

## KICK OUT THE PRIVATISERS

# NHS

## FIGHT FOR A 15% PAY RISE

MATT WHALE  
NHS NURSE

**The Tories are attempting to push their latest attacks on the NHS through parliament with the new health and care bill.**

The bill includes newly set up Integrated Care Systems (ICS), that will see the NHS broken up into 42 separate boards, with private companies like Virgin Care sat on them, responsible for their own budgets. These will

be the bodies that oversee localised cuts and privatisation of our services.

The complete disgrace that is privatised social care, with huge profits being made by companies delivering care in the community and in care homes, will continue.

The Tories' naked drive for profit and the backroom deals throughout Covid-19 have clearly highlighted the interests of the government. From the disastrous Serco track-and-trace costing £36 billion, to the multitude of disastrous PPE contracts - all have shown the corruption and cronyism underlying Johnson's government.

Money is clearly not an issue when it comes to contracts for the Tories' big business mates.

But when it comes to workers on the frontline that have delivered care throughout the pandemic, it's a different story!

The government has recommended a 1% pay rise, and we await the proposals of the delayed Pay Review Body. NHS staff have faced a pay freeze for over a decade of Tory rule, but the cost of living keeps going up. Some 40,000 nursing vacancies remain unfilled, nurses routinely post their stories of hardship on social media: of how they need to use food banks or face going hungry at the end of the month.

A mass recruitment of NHS staff must be coupled with a 15% pay rise, free training and the abolition of student nurse fees.

The answer to the problems facing the NHS and social care is a publicly owned, fully integrated, fully funded and democratically run service.

The need for our unions to step up and fight for the NHS has never been greater. The Tories have shown they cannot be trusted with our NHS and Covid-19 has just reaffirmed that.

Health workers are exhausted but angry. If the trade union leaders gave a clear lead in the fight for a 15% pay rise and against the health and care bill, it would inspire huge support from workers and youth.

• See also page 5



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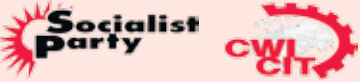
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."  
**Karl Marx**

# We cannot trust this government over Covid Fight for a new workers' party



## WHAT WE THINK

Confusion over rules and guidance, and a well-earned distrust of government actions have reigned throughout the Covid pandemic. It is no less so now, as legal restrictions are in the process of being lifted. Who can have any confidence in the measures of Johnson and Co after 18 months of witnessing their many failures, from non-delivery of PPE to the billions of pounds misspent or diverted to their rich friends?

The scandals along the way have become almost expected. Anger and disgust towards former government advisor Dominic Cummings had only just started to recede into history when it came surging back at another target: Matt Hancock, the resigned health minister, also caught breaking the rules they had created for the rest of us.

### U-turns

In addition, the U-turns continue. Ending legal restrictions would be irreversible, said Johnson. Irreversible was then changed to its opposite - reversible.

Meanwhile, Johnson urged everyone to be 'cautious'. Many people feel that their own caution and decisions can't be worse than those of the government. Even so, with Covid-19 - especially its variants - still too new for scientists to give categorical answers to many questions, the go-ahead for individuals to take their own precautions leaves many with unease or outright fear.

Socialists are at the forefront of fighting - in workplaces, communities, universities, everywhere - for measures that will help protect people from Covid. The Socialist has carried many articles, with more this week, showing our approach and some of the day-to-day demands we put forward. We argue for assessment and decision-making on the measures needed, led by trade unionists and other working-class representatives - democratic processes taking into account everyone's needs and views.

On a national level however, there isn't yet a mass workers' party in existence that could present a programme for national policies in the interests of ordinary people. The capitalist representatives in parliament today - in the 'opposition' parties as well Tory MPs - all tend towards one side or the other of a dismal 'choice' between ongoing compulsory anti-Covid rules that add to poverty and isolation, or the lifting of restrictions despite warnings from a layer of scientists of escalating mortality, more 'long Covid' cases and increased risk of variants.

Face masks have come under focus in that debate, due to a widespread and reasonable view that they are a



NHS staff protested to demand better PPE at the start of the pandemic. Chesterfield ELAINE EVANS



**We argue for assessment and decision-making on the measures needed led by trade unionists and other working-class representatives**

sensible precaution. The capitalist politicians can't even be trusted on that issue, as the BBC's health correspondent, Nick Triggle, inadvertently indicated when he wrote: "Behind the scenes, government scientists are broadly supportive of the lifting of restrictions. But one area of particular concern is the policy on masks. Not because mask wearing in some indoor settings will dramatically alter the course of rising infections, but because of the message it sends out. The feeling is that it gives the impression infections no longer matter".

They are all servants of a decaying system that can only offer the majority in society a price for the pandemic in one form or another, while fostering division over the possible forms. There is no reason for inadequate ventilation in school classrooms, dire

levels of financial support for those who need it, nightmare queues at airports, and so on, except a refusal by those in power to put enough money into public spending on adequate staffing and resources.

At the same time, they have allowed the number of billionaires in Britain to expand to 171 during the pandemic, with their combined wealth up by more than 20%.

Elected representatives of a mass workers' party, armed with socialist policies, could start to end this travesty, through championing the need to nationalise big businesses, releasing their resources for the good of all. This would need to go along with democratically organised economic planning, enabling people's needs in a pandemic like Covid to be met, as well as in all other respects.

## SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

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● Starting with the current issue of the Socialist we are entering our fortnightly summer schedule so that the editorial staff can take a well-earned break. The next issue will be published on 29 July. For updates see [socialistparty.org.uk](https://socialistparty.org.uk)

# Trade unions must continue the fight for Covid safety

KATRINE WILLIAMS

PCS TRADE UNION REP

The Tories are setting up another colossal experiment which could put wave three of the pandemic into super-exponential growth. Placing all the blame on us.

The 'learning to live with Covid' mantra just means the Tories are happy to accept more people will die and do nothing about it. This same phrase was repeated by the Welsh Labour Government health minister. The trade union movement must bring pressure on the devolved politicians to not just follow in Johnson's reckless footsteps.

Leaving the virus spread unchecked means it is more likely to mutate and become resistant to the vaccine. This is on top of the fact that a significant proportion of people are not fully vaccinated. Even those who have had both jabs can still contract Covid, spread the virus, and become ill.

Any increase in hospital admissions will put impossible pressure on exhausted NHS workers. The failing track-and-trace service must be brought into the public sector. We need to stop the Tories' plans to reduce the need to self-isolate which is the only effective way to break transmission. They are placing too much confidence in the rapid lateral flow tests that US regulators have recommended be thrown in the bin because of the danger of spurious performance claims.

One in five of those who have tested positive for Covid-19 have been affected by long Covid. In many cases this has a severe impact on people's ability to do day-to-day activities.

While the Tories are rushing to dump all the safety measures, employers still have a legal duty to protect workers from harm. They must risk assess the workplace and trade unions must ensure that employers take into account that the risks associated with Covid-19 are still severe, with life-threatening or long-term debilitating consequences from contracting the virus.

### Trade union demands

Trade unions must make demands on employers to protect workers and the public by:

- No forced return to the workplace. Any return and on what basis only in agreement with the union
- Full safety measures to protect all members at home and in the workplace, including supportive measures on mental health and stress
- Full pay for all workers who need to self-isolate
- Support transport and retail unions' demands for face coverings and social distancing to remain on public transport and in shops

Where work does need to be done in the workplace unions must demand:

- Full risk assessment done with the union safety reps
- Keep all safety measures in place to stop onward transmission of Covid in the workplace
- Minimise staffing levels to only levels to deliver essential work that cannot be done from home.
- Additional cleaning of all

touchpoint surfaces regularly through the day

- Ensure all indoor spaces are well ventilated with fresh air throughout the day
- Flexibility for workers to travel when it is quietest
- Individual risk assessments for workers who are even more at risk with underlying health conditions, clinically extremely vulnerable workers and black workers. And for those not yet vaccinated.
- No use of sickness absence procedures to penalise those self-isolating
- No use of unreliable quick lateral flow tests to reduce self-isolation time
- Full support and reasonable adjustments for workers suffering from long Covid

### Unions must mobilise

Trade unions must mobilise our members to prevent any attempts to remove safety measures in workplaces. Alongside using the health and safety legislation on serious and imminent danger (Section 44 of the 1996 Employment Act), where necessary

It is also clear that the fight for safety must address the impact of austerity, which has been a major contributing factor to the high Covid-19 death rate that has swept through working-class communities.

The fight for safety needs to include wider demands for job security, decent pay, reversal of cuts to our services, affordable good quality housing and a shorter working week, with no loss of pay. As well as resisting any attempts by the Tories to make us pay for the pandemic.



## 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.

- 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!

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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# Keep the Universal Credit uplift

## End low pay and poverty benefits

LINDSEY MORGAN  
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

The Tory government has said it will scrap the £20 a week uplift to Universal Credit (UC) in the autumn. This is despite the fact that six former work and pensions secretaries disagree, and the widespread public support to keep it.

Tory MP Andrew Rosindell called the uplift introduced during the pandemic, a 'handout' and said: "I think there are people that quite like getting the extra handout but maybe don't need it". 37% of people on Universal Credit are in work; their piss-poor wages from greedy bosses topped up by our tax money.

That twenty quid, which is just a snack out for the rich, is the difference between stockied-up cupboards, or electricity on the meter, or travel costs to work for many.

If you're on UC you need every penny you get. Taking away this money will hit the most vulnerable the hardest yet again. We are not only demanding that the £20 uplift stays, but that it be extended to all those on legacy benefits who have missed out on this money. This includes a huge number of long-term disabled claimants who are still claiming Employment Support Allowance.

Many people who have been ill long term were unable to risk shopping around for bargains, and had to spend more on shopping

locally rather than risk contracting Covid-19 in the big supermarkets. Despite the Tory lies, we had many increased expenses due to Covid-19, including the cost of teaching our kids at home.

