Only Hugo has the programme to fight and defeat Tory cuts. The Tories have found an orchard of money trees to bail out big business. A fraction of this cost would fully fund councils. But if they won’t feed hungry children at the cost of £20 million in England, they won’t fully fund councils without mass coordinated national action. Vote for the only candidate who will lead that fight. Vote for Hugo Pierre.

• Rules introduced by Unison to clamp down on democratic debate in the union mean that candidates for union elections cannot ‘invite or accept’ support ‘in money or kind’ from any entity which ‘is not provided for in Unison rules’. These articles are produced without the authorisation of Hugo Pierre, in order to comply with these requirements.

Corbyn suspended: Hugo says workers need a fighting political voice

“Many Unison members will be shocked at the news that Keir Starmer has suspended Jeremy Corbyn and removed the Labour whip from him.

In order to win the Labour leadership, Keir Starmer tried to dress up in some of Corbyn’s clothes, claiming he wanted ‘unity’ in the party. Six months later he has suspended Jeremy Corbyn from Labour membership.

This confirms the position I have argued for in this general secretary election, that Unison needs an independent fighting political voice. I am the only candidate in the election to have said we should only use our members’ money to politically back those who back us, and the policies we stand for. And it shows the other candidates are completely out of touch with the mood of members and what we need.

Why is it that MPs who vote for benefit cuts are welcome in Keir Starmer’s Labour Party? Why is it that those who voted for cuts in councils and for privatisation of public services, or for the right of state agents to commit crimes while spying on trade unionists and socialists, are welcome in the Labour Party, as are those who campaigned for a ‘hostile environment’ for migrants?

Jeremy Corbyn, who as Labour leader in 2017 achieved the biggest increase in a general election for any party since 1945, is not antisemitic.

Antisemitism must of course be taken seriously and combated, and all other forms of racism. This, however, is a cynical attempt to use false accusations of antisemitism to attack the left.

Starmer has laid down a clear challenge to the trade union movement.

“

If I was general secretary I would contact other unions to call a conference of the workers’ movement inside and outside of Labour, to fight this attack and discuss how to ensure workers have a political voice that fights in our interests

The choice is clear - accept having no party that represents the interests of the working-class majority, or stand up and fight!

If I was general secretary of Unison I would immediately contact Unite and other trade unions to call a conference of the workers’ movement inside and outside of the Labour Party, to fight this attack and to discuss how to ensure workers have a political vehicle that does fight for their interests.

In the midst of the worst economic crisis since the 1930s - with unemployment spiralling and children going hungry - a mass socialist voice, including at the ballot box, is desperately needed.

If this step is not taken from the top there will be many workers and young people, who will be prepared to do so anyway.”

Unison branches should be allowed to support them. Not a penny more to cutters and privatisers.”

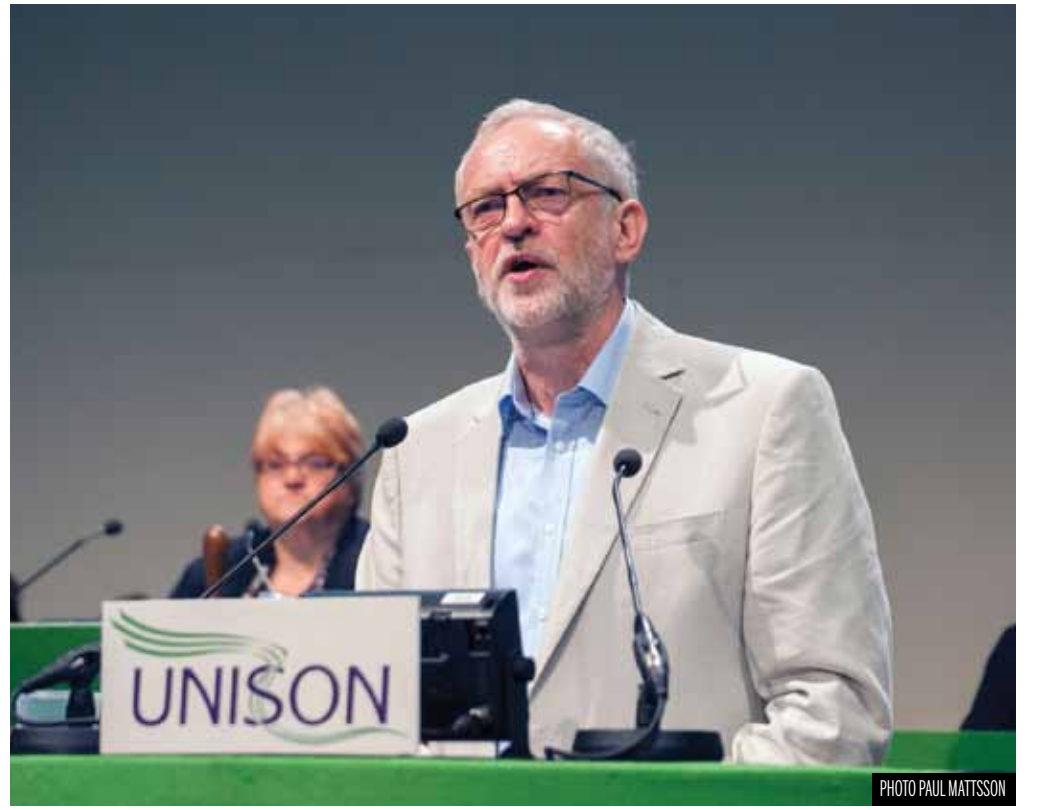


PHOTO PAUL MATTSOON

Save St Andrews mental health ward

DAVE MOODY
MID-SOMERSET SOCIALIST PARTY

The last 14 beds for inpatients at St Andrews mental health ward in Wells, Somerset are set to be moved. After ten years of successive cuts this is all that's left of what used to be 60 beds. After a public consultation that started in January, 75% of residents opposed the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) plan to move the beds to Yeovil, over 30 miles away.