### Tory lies

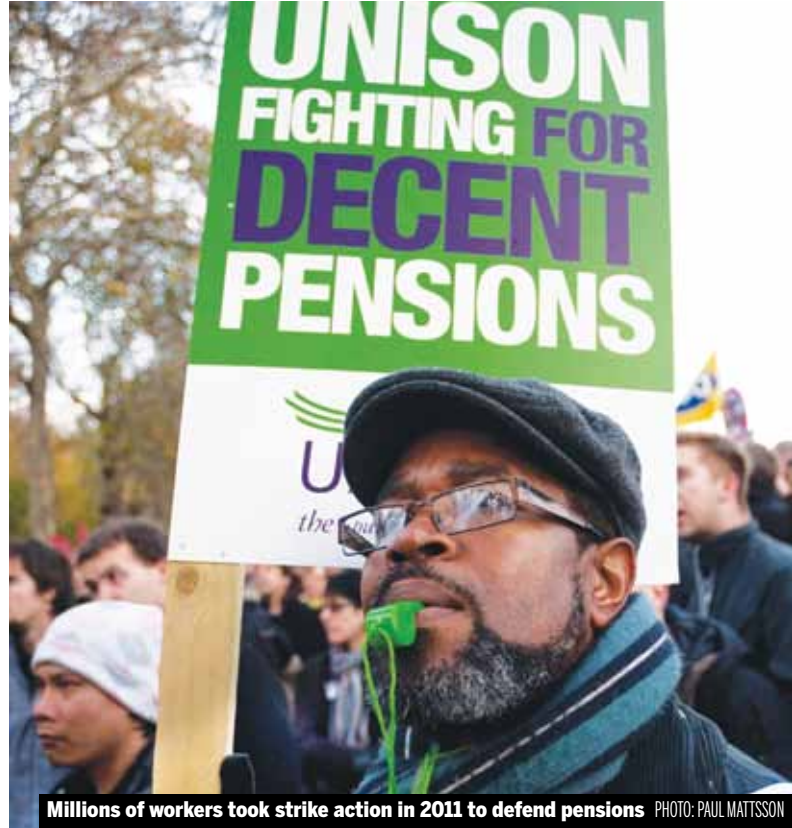
They make it sound like the money is a favour; benevolently gifted, but no longer needed. In every way that's a lie. As furlough ends and more people end up out of work or in lower-paid work, we need as much financial support as we can get. Trade unions must have a leading role in the fight to keep the uplift, end poverty pay, and increase the level of benefits. The Unite Community-led day of action on 15 July must be a start. But we can't depend on the heartless Tories to see sense, or to understand the long-term threat to their system a weak benefits system contributes to.

A well overdue long-term overhaul of the benefit system is needed, a real living wage of £12 an hour as a step towards £15, and a united class battle against the bosses who pit workers and the unemployed against each other in a 'race to the bottom'.

We need to take the wealth for ourselves by nationalising the top 150 companies and big banks under democratic workers control and management. As part of a socialist plan the wealth can be used to end low pay and poverty benefits for good.

# Defend the triple lock

## Fight to end poverty pensions



Millions of workers took strike action in 2011 to defend pensions PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

TERRY PEARCE  
SOCIALIST PARTY AND THAMES VALLEY NATIONAL PENSIONER CONVENTION

More than 2.1 million British pensioners are living in poverty after paying housing costs, a rise of 200,000 on the previous year, and the highest for 15 years. Yet the Tories, and shamefully Labour, are threatening to weaken the triple lock on pensions which keeps pension rises in line with inflation,

earnings or 2.5%, whichever is the highest. Keeping the triple lock was a Tory election pledge in 2019.

According to the triple lock formula, pensioners would be in line for an 8% rise next year. The Tories have tried to drive a wedge between pensioners and young people by falsely painting pensioners as living a life of luxury on their inflated pensions. Reality is of course quite different.

The maximum UK state pension is only £179.60, just one-third of the

value of the German state pension, and half of the French pension. In fact, the UK state pension is below the £212.00 minimum income required for an inner London single pensioner to not be in poverty. In other words, the UK state pension is below the official poverty line.

If the triple lock goes, pensions will fall even further. Pensioners have already seen the over 75s free TV license scrapped, and there is now talk of increasing the age at which free prescriptions can be claimed (see page 5). Fuel poverty and winter deaths are already creating real problems for many pensioners. If the triple lock goes, how long will it be before the free bus pass and winter fuel allowance follow suit?

Labour is hinting that it will support reform of the triple lock. We need MPs who will defend pensioners from these attacks on living standards! The trade unions should remember that their members are the pensioners of the future, and if current state pensions are weakened, their members will face a miserable life in retirement. Therefore, we need to build unity between existing pensioners and workers in the trade unions, many of whom face a future with minimal or low pensions in retirement.

Trade unionists, pensioners and youth unite to refuse to pay for the Covid crisis:

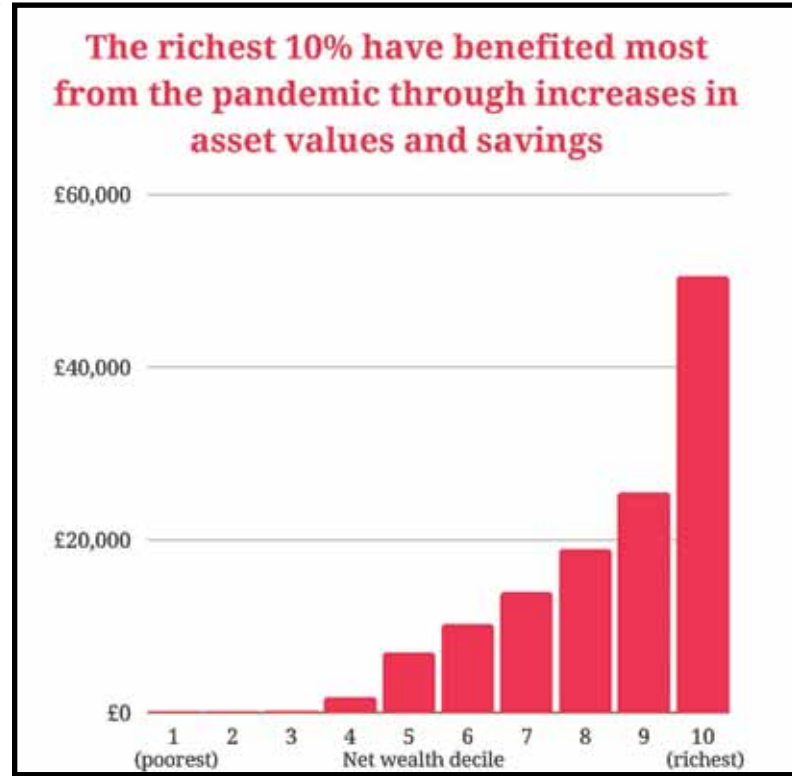
- **Defend the triple lock, free bus passes and winter fuel allowance**
- **Bring back free TV licenses for the over 75s**
- **An immediate 50% increase in the state pension, as a step towards a living pension.**

# Wealth chasm widens

The rich have got richer during the pandemic. For those who own expensive property or other assets, they have seen a big jump in their family wealth, widening the already existing wealth chasm. The continued rise in house prices has helped. Not much use if you are a lower-paid worker looking to buy a home.

A year of Covid restrictions has meant that those who are better off have been less likely to spend and have increased their savings. For those worse off, they are more likely to have lost their job, taken a 20% pay cut on furlough, or taken the opportunity to pay off debts.

The report states that total UK wealth has increased by £900 billion during the course of the pandemic. It is clear that the Tories want to keep this wealth in the hands of the rich. That explains the planned end of the Universal Credit uplift and triple lock on pensions (see above). It is also clear that Labour is unprepared to challenge them. We need a new mass workers' party that fights in the interests of the working class with a socialist programme to take the wealth off the super-rich to end poverty and inequality.



Median change in family wealth per adult as a result of asset price changes and active saving and debt changes since the onset of the pandemic, by net wealth decile (February 2020 to May 2021) FIGURES FROM RESOLUTION FOUNDATION

# Scrap the privatising health and care bill

## For a publicly funded, democratically run, NHS



Protesting in defence of the NHS in 2017 PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

The Tories are in the process of forcing their new health and care bill through parliament, despite opposition from NHS campaigners and trade unionists. We interviewed **Dave Nellist**, Socialist Party member and secretary of Coventry 'Keep our NHS public' to find out what the bill means for those of us fighting to save our NHS.

### What are the major changes introduced in the Tories' new health and care bill?

The bill breaks the NHS in England into 42 population areas of between one and three million people, with separate budgets, controlled by new Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). NHS England will set the budget for each ICB.

Separate budgets could lead to different healthcare priorities in ICBs, producing regional inequalities, more usually called 'post-code lotteries.'

Separate budgets could also open

the door to weakening current NHS workers' national pay agreements. And proposals in the bill to allow deregulation of NHS professions could lead to deskilling and more 'flexible' staff who are easier to fire and cheaper!

The government has used the pandemic to give tens of billions of pounds in contracts to private companies with little scrutiny - much of it to firms with links to the Tories themselves.

This bill makes permanent the privatisation and cronyism of the last 15 months. It removes the rules for competitive tendering - not by bringing in-house the capacity for making medical equipment, PPE, or running test and trace etc - but to allow

contracts to be awarded, for example, to private healthcare providers, without considering other bids.

### How does the bill give more power to private companies looking to make a profit?

The bill embeds big business further into NHS decision-making - allowing private companies a seat on the new ICBs and associated Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). Billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin Care already has a seat on the precursor to the ICB in Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire.

Big business will be at the centre of NHS decision-making, on how budgets are spent, on how contracts are awarded, and on which services are, or are not, provided. It will be primarily, and legally, responsible for the profits of shareholders, not the needs of local people.

The ICB will control the budget.

NHS England and the government will appoint the chair. The ICP will develop an area-wide health strategy and have a representative from each 'relevant' local authority, plus others appointed by the ICP, such as social care providers that are overwhelmingly privatised.

Nowhere is there any provision for members of the boards or partnerships to be elected, or even that board meetings will be in public, with agendas published in advance. The bill talks about transparency but doesn't deliver it.

### How do the changes affect what influence working-class communities have over what health services are delivered?

Each ICB will deliver healthcare over a vast area with no real, local control. The power to 'reconfigure'

services, ie close them, will be more centralised. At the moment, local authorities have certain powers of oversight and scrutiny regarding health, and can be susceptible to local public pressure against a hospital's closure, for example. This bill gives the secretary of state powers to call in decisions on closures - perhaps at an earlier stage, before public campaigns can be built.

### What next for the campaign against the bill? What changes to the NHS do socialists support?

Over much of the last 30 years, Labour and Tory administrations have had an overlapping agenda to run the NHS as a 'market' instead of a public service.

There are over 100 hospitals funded by Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), half of these with their business centres in tax havens. PFI, the internal market and private involvement drains billions of pounds from the NHS and into private profit every year and should be ended.

We need an NHS that is entirely publicly funded and democratically controlled and managed - involving staff through their trade unions, patients and representatives of local communities. Pharmaceutical and major medical equipment manufacturers should be nationalised and integrated into the NHS.

Current health minister Sajid Javid has warned that NHS waiting lists could rise from a massive 5.3 million people, to an enormous 13 million people waiting for treatment. This bill does not address this crisis, or the huge staff shortages. It does not propose anything for social care, which Boris Johnson claimed to have 'a plan' for 18 months ago. It does not reverse the decade of austerity and underinvestment.

But it does propose a further reorganisation of the NHS, opening the door wider to big business and private profit, and should be opposed. The trade unions need to urgently organise a national demonstration in the autumn against this Bill and in favour of real public ownership and democratic accountability for the NHS.



PAUL MATTSSON



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

# Tories threaten to cut free prescriptions for older workers

Nearly four million people in England who currently qualify for free prescriptions face paying £9.35 per item if the Tories carry out their plan to raise the qualification age from 60 to 66.

The government 'consultation' (read marketing exercise) on the change was quietly launched on 1 July and runs to 2 September.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) itself admits "the policy would affect some lower income groups more severely", and that some 264,000 people are "likely to be deterred" from collecting

their prescriptions because of the charge. The DHSC describes this as

a "small negative impact in health inequalities".

Raising the age for free prescriptions will badly impact older people's health. In a 2017 survey of 5,600 people in England with long term medical conditions, the Prescription Charges Coalition found that 33% had not collected a prescription due to cost and 15% sometimes or often skipped or reduced their doses because of cost. This led to poorer health and lost time from work.

While approximately 40% of the population in England currently qualify for free prescriptions (by age, receipt of certain state benefits, or certain medical conditions), many

chronic conditions, such as asthma and arthritis, are not included for exemptions. Cancer was only added to the list in 2009.

£576 million was raised through prescription charges in 2018-19. The Tories hope to raise a further £300 million a year from this change.

Prescriptions are already free of charge in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and should be in England too. Trade unions must oppose the Tories' plans and demand free prescriptions for all, together with the nationalisation and integration into the NHS of the pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies.



## Bexley bin workers strike

Bexley bin workers have started a two-week strike. Taking confidence from the recent victory of bin workers at Thurrock, another Tory-controlled council, workers are striking against private company Serco.

The refuse and cleaning contract has recently been retendered by Bexley council. But the workers' union Unite understands that Serco is the only bidder because the profit margins are so low. Bexley council plans to reduce the contract by £2.5 million over five years - a move that Unite warned could result in years of industrial unrest if staff bear the brunt.

The 140 Serco refuse and cleaning workers began striking from 25 July, with a picket line between 5am and 10am being held every weekday. Serco has failed for half a decade to

include refuse and cleansing staff on a stipulated pay progression scale. The situation has led to instances of refuse truck drivers being on the same pay scale as street sweepers, with some staff being owed thousands in back wages.

Workers are also angry at the company's 2021 pay offer of 1.5%. Unite members have worked throughout successive national lockdowns to keep the service running, risking their own safety as well as that of their families.

Refuse staff in Bexley earn much less than their counterparts in other areas of the capital. For example, in neighbouring Greenwich refuse staff earn a minimum of £13 an hour, compared to £10.25 paid by Serco in Bexley, which is below even the London Living Wage.

We call for an end to privatisation in local government and across the public sector, and for all outsourced workers to be brought back in-house.

## Labour council sacks GMB rep

Hundreds have signed a petition in defence council caretaker and GMB rep Gary Bolister who was dismissed after 24 years' service. Gary took part in a Facebook live video as part of a protest against Islington road closures in November last year.

During the clip Gary appeared in but did not film, an Islington councillor was inadvertently filmed in her home. The video was immediately stopped when the camera operator realised. Gary, who was mourning

the loss of his father at the time, expressed full remorse - offering to write an apology to the councillor. Despite this - and despite 24 years of unblemished service - Islington Council sacked Gary and refused his appeal.

Workers protested outside the council offices in support of Gary on 8 July and were furious at the Labour-run council. They told Socialist Party members that they were angry union money is being paid to the Labour Party when it does this to GMB members and reps.

● *Sign the petition at: [gmbblondon.org.uk/re-instate-gary-bolister-campaign-petition](https://gmbblondon.org.uk/re-instate-gary-bolister-campaign-petition)*

## Dangerous new lorry driver legislation

Unions have condemned a relaxation of safety rules restricting lorry drivers' working hours. Transport and distribution unions Unite and Usdaw said that the government's move would not address a shortage of heavy goods vehicle drivers, estimated at more than 75,000.

The decision is to 'allow' drivers temporarily to work shifts of ten hours rather than nine, plus up to two eleven-hour stints a week. Demanding better pay and conditions to attract new entrants, Unite national officer Adrian Jones said:

"Asking an already exhausted workforce to work even longer is likely to make an already difficult situation worse.

"Unite will be advising its members not to place themselves in danger and that if they are too tired to drive safely they have a legal right to refuse to do so.

"Unite will fully support those who make that decision, legally and industrially."

Udaw national officer Mark Todd said: "This short-term response to the much greater problem of driver shortages is not the answer.

"The government needs to make the industry more attractive through improving employment rights and ensuring higher pay for workers."

**National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) organising meeting: Stop the freeports race to the bottom - 7.30pm Wednesday 21 July**

The NSSN would like to thank Solidarity Shouts for merging their planned meeting on Freeports into ours. They are supporting this meeting along with Southampton and South West Hampshire Trades Union Council and others.

Join Zoom Meeting at meeting ID: 825 1845 7821, passcode: 429630

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# Dagenham school workers strike against 'fire and rehire' pay cuts



JAY COWARD

EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

School workers at Valence Primary School in Dagenham, east London are on strike against grim mistreatment through 'fire and rehire' pay cuts and demotions.

Management at this community school - run by a Labour council - plans detrimental changes to the lives of Valence Primary staff. These include forcing teachers to reapply for positions they already hold but with less pay and benefits, and proposing pay cuts or demotions for a third of the workforce.

The need for a working-class political alternative to the Tories and Labour is clear from the role of multiple Labour councils like this one backing attacks on school workforces.

On the picket line it's evident that the workers at Valence Primary are full of passion for the children they teach and supportive of one another and their students' parents. School workers have suffered years of real-terms pay cuts from austerity, then put their lives on the line in the pandemic. They should be getting pay rises, not cuts and demotions!

### Driven out

The workforce could be demoralised by this abuse, and some could end up driven out. This would also lower the quality of care and education for the students, and increase further the workload for remaining staff.

After management refused to listen, the school workers rightly decided to stand up for themselves collectively. The Barking and

Dagenham branch of the National Education Union is due to hold its fifth and sixth days of strike action in three weeks as we go to press.

The NEU is picking up new members in the school, and the union is fully prepared to call further action if there is not meaningful negotiation from the employer.

East London Socialist Party is completely in support of the Valence Primary strike.

Schools across the country are facing similar circumstances, after years of the government driving down conditions without a national fightback being led by the unions. The same support Valence has had is required nationally for the good of school workers and a proper education system for the working class.

# Brush workers into eighth week of strike



Unite members at Brush Electrics are now eight weeks into their strike against 'fire and rehire'. Their pay and conditions are being devastated by the contracts being imposed on the workers under the threat of 'sign or be sacked'.

Dale Clarke, Unite rep, spoke to the Socialist on the picket line: "We are going through an appeals process to overturn the decision, but that's highly unlikely as it's a director who is doing the appeals! The last of those meetings is on 21 July, they will then give us an outcome, and after that we will be given 72 hours to sign or be fired.

"We attempted to negotiate again with the management following the change of ownership of Brush Electrical to One Equity Partners, but they refused to change any part of the contract. We finally got a response from One Equity to say they were quite happy with what Brush is doing.

"We will continue picketing and plan to leaflet in Loughborough."

STEVE SCORE

LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

# St Mungo's strikers end 12-week strike



UNITE 1111 HOUSING BRANCH OFFICER

St. Mungo's strikers have now been out on strike for 12 weeks. On 13 July, Unite celebrated their efforts by holding a small protest to salute their sacrifices, sending them back to work with their heads held high in preparation for the next stage of their struggle against workplace bullying.

So while the strike may be over for now, Unite remains in dispute with Mungo's.

The team demanded an independent investigation of St Mungo's handling of their grievance. It was management's refusal to even discuss this that led to the strike. Now St Mungos have agreed to an investigation. But the rep who has been suspended remains on suspension.

Beckie, one of the strikers, summed up her experiences: "I joined St Mungo's in January this year, hopeful I was joining a caring and compassionate organisation. It's a charity, so caring is what's expected, right? Within my first couple of weeks, I answered the survey sent around by Steve Douglas with glowing praise. I was brand new, and my first impressions of Mungo's were very positive. Honestly, now I just feel guilty that my answers contributed

to organisational propaganda that Mungo's has a zero tolerance of bullying, when our team's experiences show this isn't at all the case."

When Beckie realised that she had been sold a lie by her employer, she decided to get even, joined Unite, and then voted for and took active part in the strike action.

A number of the strikers have now been made redundant or have decided to resign rather than return to a potentially bullying atmosphere at their former workplace. To continue with the strike in its current guise would have required a further ballot and those balloting would no longer have benefitted from employment protection. This would mean that Mungo's could decide to sack them so workers have decided, temporarily, to call a pause to industrial action.

For those who do return, it will be with the knowledge that their union, Unite, is continuing to fight with and for them. Councillors in London, Bristol and Oxford have all attended our picket lines, and have pledged their support for the Mungo's strikers. They have written to Mungo's demanding an end to bullying and an independent inquiry into the issue.

Vicko Plevnick was, unbelievably, suspended from his work merely for

the crime of alleging workplace bullying! St Mungo's is largely funded through local authority contracts and a number of councillors have now offered support for the strikers, attending picket lines and raising concerns with management.

Although Unite recognises these small steps, we are not convinced that the so-called independent consultant is independent at all, or that her report will genuinely consider the testimony of the workers who have been bullied. That is why Unite will continue to mount pressure on Mungo's independently.

We will be pushing for a serious review of governance to consider the role of the organisation's leadership in relation to bullying. We believe that many St Mungo's services remain excellent, but the behaviour of senior management risks undermining the culture and presents a growing safeguarding risk. So the fight must continue.

At the rally, Unite's regional official thanked the branch but also the Socialist Party and the National Shop Stewards Network for its unstinting support for the strikers, noting that solidarity is what keeps workers going and wins disputes. Watch this space for further action!

# Telecoms workers angry at CWU deal with BT



CLIVE WALDER

CWU MIDLANDS NO1 BRANCH (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

After two stays of execution, BT and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) believe they have reached an agreement that will prevent a national strike over compulsory redundancies, site closures and relocation.

Unfortunately, this is not because BT has given in to the perfectly justified demands of the union, but because the union leadership has signed up to a framework agreement which offers next to nothing to reassure BT workers that they have a future with the company.

After receiving no consolidated pay rise this year, BT workers will receive one next year. But no figures were suggested and the company says that the rise will depend on various factors, including business performance, economic outlook and inflation.

BT has agreed to review some of the sites earmarked for closure, and will now only close sites where it 'anticipates workers could relocate from'. No guidelines are proposed on what is considered reasonable. A well-paid, car-driving manager may well have a very different idea of a reasonable alternative location to a non-manager who relies on public transport and may have caring responsibilities. The union failed to press for home working as an alternative to inconvenient and costly relocation.