70 people attended a demonstration on 24 October, with support from Mendip and Somerset Trades Union Councils, mental health professionals who work in Wells, and Unite the union members. I spoke on behalf of the Socialist Party, and raised the need for frontline NHS workers and community groups who use the services to have democratic control of planning health services.

In January, I was one of the founding members of a Facebook group 'Save Somerset's Community Services'. The group now has 720 members. In a Zoom meeting discussing the consultation at the beginning of September, the CCG claimed that the fact that local people were opposed to the plan would not change their decision.

Tory MP James Heapey said it was not a financial decision, but



one based on the advice of medical experts. He claimed that there was nothing he could do. Since when have Tory politicians listened to expert advice regarding health?

Our campaign group has written letters to local newspapers, the CCG and Heapey demanding that, during the current Covid crisis, St Andrews ward should have its capacity and local crisis teams increased. We currently have an online petition running that has over 1,200 signatures.

Mid-Somerset Socialist Party

branch members are active in the campaign, and support the demands of the group to increase beds in St Andrews Ward and stop the closure. We demand an increase in the number of crisis teams to improve early intervention. Mental health services should be provided by the NHS in-house and expanded across the whole of Somerset.

We have more protests planned and will continue leafleting, offering support to any action that staff take to save St Andrews Ward.



Leeds protesters demand "Buhari must go!"

LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

For the second weekend in a row, protesters gathered in Leeds in solidarity with the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Organised by the Nigerian Student Society at Leeds University and Black Lives Matter Leeds, at least 80 attended.

The Socialist Party's leaflets, including text from a leaflet given out by the Youth Rights Campaign (YRC) in Nigeria, were snapped up by almost everyone attending the protest. As well as 'EndSARS' placards being carried by many on the protest, other slogans included "Bobo has been a bad boy" (referring to President Buhari) and "Nigeria is a country with everything, but has nothing."

Esther, vice-president of the Nigerian Student Society told us: "Buhari and his government should just step down... those who've taken part in the protest in Nigeria have started something much bigger." Precious, who had travelled to the protest from York, explained to protesters

how successive governments have looted the countries resources, leading several chants of "Buhari Must Go."

Marvina, from Black Lives Matter Leeds, who chaired the rally, made the important point that, as well as tackling the immediate issues of police brutality raised by the #EndSARS movement, it is also important to tackle the roots of these issues. Including the legacy of British imperialism's rule of Nigeria and the broken system bequeathed on the country.

Iain Dalton, Socialist Party Yorkshire Organiser, explained how the capitalist system is based on systematic exploitation of working-class people around the world to produce profits for those at the top of society. Capitalism relies on the forces of the state like the police to protect this system. He called for the resources of society to be brought into public ownership, and democratically controlled, so they can be planned to meet the needs of ordinary people.

• **This is a must read book for workers and youth who want to find out about Trotskyism, and the relevance of Marxist ideas today - revolutionary ideas that are invaluable in the struggle to build the socialist forces necessary to end the misery and chaos of capitalism. Don't delay - order your copy today.**

• The discount price of £6 is extended until 22 November.

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Building Bangor Socialist Students to fight the campus cuts

MICHELLE FRANCIS
BANGOR SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Since arriving at Bangor University in September I have been busy setting up a Socialist Students society. We now have ten other students in our society and three locals who are interested too.

It has been difficult to make people aware that we exist, due to coronavirus restrictions. And campus bosses have ordered us to take down all of our posters; not that it stops us putting more back up!

Now, Bangor University has announced cuts to staff. University management was trying to sweep these cuts under the carpet by making the documents hard to find. They planned a short consultation period in the hope that students wouldn't have time to react.

But, thanks to all the work from members in Socialist Students, and the hard work from two, especially angry course reps, we have made some progress. The only way we could make all students aware of these cuts was via email, and as the whole system is heavily moderated, we had to be very sneaky.

Students are angry

Through some hard work we have been able to email almost every student at the university with details of the cuts, our demands and a link to a petition. Petitions must be discussed in the student council if they get over 500 votes. We got 500 signatures in under six hours, which shows students are angry!

The student council meeting was an uphill battle due to resistance from the students' union leadership

and officers. Although so many students signed in a short space of time to support a vote of no confidence in university management, the students' union decided they didn't want to voice that to management in case they risked their 'special friendship'.

Despite the battle, we managed to get the students' union to agree to demand to "extend the formal consultation period by one month, for the student body to conduct a meaningful consultation". If this isn't done, the students' union resolved to reject the proposals and to support any staff industrial action that may occur.