BT says job cuts will be "achieved through natural attrition as much as possible", and that they will "avoid compulsory redundancy where we reasonably can." Not surprisingly, BT is now being viewed much more favourably by the market. That is what has driven these vicious proposals.

Although more detail will emerge in the coming weeks, the CWU has agreed outline proposals that

promise absolutely nothing concrete to its members. All this has been done without a ballot of the membership, which has been established policy for major agreements for many years. Socialist Party members in the CWU had repeatedly warned that backing off from industrial action would in all probability, encourage BT to push ahead with its job-slashing agenda.

The anger of ordinary CWU members was evident in the barrage of critical comments on the union's official Facebook page. At the time of writing, not a single comment in support has been seen. Many members are angry that they will not get a vote on the agreement. Socialist Party members in the CWU demand a ballot so that the members can have their say. There can be no agreement without membership endorsement.

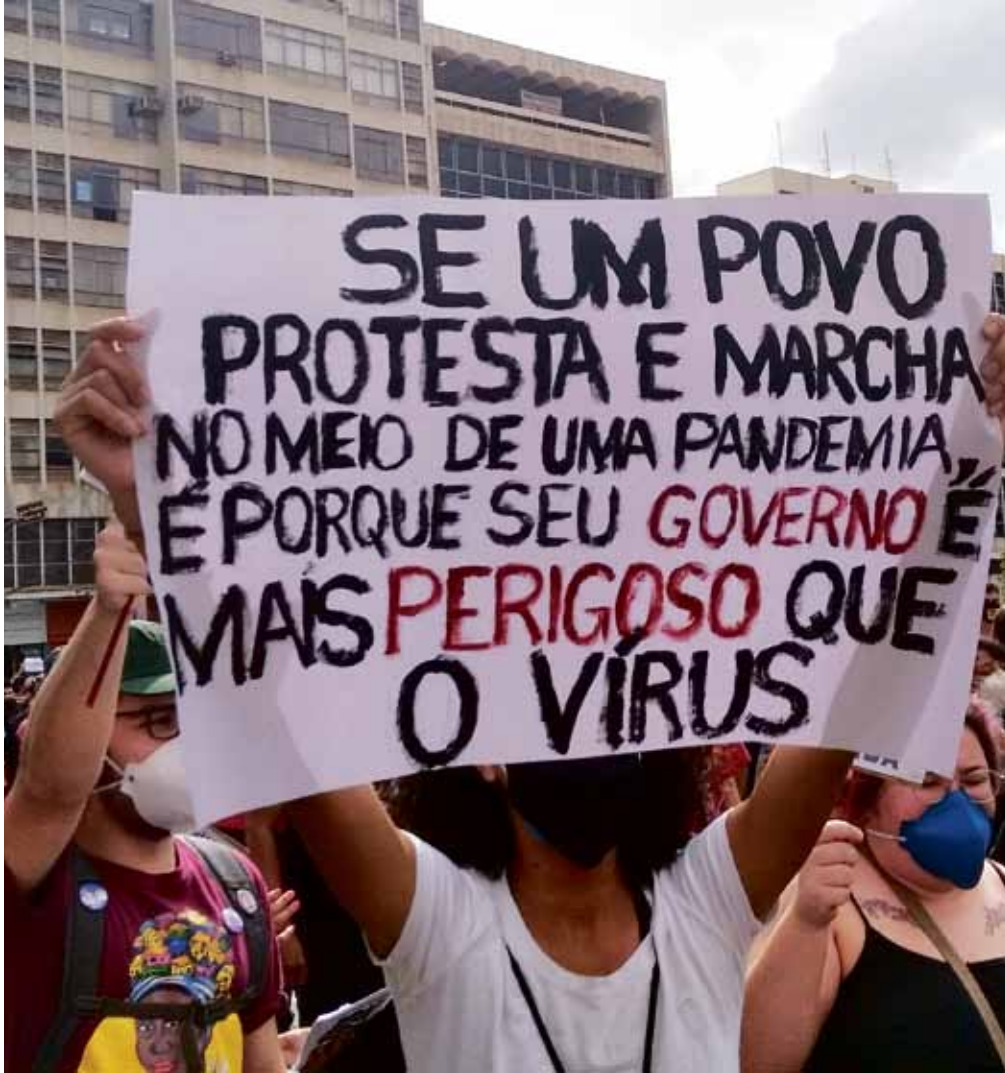
One member said the union was given a mandate to walk out and demonstrate its worth to the company not to just talk to them. It is no accident that there won't be a vote, it is very likely the leadership would suffer a humiliating defeat in a ballot.

Amazingly, this is happening as CWU members are voting for their executive for the next two years. That there is no opposition to the executive to the architects of this potential jobs massacre shows the urgent need to build a robust left in the telecoms section of the CWU to defend members in the future.

### Vote for Gary Clark

● **Socialist Party Scotland member Gary Clark is a candidate for the Communication Workers Union's national executive and postal executive. CWU members can vote for Gary, who is branch secretary of Scotland No 2 branch, until the ballot closes on 3 August. See 'Support Gary Clark for CWU executive' at [socialistparty.org.uk](https://socialistparty.org.uk) for more**





Bolsonaro's corrupt mishandling of the Covid pandemic has spurred massive protests PHOTO PARZEUS/CC

TONY SAUNOIS

SECRETARY, COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL (CWI)

Latin America continues to be ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic, with no end in sight. The horrific death toll of 1,303,000 officially recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean is likely the worst experienced on the continent since the arrival of the conquistadors from Spain and Portugal.

By far the worst case is Brazil, with over 531,000 'massacred' by the far-right populist government of Jair Bolsonaro. Peru, with 193,000 deaths, has the unenviable claim of the highest number of deaths per head of population of any country in the world.

The health crisis has had a devastating effect on the economy, driving millions more into destitution and poverty. As the regional GDP (total economic output) plummeted by 7% in 2020, millions more people fell into poverty, taking the estimated total to nearly 250 million. In Brazil alone, an estimated 18 million crashed into poverty during 2020.

2020 also saw a resurgence of a revolutionary wave sweeping the continent: mass mobilisations and a political radicalisation to the left in many countries. Although at the same time, there were elements of counterrevolution.

In April this year, a revolutionary movement began in Colombia and lasted for over a month. This involved a general strike and mass protests mobilising millions of workers, indigenous peoples, youth and others, threatening the murderous government of President Iván Duque with overthrow.

Forced into offering a concession on its proposed increase in VAT, the government responded with brutal repression, gunning down more than 40 protesters and leaving more than 100 people 'missing'.

In the same month in Chile, mass protests and a general strike call, which demanded that workers be allowed to withdraw a further 10% from their pension funds in order to survive, defeated the Piñera government. This was then followed in May by a crushing defeat of the right and traditional parties in elections to the Constitutional Convention (to rewrite the Pinochet-era dictatorship constitution). Of the 155 convention members elected, the right-wing 'Vamos Chile' secured just 37 and the 'centre-right' Concertación a mere 25.

The elections to this body were the by-product of the mass revolutionary wave which swept the country in 2019. The winners in the election were the left, including a block of 'independents' which won seats along with the Communist Party. The other big 'winner' was abstentions, given that the turnout was only 44%.

Then in June this year, the capitalist class in Peru suffered a big defeat when the left candidate, Pedro Castillo, narrowly won the presidential elections, defeating Keiko Fujimori - daughter of the former dictator Alberto Fujimori.

Protests have also rocked Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and many other countries, including Haiti, where - prior to the recent assassination of President Jovenel Moïse - a mass upsurge in struggle threatened the overthrow of the government.

As these events have unfolded throughout the continent, Brazil has plunged into political turmoil and upheaval as Bolsonaro faces his biggest crisis since coming to power. The horrific health, economic and political crises have delivered a hammer blow to Bolsonaro's murderous regime.

The decision by the judiciary to release from prison Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, 'left' president of Brazil from 2003-2010, is a potentially devastating blow to Bolsonaro's regime.



**Latin America was in the midst of a serious economic crisis even prior to the onset of Covid-19. This has been compounded by the pandemic**

# NEW WAVE OF RADICALISATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Opinion polls point to Lula, from the Workers' Party (PT), beating Bolsonaro by a crushing majority in elections scheduled for 2022. Big protests have taken place throughout Brazil against Bolsonaro. These are fuelled by the latest revelations of corruption charges against him.

The coming to power of the right in a number of countries did not represent a powerful ideological swing to the right. Much of the electoral support these forces won was a reaction against the failures of the previous 'left' governments - the so-called 'pink wave' which had swept the continent but failed to break with capitalism through revolutionary democratic socialist measures. These governments, often involved in corruption scandals, became identified as the 'political establishment' as far as big sections of society were concerned.

The massive protests that brought millions to the streets in Brazil in 2013, ignited by transport fare increases, showed the anger which existed in Brazil at the time. It was, however, not directed against one political party but against all the parties and political institutions.

## Bolsonaro regime

The resulting political vacuum allowed Bolsonaro to step in to 'save the country' and 'restore order'. He is like Trump - but on steroids! Openly supporting the military dictatorship which ruled from 1964-85, Bolsonaro's only criticism of it is that it 'did not kill enough people' and failed to 'exterminate the left'!

The Bolsonaro regime has stumbled from crisis to crisis but is determined to cling to power. Despite collapsing support in the polls, it is not excluded that Bolsonaro may try to use the military, or a section of it, and attempt a coup should he lose, or be threatened with losing, next year's election.

Although the commanders-in-chief of the army, navy and air force resigned in protest at his actions, he still retains a base of support within the armed forces. Should a coup be attempted, it is certain to provoke an explosion of opposition and wave of struggle.

Fear of such a development will mean the main sections of the ruling class will strive to avoid such a development. However, the deranged regime of Bolsonaro is not under their control, as events have already demonstrated.

Explosive developments of this character in Latin America's largest and most powerful country will have repercussions throughout the continent and internationally. Latin America was in the midst of a serious

economic crisis even prior to the onset of Covid-19. This has been compounded by the pandemic.

Argentina has been devastated. The economy officially shrank by 10% in 2020 - the third straight year of recession. Four out of ten Argentinians are living in poverty. Gripped by stagflation, the Peronist government of Alberto Fernández is divided and in turmoil over how to deal with the crisis. This includes a massive foreign debt - US\$45 billion to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) alone.

Brutal austerity conditions were imposed by the IMF on the former right-wing government of Mauricio Macri which negotiated the deal. The austerity measures he introduced provoked a series of general strikes and opened the way for the Peronists to return to power. But they also now face a deepening political and social crisis.

The IMF and Paris Club (capitalist world powers' 'debt collectors') are now adopting a more 'lenient' approach to debt repayment for fear of triggering a social explosion and the possibility of a debt default, which would have serious international repercussions.

Argentina is the IMF's largest debtor at this stage. The demand for non-payment of the crippling foreign debt, together with nationalisation of the banks under democratic workers' control and management, is one of the key demands for revolutionary socialists in Latin America.

The crucial question for the working class and youth is how these struggles can be advanced to victory; how the corrupt regimes in power and the capitalist system can be defeated.

While a new revolutionary wave is sweeping much of the continent, a big

political vacuum also exists, with the absence of mass parties of the working class. The absence of combative democratic organisations to spearhead the struggles which have taken place, with a programme and strategy to take the movement forward, has resulted in the movements becoming dispersed or entering a downturn for a period.

This is graphically reflected in Chile. In 2019, the Piñera government was left hanging in mid-air and could have been overthrown, but for the lack of organisation of the movement and a programme to take it forward.

The government was saved in November 2019 by the 'agreement for peace and the new constitution', which was supported by the big majority of the political blocs in the congress.

However, the social movement was not defeated, it merely entered a low ebb. The recent elections to the Constitutional Convention are a product of the mass movement in a distorted form. But the political vacuum still remains in the convention itself. Failure to satisfy the demands of the mass movement will see its revival in the coming months, posing in an even sharper manner the need for organisation and a political voice of the working class with revolutionary socialist policies.

In Colombia, the movement did assume a more organised form through the national strike committee (CNP), comprised of trade unions and some students unions. Unfortunately, this was held back by the trade union leaders.

Local strike and defence committees which were formed needed to come together in a national assembly of elected delegates to agree a plan

to overthrow the government and replace it with one of workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, and the poor. Rather than launch a struggle to overthrow the capitalist government, which was hanging by a thread, the CNP called off the protests.

The need for an independent organisation and programme of the working class is central to the success of the new wave of political radicalisation. The pressure to seek agreement with 'progressive' or 'democratic' sections of the capitalist class is re-emerging in these movements, resulting in parties and leaders on the left compromising on programme to form alliances with them.

## Progressive capitalism

Unity of the masses - of workers, youth and all those exploited by capitalism - is necessary. Yet this is not the same as reaching a compromise with 'liberal' capitalists, which is the road to defeat of the movement.

In Brazil, one of the leaders of PSOL (Socialism and Liberty Party), Marcelo Freixo, has left the party which he helped to establish in 2005. He has joined the capitalist misnamed Brazilian Socialist Party, claiming the next election would not be about "left versus right, but civilisation against barbarism".

He argued that leaving the party was necessary to attract right-wing figures who oppose Bolsonaro, adding that PSOL would eventually join a coalition with the right anti-Bolsonaro forces.

The Committee for a Workers' International is in favour of PSOL standing in any presidential election and fighting for an independent class position to prepare the forces to fight for a socialist alternative. In the second round of the election, most likely Bolsonaro against Lula, a vote against Bolsonaro would be necessary.

The victory of Castillo in Peru, and growth of the party that supported him - Peru Libre, which adheres to 'Marxism and Leninism' - has terrified the ruling class. The crucial question now is what measures Castillo will take to break with capitalism.

While his election represented a big step forward, during the campaign he moderated his programme. Since his election, his economic advisors have argued that his government will respect the market and honour Peru's foreign debt repayments.

Castillo's victory will open a new chapter in the struggles of the masses in Peru, and the prospect of a mass movement could force him in a more radical direction. However, if a programme to break with capitalism is not implemented, it will give the



**An independent organisation and programme of the working class is central to the success of the new wave of political radicalisation**



Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro - like Donald Trump but on steroids! PHOTO PALACIO DO PLANALTO/NSAC NOBREGA/PR/CC

reactionary right-wing forces time to regroup and strike back.

In Bolivia, former left-leaning president Evo Morales failed to break with capitalism and was removed by an effective coup in 2019, following which his government resigned.

This is a warning to Castillo. Although elections in 2020 saw Morales' party MAS (Movement for Socialism) returned to power in Bolivia, it remains imprisoned in capitalism, without the economic benefit which Morales had for much of his terms in office, based on the boom in commodity prices.

During this new wave of upheaval and struggle, it is crucial that the lessons of the 'pink wave' are learnt. The revolutionary upheavals went furthest in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. Yet the failure to break with capitalism, and the top-down, bureaucratic, corrupt methods used by most of the leadership in those countries, acted as a break on the movement and resulted in social and economic catastrophe, especially in Venezuela and Ecuador.

In Ecuador, this has allowed the right wing to make a comeback for a period. Venezuela, like some other countries, including parts of Mexico, faces social disintegration and a humanitarian disaster as millions have fled the country.

The US embargo on Venezuela and Cuba, continued by Biden, has undoubtedly worsened the situation. However, with a rupture with capitalism and a real system of democratic workers' control and management this could have been overcome, and an appeal made to the working class of the rest of Latin America.

The need for a politically conscious movement of the working class with workers' democracy and control is crucial. Bureaucratic, top-down methods are not the road to achieve the socialist revolution.

The situation in Nicaragua underlines the disaster such methods can

lead to. There, the Sandinista revolution in 1979 overthrew the Somoza dictatorship. However, the revolution did not conclusively break with capitalism and used bureaucratic administrative methods. Sections of the leadership, especially Daniel Ortega, swung to right.

Defeated by the US-backed Violeta Chamorro in the elections in 1990, Ortega was returned to power in 2006, having agreed a pact with the Roman Catholic Church. He now rules a corrupt dynasty with his wife as vice-president.

An uprising in 2018 was brutally repressed. Arresting opponents, including former Sandinistas in this election, the Ortega regime has morphed back into Somoza 2.0. The same process has gripped Venezuela under Maduro.

The new wave of struggle and political radicalisation sharply poses the need to build mass parties of the working class with a revolutionary socialist programme. The absence of these forces opens the prospect of a more protracted series of struggles and upheavals - of struggle between the forces of revolution and counter-revolution - until this issue of the crisis of leadership is resolved.



CWI Chile members on the watershed 2019 protests PHOTO SR/CC



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# Why I joined the Socialist Party

## Workers’ poverty and rich profits shifted me left

AISHA KHAN  
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

My political interests stemmed from awareness of social issues - discrimination around race, gender, sexuality, and particularly from being a feminist. Those issues remain the most presented in the media, more so than economic issues.

Yet, behind all the current movements like Black Lives Matter and Pride are socioeconomic conditions, fuelling discrimination and division, leaving marginalised communities even more ostracised when they lack a stable financial situation.

Seeing the crisis with homelessness, poor conditions faced by low-income households, and the realisation that the most fundamental necessities of survival are often privatised and used for profit by wealthy corporations and the top 1%, shifted me to a more radical left.

The idea of basic necessities being free is absolutely normal. While it should not be a radical idea, it becomes so under a capitalist system that steals the hard labour of workers.

Through looking into the injustice of the entire system, I affiliated myself with socialism. I continued to post on social media, yet I had not found anything in person to get involved with.

So when I found a Socialist Party poster on the university campus, I applied to join. I wanted to become actively involved, and do my part in contributing to change.

I had not been to any protest before, or even come across any campaign stalls related to socialism. But the friendliness of all the Socialist Party members encouraged me further to join. And after partaking in protests, I am more excited to join with others and see unity for a cause.

## Everyone can spot Socialist Party in Stoke

**Selling the Socialist**

*Just some of the events where the Socialist newspaper was sold in the past week...*

Our campaign stall concentrates on demanding a 15% pay increase for NHS workers, and an end to NHS privatisation. It includes two tables end to end, and a red wraparound with six large posters.

We also have Socialist Party flags

and placards. There are not many people who can pass by without seeing our stall.

We follow one simple rule - at some point during our talks with people we ask them if they want to buy a copy of our weekly Socialist newspaper, and we make it clear that the Socialist is a real workers’ paper.

While some leaders of the main trade unions that represent NHS workers are more or less absent without leave, the Socialist explains what needs to be done and how to do it in great detail.

**ANDY BENTLEY**

## Socialist Party meetings say: We’re ready to go out and campaign

### ● Southern and South East

50 people came to our meeting on 11 July, either in person or via Zoom. Socialist Party general secretary Hannah Sell led the opening discussion. Hannah congratulated the party for not just surviving lockdown, but adapting.

We could have easily declined into an online discussion group instead

of an active, campaigning party. In fact, we have been far from inert.

We have supported strikes and stood in local elections. And all of this was done while following Covid guidelines.

The atmosphere was hopeful and focused. We have a new Socialist Party branch in Chichester, and during the conference over £2,000 was donated to the party. Immediately, we’re helping Paul Couchman in his election campaign in Staines (see above).

The new book by Peter Taaffe - ‘The

# We need councillors who will end housing crisis

## Vote TUSC in Staines on 22 July

PAUL COUCHMAN  
TUSC CANDIDATE IN STAINES WARD

I am standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the Staines ward by-election for Spelthorne Council.

Spelthorne has over 2,500 families on its housing waiting list. Many of these are living in poor, cramped and unfit conditions, desperately waiting - often for years - for the offer of a space to call home.

A report by Get Surrey showed that a family would need combined earnings of well over £100,000 a year to get a mortgage on the average house in the borough. How many local residents earn anywhere near that amount?

There is a whole generation of young families in Spelthorne who cannot afford to live here. Only 300 new homes have been built each year since 2016, and very few of these have been ‘affordable’ - 12.3% in 2016, 3.1% in 2017, and only 1.9% in 2018.

And what do they mean by ‘affordable’? The government’s definition is no more than 80% of the average local market rent.

The council is talking about its ‘Spelthorne Plan’ - which consists of a few high-rise blocks of more posh apartments. The Greens are actually demanding that the council builds fewer homes, after they did a deal with the Lib Dems on the council.



Paul Couchman campaigning NICK CHAFFEY

The ‘Independents’ (ex-Tory and ex-Ukip) are just complaining about the skyline - ie ‘not in my backyard’.

No one on the council, apart from two independent Labour councillors, is talking about what is really needed - a mass programme of publicly owned council house building, and a cap on the rents charged by private landlords.

When I was growing up, we always had somewhere safe and secure to live - a council house. They weren’t always well maintained by local councils, but mostly lovingly looked after by residents.

These were the first steps into interdependence for most young families. These have nearly all now been

sold or turned over to housing associations - in Spelthorne to A2 Dominion.

Spelthorne Council has the power and the resources to build hundreds of good-quality, environmentally sustainable, carbon-neutral, family homes. The work should be done in-house with quality controls, taking on local builders and apprentices on trade union terms and rates of pay.

There are masses of brownfield sites and ex-office blocks which could be turned over to council housing. The Socialist Party says that it’s only the political will of the current councillors that is missing. We need the voice of the working class to be heard in the council chamber.

## Stop Pimlico gentrification

HELEN PATTISON  
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Residents on a housing estate in Pimlico in London protested on 10 June. Redevelopment plans for their area include properties which will be at 80% of market rents.