Hopefully this will give confidence to staff organised in the union UCU, that if they threaten the university management with industrial action they will get support from students.



Maybe now they will listen – Refund the fees!

BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Another great Socialist Students society stall and 'refund the fees' campaigning in Birmingham, with support and sign-ups coming from students across all departments.

University management thought it was necessary to send campus security and police to the stall, to both watch us and constantly ask if we were "holding another protest?"

There were seven in total as well as a police van and security car.

If our protest last week got under the skin of the university management, then good! Maybe now the university bosses will start listening to the thousands of students organising, on and off campus, for opening up the books of university accounts. And for a refund of all tuition fees and to stop the university acting like a profit-making business.



Donate now to the Socialism 2020 appeal

We are urging all our members and supporters to donate and pledge to the Socialism 2020 appeal.

Keir Starmer's attack on Corbyn, and the Tories being forced into another humiliating U-turn over Covid, underlines the crucial need to get across socialist ideas in the workplaces, local communities, trade unions, universities, and in the protest movements that will develop in the coming period.

2020 has seen a dramatic change in the world situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic and new economic crisis. People around the world are angry at the attacks they are facing, and have responded with mass protests, from the anti-SARS protests in Nigeria, to the demonstrations in Poland against the attacks on abortion rights.

In Britain, the Tories have been forced into many U-turns as a result of protests and public anger. Socialist Party members have participated in these struggles, putting forward a socialist programme to help develop them into effective mass movements.

We are facing some new restrictions on our campaigning work, but the best possible answer to that is making sure the Socialism 2020 fighting fund appeal is the biggest possible. Make sure we have the resources to produce the leaflets, posters and placards that will get our socialist message out to as many people as possible when the anger beneath the surface erupts into new struggles of the working class and young people.

What can you do to help us have the best possible fighting fund appeal at Socialism 2020? Have you pledged or made a donation? Who can you ask to make a donation?

Every donation, no matter how small, will make a difference, and all of it will go to building support for socialist ideas.

How you can donate to the Socialism 2020 fighting fund appeal

- If you want to donate, please visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate and mark your donation for Socialism 2020 in the comment box
- If you would like to make an IOU please email finance@socialistparty.org.uk with how much you would like to donate
- With both donations and IOUs, please send a photo of local campaigning in your area

Fund the fightback

DONATE TODAY

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or make cheques payable to Socialist Party, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND									
	AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q4-OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020		DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2020			
	East Midlands	720	1,850			39%			
	North West	372	1,150			32%			
	West Midlands	662	2,600			25%			
	London	1,066	4,600			23%			
	South West	382	1,800			21%			
	Wales	268	2,300			12%			
	Southern & SE	269	2,350			11%			
	Yorkshire	273	2,550			11%			
	Northern	65	750			9%			
	Eastern	85	1,200			7%			
	Other	167	3,850			4%			
	TOTAL	4,329	25,000			17%			

Join the fightback

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- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206**

to find out more today!



“ ”

I want to engage workers in building stronger unions and bringing about social change.

“ ”

I'm fed up with Labour now they've kicked Corbyn out. There's got to be a better party that has my values. I asked a friend about joining the Socialist Party and she provided a link.

Since Keir Starmer's suspension of Jeremy Corbyn, we have had a big influx of interest in joining the Socialist Party. If you would like to join then you can give us your details at socialistparty.org.uk/join and a local organiser will get in touch. These are some of the comments people have left when applying to join us.

“ ”

I'm an angry and passionate believer in fairness, truth and light. I joined the Labour Party in support of Jeremy Corbyn in 2015 and have today left the party, grossly upset and disappointed. A chap sells me the Socialist in Truro; Trevor. Top chap and a socialist and it is now time for me to join the cause. In solidarity.

“ ”

I am so angry and depressed. The awful government we have - and now Starmer has sacked Jeremy Corbyn! I have left the Labour Party, but still want to fight.

“ ”