These homes will not be affordable to the majority of ordinary people. Despite the fact that thousands of people are on the council house waiting list, the council is ploughing



ahead with plans which won’t actually address housing need.

Many of the buildings are run down. They will either need work, or some ultimately need to be redeveloped.

But this should be done with the

proper involvement of the residents, and with a proper time frame for the works. There should be no backdoor gentrification. Any new homes should be council housing on council rents.

### ● West Midlands

Our meeting for Socialist Party members in the West Midlands on 10 June highlighted that, despite the many challenges of the pandemic, the Socialist Party has flourished.

This was shown by the many new faces at the meeting, several of whom spoke in the discussion. 60 people attended in person and on Zoom.

We touched on how trade union membership has grown during the pandemic, and the huge potential for further workers’ struggles as people return to the workplace.

A Stafford Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate said how proud she was to have increased her vote from the last time she stood. TUSC is putting forward a people’s budget, including in Birmingham - the largest local authority in Europe - where all council seats are up for grabs next year.

A Birmingham student said people attended open-air Socialist Party meetings in all weathers. This meeting raised over £800 in donations, thanks to the generosity of everyone attending.

**AKILA**  
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

# Youth Fight for Jobs is back



TU SENAN

## March and protest with us on 9 October

REECE WILSON  
NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Young workers and students are organising Youth Fight for Jobs (YF4Js) in preparation for a day of action on 9 October. The Youth Fight for Jobs campaign is needed now more than ever.

The furlough scheme is set to end in September, and scores of young people are set to be cast out into the world of unemployment, at worst, and low-paid precarious jobs, at best.

The government’s plan for youth jobs is shipping young people into minimum wage, part-time,

six-month contracts. We must fight for a better future.

YF4Js was founded in 2009 in similar circumstances. The consequences of the 2007-08 financial crash were borne on the shoulders of the working class - especially its young members. Since then, 13 years of austerity have left young workers in poverty and uncertainty.

Degrees and apprenticeships that were meant to bring young people success and security have left them penniless, in debt, or both. At the opposite pole, the 2,365 billionaires in the world increased their wealth to almost \$13 trillion - a 54% increase.

Both the government and the

Labour Party have shown that they do not care about the working class, and only care about the rich.

Some recent workers’ struggles have been victorious - the Royal London Hospital strike and that of the Thurrock bin workers. But things will get worse if we let the bosses keep pushing against us.

Youth Fight for Jobs will be marching in cities and towns on 9 October for a future for young people, with well-paid secure socially useful jobs that benefit everyone, not just the bank accounts of the bosses.

So join us. From school students to the unemployed to young workers - this is your future. Help us organise the fightback.

Youth Fight for Jobs says the trade unions should fight:

- **Against all job cuts** - Open the finance books and nationalise firms to save jobs
- **For real training and apprenticeship schemes for young people** - For a decent job at the end of training
- **For the right to a job for all** - End low pay, and fight for government investment in socially useful job creation. Share out the work with no loss of pay
- **To make the 1% pay** - Take the monopolies and banks into democratic public ownership to provide every young and working-class person with a future



Right-wing study concludes youth like socialism

67% of young people would like to live in a socialist economic system

KAT GWYTHYR  
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

A right-wing think tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) has concluded that younger generations - Millennial and Generation Z, people born early 1980s to early 2010s - are more politically engaged, and hold more anti-capitalist views. The IEA’s report says young people more readily embrace socialist views and alternatives.

Much of this move towards socialist and anti-capitalist views has been driven by young people’s experience of capitalism. During social movements of the last few years - notably Black Lives Matter and the climate crisis - capitalism is often viewed as the root cause of these issues, a capitalist system that is ‘exploitative’ and ‘unfair’.

Respondents to this study also held capitalism responsible for Britain’s housing crisis, were in favour of the renationalisation of railways and utilities, and against the privatisation of the NHS. The ideas positively put forward by respondents are key demands of the Socialist Party.

This study serves to further demonstrate that socialism is not at the margins of politics. It now occupies a central place in people’s views.

Labour under Keir Starmer is pro-capitalist. And, as this study has demonstrated, no longer represents the views of most young workers.

The Socialist Party organises across the working class, including younger people who are growing disillusioned with the failures of capitalism. We campaign for a mass workers’ party that actively proposes an alternative that meets the needs of people - socialism.



LGBTphobia - discrimination, oppression, harassment and bullying of LGBTQ+ people - impacts the lives of every LGBTQ+ person. The Tories cannot be trusted to end this, or protect our lives or livelihoods. Therefore a fightback is needed. The Socialist Party has produced this charter to aid the discussion and debate needed as part of building a movement to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation.

LGBTQ+ workers and young people have a proud history of fighting back against oppression. The Stonewall riots in 1969 saw the LGBTQ+ community in New York explode in

anger at police repression and led to the birth of Pride events.

Such powerful movements are what have led to the legal improvements we've won, such as the equalisation of the age of consent, equal marriage and other laws that improve LGBTQ+ rights.

But no gain is permanent under capitalism. And homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and discrimination still exist and affect our lives.

These issues have been exacerbated during the Covid pandemic. Outrageously, some services have even recommended people 'press pause' on coming out during the pandemic.

- Surveys show that two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people are afraid of holding their partner's hand in public, or being open about their sexuality for fear of a negative reaction
- More than a quarter of young LGBTQ+ people in education have experienced verbal harassment, insults or forced 'outings'

- Nearly all LGBTQ+ people experiencing this harassment do not report it for reasons like 'it happens all the time', or the feeling that nothing will change
- A report from the Trades Union Congress found that 68% of LGBTQ+ people have faced sexual harassment at work. Of these, two in three did not report it to their employer. A quarter of those who didn't report chose not to for fear of being 'outed'
- Young LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be homeless - making up 24% of the young homeless population
- More than half of LGBTQ+ people have experienced depression (with one in seven afraid to seek help for fear of discrimination)
- LGBTQ+ asylum seekers face hostility while attempting to flee persecution. The Home Office demands 'proof' of sexuality, or says that deportation is not a risk to people's safety on the basis that they could hide their sexuality in countries where they would otherwise face persecution, discrimination or violence



The Socialist Party LGBTQ+ group is producing this charter to start a discussion about the demands needed to fight for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, and what programme is needed to end LGBTphobic discrimination. Help us to build a mass movement to smash LGBTphobia. Appeal for support for the charter in your workplaces, youth organisations and among the wider working class.

## Pride

Born out of the struggles and campaigning of LGBTQ+ people, more recently we have seen Pride events become increasing corporatised and step away from their radical roots. A political Pride is more important than ever. But an annual protest is only the start of what we need.

- We call for:**
- Pride events to kick out the corporations and organise by drawing together community campaigners, trade unions and all others interested in reclaiming Pride
  - Build a fighting movement with a democratic and accountable leadership to fight for LGBTQ+ rights, participate in movements against austerity, oppression and discrimination and organise international solidarity

## In our workplaces

Many LGBTQ+ workers face discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. The main bodies of organised workers - the trade unions - need to launch fighting campaigns to stand up for LGBTQ+ workers at work and in wider society. These are organisations which can put the rights and needs of workers first, before the profit or interests of the bosses.

- We demand:**
- That the trade union movement fights against the discrimination which remains endemic in our workplaces
  - Trade unions must organise and campaign for zero-tolerance of bullying, discrimination and harassment in workplaces, including schools, colleges and universities. This means not only ensuring that adequate procedures are in place for dealing with such behaviour, but that they are actually implemented in

# LGBTQ+ WORKERS' CHARTER



## In healthcare

As socialists we fight for democratic control of society, and that includes in the health service. This requires democratic discussions, bringing together workers and service users, to develop a plan of what treatment, support and resources we actually need, not what capitalists can make a profit from or what the capitalist system can 'afford'. We wouldn't have to fight tooth and nail for safety measures like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to be available, or against the years-long waiting lists for trans healthcare, because resources could be allocated on the basis of need not greed.

- We say:**
- Reverse all privatisation and cuts. Kick big business out of the NHS. End the postcode lottery. Scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and cancel all PFI debts
  - Build a mass campaign for

- massive investment into our NHS - for a fully funded National Health Service and care system, free at the point of use
- Scrap prescription charges in England, and all dental and health charges
- Invest and expand provision of gender clinics to meet the needs of trans people
- Massively expand mental health support
- Nationalise the private healthcare sector, care homes, the medical supply industry and the pharmaceutical companies - integrate them into the NHS
- Health services run for health not profit. Build and fight for services that meet all our needs

# Build a mass movement to end LGBTQ+ oppression

In Britain today, austerity and capitalism in crisis threaten the gains won through struggle in the past. Austerity hits groups already discriminated against under capitalism hardest.

Since 2010 we've seen large numbers of LGBTQ+ services close due to lack of funding. LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately more likely to experience mental health issues or experience homelessness; all areas where we are seeing huge cuts.

In recent years, issues around discrimination, particularly transphobia, have been on the rise. This is not just as a result of the Tories and their policies, but the failure of the trade union and labour movement leaders to answer Tory lies, cuts and division with mass action and a socialist programme.

The housing crisis, cuts to homelessness services and shelters, cuts to NHS funding and many of the other austerity attacks are hitting LGBTQ+ people sharply. Defeating austerity requires rebuilding working-class struggles.

The Tories' lie, that needs to be answered, is that the fight for rights and resources in society is between different groups who face discrimination and oppression. The truth is that capitalism, the system the Tories

defend, is based on exploitation and the driving down of working-class living standards. Keeping us divided is in their interests as it weakens our ability to fight back. This tactic is what ultimately lies behind the Tories' failure to update the Gender Recognition Act (2004) to make it easier for trans people to self-identify. The Socialist Party fights for the right to self-identify and for the resources and services we all need.

By building the struggle against austerity alongside other workers and youth we can defeat the Tories, their division, and their austerity agenda! That means building fighting trade unions and a new mass workers' party.

Improving LGBTQ+ rights is an issue for the trade union movement because the unions, as the main organisations of the working class, can and have played a key role in the fight for the rights of those who suffer oppression and discrimination under capitalism.



## Housing, services and resources

How many LGBTQ+ people have put up with discrimination in the workplace or bullying bosses because the alternative was being thrown on the scrapheap of Universal Credit, facing poverty and eviction? How many LGBTQ+ people have not been able to be out, or have been forced to live in unsafe conditions, due to the lack of decent housing, or been forced onto the streets? How many LGBTQ+ services, already stretched, have been stripped to the bone by a decade of austerity?

- Oppose cuts and privatisation of public services
- End enforced poverty - for the right to decent benefits, no to sanctions, pensions for all
- No imprisonment for crimes of poverty. Safe communities for all. Mass investment in jobs and training
- Fully fund vital services for all including social care, domestic violence refuges and support, education, public toilets and the NHS
- Shelters for LGBTQ+ people fleeing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic families or partners
- Protect existing LGBTQ+ venues and provide funding to develop additional venues to meet the needs of the community
- Cap private rents, for a mass programme of building council houses, no to evictions

Homophobia and transphobia have their roots in class society and the institutional inequality inherent to it, including on gender lines. Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation and division of workers in order to maximise the profits of a few.