Corbyn awoke my socialist tendencies



SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER OF SOCIALISM 2020 socialism2020.net						
Themes	SMASH RACISM	WORLD IN CRISIS	AFTER CORBYN	COVID LESSONS	SOCIALIST PROGRAMME	WHAT IS SOCIALISM?
11am-1pm	LESSONS OF THE BLACK PANTHERS Speakers: Deji Olayinka, Black Lives Matter activist, and Jim Hensman, socialist activist who worked alongside Panthers	WORLD ECONOMY - IS A 1930S STYLE DEPRESSION INEVITABLE? Speaker: Robin Clapp, secretary Socialist Party South West	HOW CAN A MASS WORKING-CLASS POLITICAL VOICE BE BUILT? Speaker: Josh Asker, Socialist Party editorial department	WORKERS' CONTROL IN THE WORKPLACE Speaker: Glenn Kelly, Socialist Party industrial department	FRIEDRICH ENGELS - ARE HIS IDEAS RELEVANT FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION? Speaker: Chris Thomas, Socialist Party executive committee	IS CUBA SOCIALIST? Speakers: Ian Pattison and Scott Jones, Socialist Party editorial department
2-4pm	POLICE RACISM - HOW DO WE END IT? Speakers: Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialist Party executive committee	NEW WORLD ORDER: CHINA AND THE US Speaker Tony Saunois, secretary of the Committee for a Workers' International	LABOUR COUNCILS: A POTENTIAL COUNTER-POWER TO THE TORIES? Speakers: Dave Nellist, former socialist Labour MP and TUSC national chair, and Kris O'Sullivan, Socialist Party organiser, West Midlands	CLIMATE CHAOS - ACTION NEEDED BUT HOW? Speaker: Tom Baldwin, Socialist Party national committee	CAN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY BE SAVED FROM COVID AND CAPITALISM? Speaker: Nick Hart, record label worker, socialist and musician	IS THE WORKING CLASS STILL THE AGENT OF SOCIALIST CHANGE? Speaker: Helen Pattison, Socialist Party national committee
FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER OF SOCIALISM 2020 Introduction to Socialism 2020 5-7pm: Speakers: JUDY BEISHON Socialist Party executive committee; DEJI OLAYINKA Black Lives Matter activist and socialist; TONY SAUNOIS Committee for a Workers' International secretary; DAVE NELLIST former socialist Labour MP, national chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition						
SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER OF SOCIALISM 2020 socialism2020.net						
Themes	SMASH RACISM	TROTSKYISM	BROKEN BRITAIN	EXIT FROM CRISIS	IDEAS OF THE CWI	FIGHTBACK 2020
11am-1pm	REVOLT OR REFORM - HOW WAS SLAVERY ABOLISHED? Speaker: Hugo Pierre, Unison national black members rep (personal capacity)	REVOLUTION BETRAYED: WHAT HAPPENED IN THE USSR? Speaker: Lenny Shail, Socialist Party national committee	WHERE IS BRITAIN GOING? Speaker: Hannah Sell, Socialist Party general secretary	CAN KEYNESIANISM SAVE CAPITALISM? Speaker: Bob Labi, International Secretariat of the Committee for a Workers' International	LEGACY OF THE COLLAPSE OF STALINISM Speaker: Clive Heemskerk, Socialism Today editor	JOBS CRISIS: THE FIGHT FOR WORK OR FULL PAY Speaker: Rob Williams, Socialist Party industrial organiser, and Carah Daniel, supporter of Debenhams occupation in Ireland
2-4pm	PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION? IDEAS TO SMASH RACISM Speaker: Isai Priya, Socialist Party black and Asian members group organiser	HOW DO WE GET FROM HERE TO SOCIALISM? Speaker: James Ivens, Socialism podcast organiser	WHAT NOW FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST AUSTERITY? Speaker: Iain Dalton, Socialist Party national committee	IS FASCISM ON THE CARDS? Speaker: Niall Mulholland, International Secretariat of the Committee for a Workers' International	LESSONS FOR TODAY OF THE NEW LEFT FORMATIONS Speaker: Judy Beishon, Socialist Party executive committee	CAMPUS CHAOS - A CRISIS MADE BY CAPITALISM Speaker: Theo Sharieff, Socialist Party national youth organiser
5-7pm	HOW DO WE DEFEAT THE FAR RIGHT? Speaker: Steve Score, East Midlands Socialist Party secretary	DO WE STILL NEED A THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION? Speaker: TU Senan, International Secretariat of the Committee for a Workers' International	IS SCOTLAND ON THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE? Speaker: Philip Stott, Socialist Party Scotland executive committee	CAN GREEN TECH AND AI SAVE THE SYSTEM? Speaker: Mark Best, Socialist Party national committee	POLL TAX - HOW A MASS MOVEMENT WON Speaker: Alistair Tice, Socialist Party Yorkshire secretary	HOW TO STOP THE IMPENDING WAVE OF MASS EVICTIONS Speakers: Jack Jeffrey, housing worker and activist, and Nancy Taafe, Socialist Party national committee
For info & tickets: socialism2020.net or 020 8988 8777						
MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER OF SOCIALISM 2020 socialism2020.net						
Themes	END OPPRESSION	MARXISM TODAY	INTERNATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL		
11am-1pm	HOW CAN LGBT+ LIBERATION BE WON? Speaker: Michael Johnson, Socialist Party LGBT+ members group organiser	READING: THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO Speaker: Martin Powell-Davies, Socialist Party in education group organiser	THE US AFTER THE ELECTIONS Speakers: members of the Independent Socialist Group in the US	FAILING CAPITALISM AND RESISTANCE IN NIGERIA Speakers: members of the Democratic Socialist Movement and the Youth Rights Campaign in Nigeria		
2-4pm	ARE WOMEN GOING BACK TO THE 1950S? Speaker: Tessa Warrington, Socialist Party national committee	READING: SOCIALISM - UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC Speaker: Ross Saunders, Socialist Party national committee	BELARUS AND THE CRISIS IN THE FORMER SOVIET STATES Speaker: Clare Doyle, International Secretariat of the Committee for a Workers' International	SOUTH AFRICA: 60 YEARS AFTER SHARPEVILLE Speaker: Weissman Hamilton, leading member of the Marxist Workers' Party in South Africa		

SATURDAY NIGHT RALLY

ON COVID, CAPITALIST CRISIS, WORKING CLASS POLITICAL REPRESENTATION, & THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

SATURDAY 21 NOV 6-8pm, broadcast live

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- **HANNAH SELL**, Socialist Party general secretary
- **PETER TAAFFE**, Socialist Party political secretary and former editor of the Militant
- **HOWIE HAWKINS**, the Green US presidential candidate



DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

● Send your news, views and criticism, in not more than 150 words, to editors@socialistparty.org.uk - or if you're not online, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT

● We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. For legal reasons, we need your full name, address and phone number - but confidentiality will be respected if requested

THE SOCIALIST INBOX



CC/LAREEUMBAH

● Union conference private technology fails

We can now add the University and College Union (UCU) Congress platform to the list of private contracts which have failed to deliver during the pandemic.

The union's three-day national congress was cancelled with just two hours' notice. Senior union officers were not convinced the online platform was reliable enough to ensure democratic debate and accessibility.

Democracy in many unions has been attacked during the pandemic, with the bureaucratic apparatus stepping in. We must fight this.

This technology failing - paid for with a currently unknown amount of members' money - reveals why we cannot rely on private companies to deliver.

Billions is going to 'technological' solutions to the restrictions of the pandemics, but so far, what has it delivered? The pockets of big business bosses are being lined, despite failing to deliver what workers need.

BEA GARDNER
UCU CONGRESS DELEGATE

● Robert Fisk told the truth about Palestine and Iraq

Journalist Robert Fisk has died aged 74. A real loss to journalism that has integrity.

I met him once. He was to the point in person as well.

He was absolutely essential reading about the Middle East for many years. He told the truth about Palestine, Iraq and many other war zones.

He was a scourge of the establishment, because he wasn't bought or allowed himself to be compromised.

He cut his teeth in covering the conflict in Ireland and wrote good books on Irish history too. Sad loss.

NIALL MULHOLLAND
NEWHAM, EAST LONDON

● Dripping in profit

The government's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has sided with four major water providers who challenged an Ofwat ruling on how much profit they should make.

CMA believes the proposed 2.96% profit is too low and should be increased to 3.5%. This cry for increasing profit comes as the UK environmental agency for the UK announced that pollution from the water sector is the worst since 2014.

Water bills have risen 40% since privatisation. With this recommendation, it is likely to increase. These companies have racked up £51 billion in debt, but paid out £56 billion in dividends.

Clearly, these dividends would have been better spent on infrastructure improvements, supposedly responsible for the debt, than in the pocket of owners. This shows the need for socialism, where the needs of society outweigh the needs of private investors.

The water sector should be renationalised, with no compensation for the big shareholders. £56 billion seems like enough to me.

Once nationalised, the price structure should be revaluated to allow only for maintenance, repair, and expansion, of services, and increasing workers' pay. Something as essential as water should have never been out of the control of the people.

LIAM BIRCH
NEWCASTLE

Time for a new party:

Readers of the Socialist react to Corbyn's suspension

My dad, 89 in a few days, has resigned from the Labour Party. He first joined in 1956.

He was once a Labour councillor, in the days when councils weren't making cuts. His parents were in Labour, and the family has labour movement roots going back to the London docks in the 1880s.

He left the party when Blair took us into the war in Iraq, but rejoined later in the hope Labour could be transformed into a pro-working-class, socialist party. Even an old man, who has spent most of his active life in the party, has decided the suspension of Jeremy Corbyn is the final evidence of that route now being cut off.

STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER

Keir Starmer still can't attack Tory failures. The man would rather spend his time removing anyone from the party that supports the working class.

If you are a Labour member, you should consider leaving and joining the Socialist Party, if you want to build a new workers' party with socialist principles. The Socialist Party is a part of the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), standing anti-cuts candidates in the May 2021 elections.

DAVE MOODY
SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET

Will Jeremy Corbyn stay in Labour and continue to get shafted, or will he lead the split that's desperately

needed from this openly anti-working class organisation?

It must be pleasing to the ruling class to see such an openly capitalist-supporting second Tory party, which Labour has become under Tony Blair and now Keir Starmer.

PAUL MARSHALL
ROTHERHAM

What now for the Labour Party? People joined Labour enthusiastically to support Jeremy Corbyn and his alternative to austerity and attacks of the Tories.

The Labour machine was always in the hands of the right. It was two parties in one.

The victory for the right is emphatic. It's time for a serious discussion among socialists and trade unionists for a new workers' party.

MATT WHALE
HULL

Sky News says Keir Starmer's suspension of Jeremy Corbyn echoes Neil Kinnock's purge of Militant. Kinnock's action against Militant (now the Socialist Party) started a crusade to make Labour safe for the bosses, which Tony Blair accelerated.

DAVE NELLIST
FORMER LABOUR MP, EXPELLED FOR BEING A SOCIALIST

Jeremy Corbyn has been suspended for asserting his own innocence. This is confirmation that Labour has been recaptured by admirers of Margaret Thatcher - with

the assistance of every branch of the establishment and the ruling class, from the press and media to parts of the civil service, like the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

Everyone who has ever read George Orwell should realise what we are being invited to do, denounce a lifelong anti-racist as a racist. It's time for a new party for everyone, that isn't in thrall to the billionaire class.

DAVE MURRAY
BASILDON

The rich and powerful needed to capture Labour, so they had a second eleven that they could turn to when needed. Under Blair, they got their prize.

Jeremy Corbyn's election upset their plans. This suspension is about making sure they don't let that happen again.