In Britain and worldwide, a tiny group of people own and control industry, science and technology - and harness them in order to make vast fortunes.

Globally, eight people own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity - the greatest polarisation between rich and poor in human history. In Britain, the majority of us have faced endless austerity, while a tiny handful are raking it in. For example, the CEOs of the 100 biggest stock-market-listed companies collect an obscene 73 times the average wage of their workers.

Big businesses and banks claim support with rainbow logos and by



## Young people

- Get organised! Build student unions in school, college and universities to fight to end homophobic bullying in education and for young people to have a say. Build Youth Fight for Jobs to fight youth unemployment
- Safe, council-run, well-funded youth centres, youth services and youth clubs and facilities. Young people need support and somewhere to go
- Fully fund housing and social support, and supply council homes for LGBTQ+ young people fleeing abusive living situations

## Trans rights

It is largely as a result of the courageous struggle by trans people that trans oppression is becoming more widely understood. But that doesn't mean there isn't still a lot of work to do to end it. Many trans people experience mental health issues alongside discrimination and harassment in the community and in workplaces, and when accessing services including healthcare.

The Socialist Party stands for the right to self-identify, including for non-binary identities.

- We say:**
- Fight to end trans discrimination in law and in society as a whole. Build a movement to fight for legal changes to simplify the process of self-identification
  - Invest in expanding all public health support and other services for all
  - Build a united struggle to end the discrimination and oppression faced by trans people

sponsoring Pride events. But the major banks and big businesses that rush to lead Pride marches and hang rainbow flags are part and parcel of the capitalist system. Many, for example, also invest in Saudi Arabia where the government sentences LGBTQ+ people to death. They all exploit the working class and have an interest in maintaining any forms of division among us.

Capitalism offers no hope of a decent future for the 99%. It is an unequal, oppressive and discriminatory system, based on exploitation of the working-class majority by the tiny capitalist class, and divides us on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, etc.

That's because it is the working class that is the force in society that can get rid of capitalism. Class exploitation unites workers of all backgrounds. Together we have the potential power to fundamentally change this rotten system. Because of our role in production - we make things and make things work - and the consciousness of our collective



## Build international solidarity

LGBTQ+ people across the globe face murderous anti-LGBTQ+ regimes and horrific discrimination.

- We say:**
- End the hostile environment - end all racist immigration laws. For community and trade union oversight of border controls
  - Grant all refugees and asylum seekers the right to work

interests that this can generate, the working class has the potential power to replace capitalism with a socialist alternative based on democratic planning to meet the needs of all.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought misery for the working class, but it has also revealed our collective strength. It is essential to link the fight against all forms of oppression including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, to the fight against class exploitation and capitalism.

The rights the LGBTQ+ community have gained have come from decades of struggle. However those gains and developments can be lost. We don't want to just struggle to keep what we've already won, we need to build a mass movement, not just of LGBTQ+ people but the wider working class, which moves into action. It is only through this that we can fundamentally change society - fighting for a socialist change and the end to exploitation, oppression and discrimination.



- No deportation. End inhumane 'proof of sexuality' by the Home Office
- Close down all detention centres - these are run by profit-driven companies that further exploit detainees and use them for cheap labour
- Fight for the right to asylum - including the right of families to be reunited

## Fight for socialism

Ultimately, until we end the rotten capitalist system, oppression and discrimination will be a part of everyday life for millions across the world. We need to fight for an alternative, socialism - a system which replaces the bosses, their divide-and-rule tactics, and quest for profit above all else. So that the working-class majority is able to put the vast wealth and resources of society to use, planning society democratically to provide what we need.

- Take the wealth off the 1% - we can't control what we don't own. Take into democratic public ownership the top 125 companies and the banks that dominate the British economy. A democratic

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## England football team

## ‘Working-class players do more for us than politicians’

IAN PATTISON

ENGLAND FOOTBALL FAN, WALTHAM ABBEY, ESSEX

As a football fan that supports England, I never thought I'd see what the team achieved in at the World Cup in the summer 2018 topped. I don't know what the atmosphere was like in 1966, 1990 or 1996, but surely this was better?

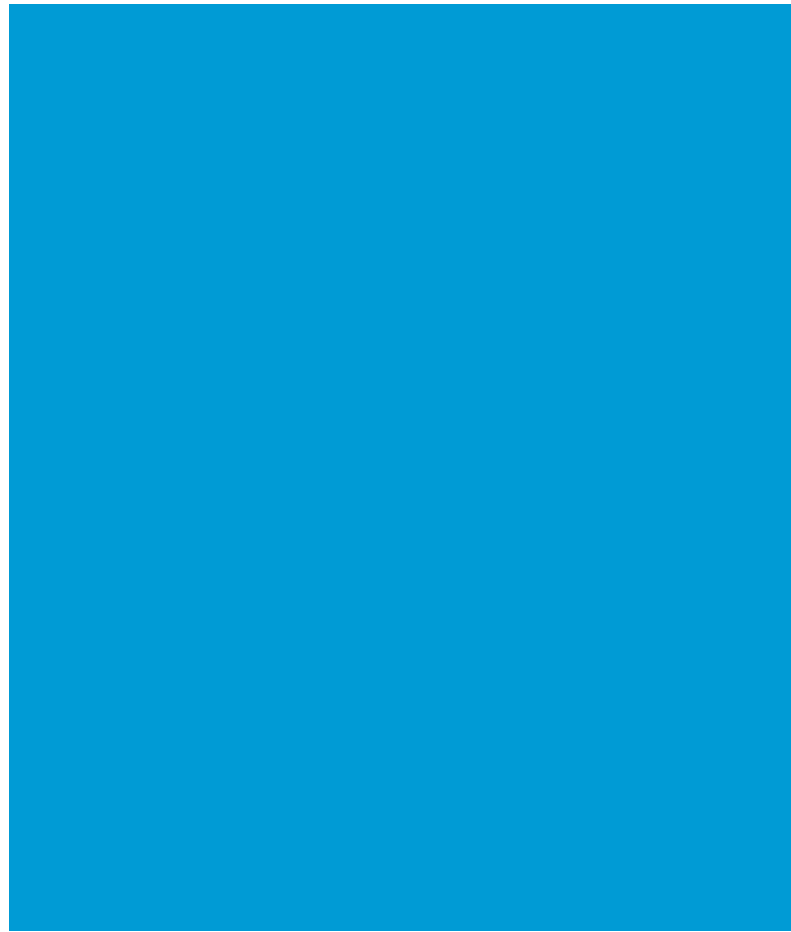
Not only did England reach the final, but it's a group of players that cares about the same issues that my generation cares about - NHS, poverty, inequality, fighting racism and homophobia. It's a team of Marcus Rashford, the 'official' opposition that shamed Johnson into defeat on free school meals. Fans cheered players taking the knee, and on the final match day booed racist Nigel Farage.

The three England players that missed penalties in the shootout are black, and were immediately subject to disgusting racist abuse. Sadly this is not new. In the past, the right-wing tabloids would have encouraged the scapegoating of individual players following an England defeat. But the capitalist media couldn't get away with that this time.

One person from Oldham was interviewed on the news the day after the final. He said: "These lads are from working-class communities like us. Some of them do more for us than the councils and politicians, like feeding kids." No wonder working-class people identify with this England team.

At the Socialist Party campaign stall in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, somebody mentioned the England players promising to donate their prize money to the NHS if they were to win. Another said: "More than this government has ever done." Football pundit and former player Gary Neville said: "The standards of leaders in the country in the last couple of years has been poor, looking at that man [Gareth Southgate] is everything a leader should be - respectful, humble and truthful." It's clear he was criticising Boris Johnson and the Tory government.

It wasn't the first time he'd aimed criticism at Johnson this tournament. In response to the racist abuse,



Gary Neville went further: "It starts at the very top... the prime minister said that it was okay... to boo those players [taking the knee] who were trying to promote equality and defend against racism."

**Inaction**

As a player, Neville admitted he did nothing when teammate Ashley Cole was subject to racist abuse during an England international match. He's said he's proud that these young players act differently.

England player Tyrone Mings challenged Tory home secretary Priti Patel for her faux condemnation of racist abuse. He said: "You don't get to stoke the fire at the beginning of the tournament by labelling our anti-racism message as 'gesture politics' and then pretend to be disgusted when the very thing we're

campaigning against happens."

One left political group said: "If football comes home, it's going to Boris Johnson's house. Let's not stand at the front door begging to be let in." That's rubbish. This England team doing well isn't a victory for Johnson. The squad is made up of working-class players. Many have been politicised by the same issues that have radicalised millions of workers in the last year.

This group of players live and breathe football, and love the fans and working-class communities around them. They might not be socialists. But they perfectly sum up the philosophy of former player and manager Bill Shankly: "The socialism I believe in is everybody working for the same goal, and everybody having a share in the rewards. That's how I see football, that's how I see life."

## Theatre review

## Farewell Leicester Square - the story of Britain's first black bus driver

MARY FINCH

WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Farewell Leicester Square tells the story of Joe Clough - Britain's first black bus driver. It opens in Jamaica, where Joe was born and began his career as a driver working on horse-drawn carriages.

The upbeat tone of the play is set immediately as we follow Joe's mischievous childhood in Jamaica.

His job led him to England when his posh employer, Dr White, moved there in 1903. Dr White does his best to prepare Joe for the cold weather and cobbly roads, but there is an endearing culture shock on his arrival

in England.

He immediately falls head over heels when he meets his lively future wife, Margaret, at a public house in London. Phillip Olagoke, the play's only actor, seamlessly transitions between all three characters.

Joe was not only accepted, but was enormously popular in the local working-class community in Bedford. He was sacked from driving the Number 11 bus on spurious charges, motivated by racism from the bosses. But the other bus drivers rallied around him to get him reinstated.

Unable to fight as an active serviceman in World War One, Joe instead signed up to drive ambulances. This

section of his life probably only takes up 15 minutes in the hour-long play, but it's profound and deeply affecting. A badly injured soldier in Joe's ambulance reaches out to touch his skin for 'good luck', and Joe reaches back and holds his face in an attempt to lift his spirits.

Joe's racial identity and experiences of racism are an important part of his story, but he isn't defined by them. His incredible life, vibrant personality, and the joy he found in driving shine through in the writing and a fantastic lead performance.

Farewell Leicester Square is funny, at times very sad, thoroughly enjoyable and well worth seeing.

## Readers' comments

## ● 'Freedom Day' for who exactly?

The media are calling the end of lockdown restrictions on 19 July, 'Freedom Day'. But freedom for who exactly? If the end of lockdown is a return to business as usual, then this is cynical at best and plain insulting at worst.

Poverty, cost of living and food bank usage is still greatly increasing. Mental and physical health deteriorating, and a plethora of other issues are getting worse and worse under Tory austerity and mismanagement. Covid exposed all of capitalism's failings for all to see.

Covid showed us that even the Tories can act in a crisis, so why let it get to such a devastating point ever again? The pandemic has affected everyone, some more than others. I am a 26-year-old autistic adult with a master's degree, I struggled to get a job before Covid, and have been on and off Universal Credit for years since my graduation. Things are only worse now and I am one of many that capitalism has failed. This freedom they speak of is beyond me, for I have no money to participate.

If the Tory track record is anything to go by, it is wishful thinking to expect things to ever go back to normal on the cheap. There is much to learn from the past year or so, and only a socialist programme can stand up to the challenges we face to rebuild society.

AARON BRADLEY SMITH-LYONS  
NORTH LONDON

PHOTO ESTONIAN PRESIDENCY/CC



Johnson's 'freedom' doesn't include low-income people and the vulnerable

That's why the national day of protest over the NHS pay offer on 3 July was well supported by the public. But the right-wing leaders of Unison, who did not support the protest, remain within a 'Covid bubble' believing the prime minister, whose life was saved by NHS staff, can be appealed to by an open letter signed by Unison members!

Politically, the 'Covid bubble' has burst with the loss of a Tory safe seat, failure to win a Labour 'red wall' seat, and the health secretary's resignation. The medical miracle of the pandemic was the speedy creation of effective vaccines; politically, it was the Tories' creation of not one but several 'money trees'. Now they face the daunting task of recovering that 'spending spree' by taking on a working class population and proud of its 'key workers' who saved their lives.

JOHN MERRELL  
LEICESTER

Conservatives have always believed in 'acceptable deaths'. Earl Haig dismissed the thousands of 'poor bloody infantry' he sent to die. After all they were only working class.

Is Boris so blasé about his own death, I wonder?  
DEREK MCMILLAN  
WORTHING



## Putting the Olympic gravy train ahead of public health

CARL SIMMONS,

KOKUSAI RENTAI (CWI IN JAPAN)

On 8 July, just over two weeks before the games were due to open, Japanese premier Suga Yoshihide announced that the Olympics would be held without spectators. This was the result of a rebound in coronavirus cases and a new declaration of a state of emergency in the Tokyo area, only three weeks after the end of the previous one. This was a huge blow for Suga. In fact, he looked like he had just been punched in the stomach!

The question most Japanese are asking is: why are the games going ahead at all? Opinion polls have shown up to 80% of the population favour postponement or cancellation.

Originally scheduled to be held last year, the games were postponed due to the medical risks involved. While Japan had relatively few infections then, the situation since has only worsened. Most deaths from the virus occurred in the third and fourth waves, which hit last winter and this spring.

Vaccination has been slow. At the time of writing, only around 11% of the adult population have received two vaccinations. In the fifth wave now hitting Tokyo, 30% of new cases are the more easily transmissible 'delta' variant.

Medical opinion has been overwhelmingly against the holding of Olympics, with even the government's chief medical adviser, Omi Shigeru, making his opposition clear.

The 6,000-strong Tokyo Medical Practitioners Association has officially called for the cancellation of the Olympics. Some hospitals have even been festooned with banners showing their opposition to the games.

However, the government has still not cancelled the Olympics. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) declared that only it could decide on cancellation. The IOC is dependent on income from selling the television rights to the games. Postponement has already caused it cash flow problems. The comments of Thomas Bach and other IOC bigwigs have been greeted with anger



PHOTO ARNE MUESLER/CC

The Olympic stadium in Tokyo will be bereft of spectators during the games due to a new wave of Covid infections

and derision in Japan. They are seen as putting the Olympic gravy train before public health.

However, if the Japanese government had wanted to cancel it is clear that the IOC would have had little choice but to agree. But the government and Japanese business are heavily invested in the games.

Dentsu, the largest advertising agency, had been awarded broadcasting rights for 22 countries across Asia by the IOC. It has a very close relationship with the ruling party, providing it with funds as well as enjoying a monopoly on the party's public relations work.

While spectators from abroad have already been banned, Suga argued strongly for the games to go ahead with spectators from Japan. This would have provided a boost for tourism and many other business sectors. It estimated that holding the Olympics without spectators will mean a \$23 billion hit to profits.

The Organising Committee even wanted to allow the sale of alcoholic drinks at the games. Ironically, major sponsor Asahi Breweries opposed the idea. Its regular customers, thousands of family-owned restaurants and bars, were forbidden or restricted from selling alcohol under state of emergency regulations. To have allowed an exception for the Olympics would have caused outrage.

**Reputation**

The government staked its reputation on holding the Olympics. The 1964 Tokyo games coincided with a period of rapid growth in Japan. After 20 years of economic stagnation, the Abe and Suga governments had sought to use the games to show that a revitalised 'Japan was back'. Running into trouble with the pandemic, the rhetoric changed to how 'the Olympics would prove mankind's triumph over Covid-19'.

Holding the Olympics is an

enormous political gamble for the government. In recent Tokyo assembly elections, the ruling conservative Liberal Democratic Party failed to win a majority. The reformist Communist Party, which called for cancellation of the games, and the capitalist opposition Constitutional Democratic Party, calling for cancellation or postponement, both made gains.

Tokyo First, a party built around the governor of Tokyo, Koike Yuriko, which called for the Olympics to go ahead but without spectators, lost less seats than expected. Post-election polls showed that discontent with the government's handling of the pandemic and the Olympics was a major factor.

Holding the games will mean nearly 80,000 people (athletes, IOC officials, media staff, etc)

entering Japan and then returning to their own countries.

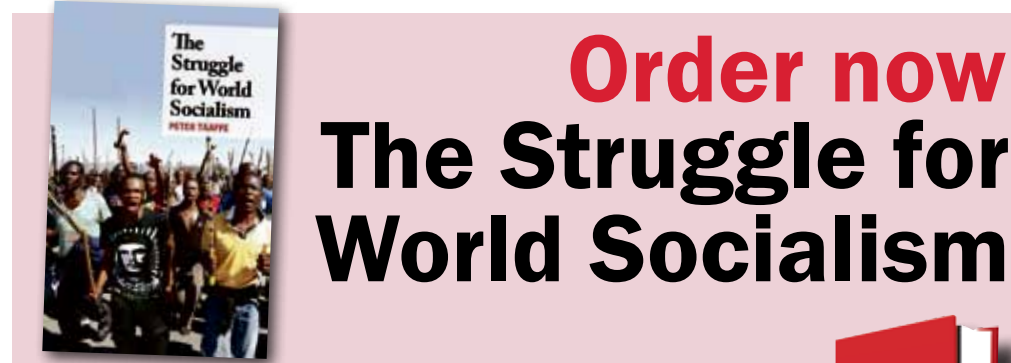
The government and IOC's protective 'Olympic bubble' is a myth. Already there have been cases of infections among athletes and workers at the Olympic Centre. The IOC's lack of faith in its ability to ensure this is revealed by the waiver which they are asking athletes to sign, freeing the IOC of any legal liability for injury or death from participation in the games, including from Covid-19.



Opinion polls have shown up to 80% of the population favour postponement or cancellation

Specialists have warned of the dangers of a super-spreader event with new variants developing in the 'Olympic Petri dish'.

The decision to go ahead shows a reckless disregard for public health. While in a socialist society sport would be used to improve and promote good health, under capitalism it has become one more source of profits, whatever the human cost.

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## Kazakhstan: Solidarity with protesters attacked by regime forces

The Committee for a Workers' International has received an appeal for solidarity from a group of left activists in Kazakhstan, known as 'Red Yurt', following a vicious attack by state security forces on a demonstration in Almaty, the country's largest city.

The authoritarian Kazakhstan state is continuing to suppress all democratic rights, including the right to peacefully protest, as well as making life harder for workers and young people by increasing prices on basic essentials.

On 6 July, left activist Valikhan Sultanov was arrested at a protest demonstration against price increases. According to unconfirmed

reports, he is now in one of the medical institutions of Almaty in a serious condition with severe head wounds.

Demonstrators were 'kettled' by security forces for hours in sweltering heat and repeatedly beaten.

● Please send messages of protest to your Kazakhstan embassy and other business and cultural organisations linked with the Kazakhstan government.  
● Send solidarity messages to Red Yurt at [chakmonro@ya.ru](mailto:chakmonro@ya.ru)  
● Updates and a letter of protest from Campaign Kazakhstan can be read on [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)



£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



# the Socialist

Issue 1142

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formerly **Militant**

# PRIDE

# IS

# PROTEST

## Build a mass movement for LGBTQ+ liberation and socialism

**ADAM HARMSWORTH**  
SOCIALIST PARTY LGBTQ+ GROUP

**W**e need political struggle for LGBTQ+ liberation. It is becoming more scary and less safe to be out. One in five British LGBTQ+ people suffer hate crime every year. We have seen a spate of anti-LGBTQ+ violence in Liverpool, alongside a vicious assault in Cardiff, and a mural in Manchester defaced.

Abroad, just this month, a pride event in Georgia had to be cancelled after a camera operator was killed by far-right thugs while covering an anti-LGTQ+ protest, and a gay man in Spain was murdered. The

protests against these attacks point to what is needed.

Unfortunately, the biggest pride events have become completely divorced from the real political struggle they came from. Pride is meant to be a protest where LGBTQ+ people and their supporters can make their voices heard and demand better. You don't get that at London Pride, or at Brighton, Birmingham, Manchester, because they are now funded and headed by banks and big businesses.

They don't have the same goals as us. Bankers and bosses, whether LGBTQ+ or not, will put profit first. Banks will turn their logos rainbow colour to bring in the pink pound,

while doing multi-billion pound deals with homophobic governments. They have been uninvolved in, and in many cases hostile to, fights for equality and to build and defend the services LGBTQ+ people need. They want to keep the status quo - a capitalist profit system based on exploitation and division. And because they have money, they've ended up being the ones running most Pride events.

That's why we need to reclaim pride, as part of building a movement to win change that will meet the real needs of LGBTQ+ people.

We welcome Peter Tatchell's call for a protest pride, and the next step needed is a democratic discussion about the slogans and demands that the movement is fighting for. Central to that has

to be involving the trade unions - democratic organisations of 6.7 million workers in Britain.

By organising together with the mass of the working class, against the bosses who exploit and divide us, LGBTQ+ workers have the power to win against the capitalist system that oppresses us.

● **The Socialist Party has drawn up our LGBTQ+ workers' charter to outline our political programme for LGBTQ+ liberation (See pages 12-13)**

**Reclaim Pride London**  
**24 July 1pm**  
**Parliament Square**

**WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS**

►►► see column on p3