Trade unionists need to draw the conclusion that it's time once again to make our own challenge. Corbyn should make that call himself and launch an open, federal, workers' party.

That could draw together all those who have had enough of austerity and big business hypocrisy. If he did, and key unions backed him, it would transform the situation.

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES
LANCASHIRE

● Editorial: Time to fight for a new mass workers' party, turn to pages 2-3

Locked down and hard up



CC/CHATHAMHOUSE

● Late

Hours late for his own press briefing. Weeks late for Lockdown 2. Weeks late for Lockdown 1. And about two centuries late in terms of his political ideology.

This is what happens when we entrust the country to a narcissistic befuddled toff and his corrupt and sociopathic cronies.

CHRIS HOLMES
HARINGEY, NORTH LONDON

● Pubs: Tories think of party coffers

Hidden in the small print of the new lockdown restrictions is the new rule that pubs operating as takeaways cannot sell alcohol - despite having a licence to do so purchased from the local authority - taking away any conceivable possibility of operating profitably.

The supermarkets, some of the biggest contributors to Conservative Party coffers, can without restriction continue to sell alcohol.

If anyone can explain why you can buy a bottle of wine from a supermarket, but you can't take away the same bottle of wine from a pub that doesn't contain the words - "making sure small businesses lose any hope of remaining in business" - then I'd be interested to hear it.

PAUL SMITH
A GATESHEAD PUB OWNER



CC/U3144362

● Save face

The government was adamant that there would be no lockdown, and ridiculed those who suggested one. It has now changed its tune, not for the first or last time.

The government is adamant that schools and universities remain open. It is already clear that the lockdown will go on longer if they do.

The government is "following the science" when it agrees with them, and not when it doesn't. Lives could be lost to save the face of the government. It is too high a price.

DEREK MCMILLAN
WORTHING

CHILE: A DEFEAT FOR THE RIGHT!

Referendum agrees to scrap the Pinochet-era constitution

Mass protests, including a general strike, in 2019 - triggered by a movement of young people in Santiago, Chile's capital city, over a metro fares hike - forced the right-wing Piñera government, despite vicious state repression, to make political and economic concessions. One of these was a referendum on changing the country's despised constitution, introduced during the dictatorship of general Pinochet.

Celso Calfullan, and other **Socialismo Revolucionario** (CWI Chile) members, report on last month's historic vote.

After postponement, a referendum was finally held on the Chilean constitution on 25 October, and resulted in a crushing majority in favour of change. On a 51% turnout, 78.28% voted to change the constitution that was bequeathed by the Pinochet dictatorship, with 21.72% voting against. This represents a crushing defeat for the far right and the supporters of the previous military dictatorship.

In a hypocritical volte-face, all of the political parties and leaders, including President Sebastián Piñera, ended up supporting the vote to change the constitution. This is despite the fact that for 30 years, including under the so-called 'left' Socialist governments of Michelle Bachelet and Ricardo Lagos, they did nothing to propose getting rid of the Pinochet constitution.

Right-wing general Augusto Pinochet, with the backing of the Chilean capitalist class and the US administration, seized power in a bloody coup d'état on 11 September 1973, ousting the left president Salvador Allende. In 1980, to consolidate his grip on power, Pinochet forced through a new constitution in a rigged referendum. However, Pinochet suffered a setback in 1988 in a referendum when voters - despite enormous state intimidation - rejected an eight-year extension to his presidency.

As millions took to the streets in October 2019 demanding an end to student debt, low wages, the economic system, and for a constituent assembly, Piñera and his

government opposed any change to the constitution. Brutal repression was unleashed against the protests. Hundreds of youth lost their sight, either partially or completely, after police fired pellet guns directly at their faces.

Today, the capitalist politicians all sing a different song. They called for a 'yes' vote for change in the referendum and proclaimed the result a victory for them, their political parties, and the 'democratic process'.

Incredibly, they now refer to last October's protests as 'peaceful' as opposed to the 'violence on the current protests'. Yet during October 2019, the protesting youth were also denounced as 'violent criminals'. Over 2,500 of them are still in jail for participating in the protests.

It is crucial to continue the struggle to fight for the immediate release of all the youth held in jail. Popular tribunals are needed to put on trial those responsible for the killings of more than 30 people during the protests and for state torture, sexual abuse, and violence.

2019 movement

The referendum vote was a victory of the mass protests and demonstrations held last year. It is a victory for the street, not the capitalist political institutions. Without the mass mobilisations, change would not have taken place.

However, a vote for a new constitution is one thing. The system whereby a new constitution will be drafted is little more than a trap.

Two options were also put to the



CWI Chile members on an anti-Piñera government protest last year PHOTO SOCIALISMO REVOLUCIONARIO

vote during the referendum. One proposal was for a mixed convention of elected representatives of the political institutions and other 'citizens'. The second, which was overwhelmingly endorsed, is a Constitutional Convention of 150 representatives, elected directly, which would then draft a new constitution to be put to another referendum in 2022.

If this proposed new constitution is rejected, then the Pinochet

constitution is reintroduced.

In reality, the existing political parties will determine the candidates for the Constitutional Convention. Through this, they will aim to maintain control of the process.

Constituent assembly

Some efforts are being made to present lists in the elections to the Convention which exposes the fraud taking place. The intention is to

campaign for a genuine constituent assembly, elected by local assemblies of the workers, poor, and all sections of society that are exploited by capitalism. This would form a government of the workers and the poor.

Following this victory, the struggle needs to continue, to build mass assemblies to convene a genuine constituent assembly to act in the interests of the workers and all those exploited by capitalism.

Poland: Mass protests against abortion ban

CHRISTINE THOMAS
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tens of thousands of women have taken to the streets of Poland in an uprising against living in a "female hell". The Constitutional Court has effectively banned abortion, by ruling



There have been large international protests (London demo above) in solidarity with pro-choice protesters in Poland PHOTO JAMES IVENS

it unconstitutional in cases of severe foetal abnormalities. These accounted for 96% of the just 1,100 abortions that took place legally in the country, last year.

With placards declaring, "I wish I could abort my government", demonstrators have come out in their tens of thousands, not just in Warsaw and major cities but also in the small towns that have been bastions of support for the ruling PiS (Law and Justice Party). They have been joined by miners, farmers, LGBT protesters, and other angry groups.

If the PiS thought that an attack on abortion would act as a diversion

from its inept handling of the Covid pandemic, the opposite has been the case. Defying coronavirus restrictions, the abortion protests have become a lightning rod for the immense social discontent that has accumulated against the reactionary government, including over Covid.

In 2016, the government was forced by mass street protests, which inspired movements of women internationally, to back down from its attempt, using the Catholic Church, to criminalise abortion.

This time, under cover of Covid restrictions, the PiS bypassed parliament and instead went through the

Constitutional Court, packed with its cronies.

Even before the court ruling, Poland had one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe. Only 10% of hospitals carried out legal abortions. Now, all abortion is criminalised, except in the rare case of rape, incest, or if the mother's life is under threat. As one protester said, women are being turned into human incubators, 'tortured' and forced to give birth even to a dead foetus.

According to women's organisations, every year 80,000-100,000 Polish women leave the country to have an abortion. So it will be

Recent solidarity demo reports from Socialist Party branches



Part of the large solidarity protest in Birmingham PHOTO BIRMINGHAM SP

Birmingham

On 1 November, 600 people, mainly Polish women and their allies, gathered in Birmingham for 'Pieńko Kobiet (Women's Hell) Polish Women on Strike', to protest in solidarity with women in Poland fighting for their reproductive rights.

Right from the start, protesters vented their anger at the Polish government, chanting in both Polish and English. The Socialist Party's solidarity was well received, and we were the only political group giving out leaflets (partially in Polish) displaying our key demands, many of which were accepted with enthusiasm.

A member of our branch spoke in solidarity on the party's behalf to the crowd, and stated our demands for free public healthcare, including safe abortions, as well as our fight for the right to make this choice free from poverty. Again, we were

the only political group to speak, and this call for justice for the women of Poland was met with further chanting and gestures of solidarity.

MIA WROE
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

London

"Myślę, czuję, decyduję" - I think, I feel, I decide! Around 500 chanted around the statue of Eros at Piccadilly Circus, central London, on 1 November. Synchronised pogo-jumping also formed part of the protest!

Polish women held home-made placards with the movement's thunderbolt emblem and, slogans like "I will not be a human coffin" and "You will never walk alone." A good number of men joined too, reflecting changing attitudes and the

generalised anger against the vicious, anti-worker PiS government.

Hundreds of protesters took our Socialist Party leaflets expressing solidarity and proposing ideas for the fightback in Poland. One man read out the leaflet's demands and explained them to his family. Curious passers-by were quick to lend their support as well.

JAMES IVENS
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Southampton

ZUZANNA SKÓRNIEWSKA, organiser of the solidarity protest in Southampton, spoke to Josh Asker of the Socialist Party

"The main reason for organising a protest in Southampton is to show solidarity with Polish women living in Poland. The protests in Poland escalated quickly in

size and range and are taking place in towns which have not protested so massively since 'communist' times!

Before the fall of 'communism', abortion rights in Poland were among the most liberal in Europe. Upon the system transformation [to capitalism] in 1989, the Catholic Church's influence on Polish politics began to increase, which soon after resulted in limiting the abortion rights.

The ruling PiS party, under lockdown, used the Tribunal Court, which they have had influence in since 2015, to decide that the right to abortion on the grounds of foetal impairment was against the Polish constitution. This ruling was clearly politically motivated and influenced by the ruling party, which has been trying to make abortion completely illegal.

I think the dominant feeling among Polish women in Poland and elsewhere is one of anger. One can clearly see in opinion polls that Polish people are in favour of making abortion rights more liberal, rather than even more limited.

Polish women have seen the court ruling as a symbol of the state treating them instrumentally, some say as 'incubators'.

Also, many people are protesting for women's and LGBT people's rights, which have also been attacked by the openly homophobic government. The main slogan of protests so far has been 'solidarity is our weapon'."

Nottingham

On 31 October, 200 protesters gathered in Nottingham's Market Square to speak out against a further tightening of Poland's already restrictive abortion laws. This was the second solidarity demo in the city.

Despite the tier-3 restrictions currently in effect in Nottingham, the masked and socially distanced crowd voiced anger against Poland's ruling Law and Justice

working-class and low-income women who don't have the means to travel who will be especially 'living in hell'.

More action

On 28 October, protesters organised a nationwide women's strike with mass street demonstrations in 400 towns and cities, and numbering over 400,000 demonstrators in total. And two days later, over 100,000 jammed into Warsaw's streets to express their anger with the ruling PiS government.

The next step, along with organising more mass demonstrations, should be industrial action, including a 24-hour general strike of all workers and an escalation, if necessary, to demand that the reactionary court ruling be overturned.

The movement must demand that all women have access to safe abortion, and that the economic resources be made available for healthcare, safe contraception, affordable childcare, and so forth. This would enable women to have a real right to choose when and whether to have children, and to do so free from poverty and religious interference.

But the movement has the potential to go much further: drawing together all those who oppose the PiS government's attacks on women's rights, LGBT rights, democratic and workers' rights, and the economic effects of the Covid pandemic - laying the basis for a mass party that could fight for the interests of workers and all oppressed groups in capitalist society.

(PiS) party and its aggressive anti-abortion stance.

The speeches, mostly in Polish but with some in English, had regular stops for chanting (leaflets were distributed with pronunciation guides for non-Polish speakers).

Labour MP Nadia Whittome was present and promised support, but Socialist Party members were the only political group distributing material.

What was noticeable, however, was the absence of a clear call by speakers for a working-class alternative party and programme in Poland, to positively channel the anger of protesters there.

We think building this alternative is needed urgently to really challenge the rule of PiS.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Leicester

At the 300+ strong protest in Leicester there were a wide variety of placards saying: 'My Body, My Choice', 'F**k PiS (the ruling party in Poland), and 'I wish I could abort my government'. We brought solidarity from the Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers' International. We spoke with protesters, agreeing with their demand for constitutional change, but also arguing for our party demands: for the real choice whether to have children and to do so free from poverty and religious interference, which was well received.

We sold the Socialist and all our leaflets were taken. We also discussed with one of the organisers about putting her in touch with Nigerian students, who wanted more support for their solidarity demos against state repression in Leicester.

LINDSEY MORGAN
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

US presidential election 2020 - analysis in the Socialist



PHOTO GAGE SKIDMORE/CC

The result of the US presidential election, held on Tuesday 3 November, will not be known until after this issue of the Socialist has been printed. The result could be considerably delayed by the counting of an unprecedented number of postal ballots before the tally of Electoral College votes - that, constitutionally, determine which candidate wins rather than the total popular vote - is declared.

Additionally, if the vote is close, legal appeals - against a backdrop of possible street protests - could delay the result still further. Readers should therefore refer to our website - socialistparty.org.uk - for updates on the outcome, including comment from the Socialist Party's co-thinkers in the US, the Independent Socialist Group.

The US after the November elections - one of the sessions at socialism2020.net Online forum 20-23 November



PHOTO MICHAEL STOKES/CC



£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1108

5-11 November 2020

formerly **Militant**

MASS WORKERS' VOICE NEEDED

DISCUSS & DEBATE AT
Socialism 2020
ONLINE FORUM: 20-23 November

How did your living standards fair between April and July this year?

Chances are you didn't see your wealth increase to over ten trillion dollars. But the world's billionaires did.

Meanwhile, roughly 30 million people are unemployed in the US, about a fifth of the workforce. In autumn 2020, almost 30 million Americans reported that they have not had enough to eat at some point in the previous seven days.

In Britain, a 'period of destitution' is threatened by the twin crises of Covid and capitalism. Child hunger rumbles - and grumbles - on.

In every country on the planet, our lives and livelihoods are not

safe in the hands of the representatives of the capitalist class. The big business fat cats get rich and our families and communities pay the price.

A new mass workers' party could articulate a socialist programme around which the working class could unite in struggle in our own interests. It is urgently needed. That starts with raising the idea - and fighting for it.

That was the Socialist Party's history in the Labour Party, then called Militant. Peter Taaffe was the former editor of the Militant paper and Hannah Sell was the last Young Socialist representative on the Labour Party NEC. And we continue that tradition today.

The US presidential candidate for the Green Party, Howie Hawkins, is using his campaign to raise the need to build a mass working class political voice there. Howie will speak at the main rally of Socialism 2020 alongside Hannah, Peter and other socialist fighters.

WE ARE THE 99%
TAKE THE WEALTH OFF THE 1%
NATIONALISE THE BANKS!

Socialist Party
www.socialistparty.org.uk

SOCIALISM 2020 SATURDAY NIGHT RALLY
Covid, capitalist crisis,
working class political representation,
& the fight for socialism
21 November, 6-8pm, broadcast live

Speakers include:

● **HANNAH SELL**

Socialist Party general secretary

● **PETER TAAFFE**

Socialist Party political secretary and former editor of the Militant

● **HOWIE HAWKINS**

Green US presidential candidate

● **BEA GARDNER**

Student activist

● **HUGO PIERRE**

Unison NEC (personal capacity)

● **ISAI PRIYA**

Socialist Party Black & Asian members coordinator

Chaired by **HELEN PATTISON**

For agenda, tickets, info: socialism2020.net or 020 8988 8777

A SOCIALIST RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS
▶▶▶ socialistparty.org.uk/coronavirus

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS
▶▶▶ see column on p3

