

UNITE TO FIGHT TORY PAY INSULTS

Build for strike action

HOLLY JOHNSON

SHEFFIELD NHS WORKERS SAY NO!

The Tories' 3% pay offer is a direct attack on the NHS. It shows the contempt the government has for the health service and its staff. 3% is simply not enough, and makes it clear that the government does not intend to invest in the future of the NHS.

Staff are exhausted and burnt out, but the mood is changing again to one of anger, of wanting to see change and being prepared to fight for it.

We will not stand back and accept this paltry offer. After all, we have had up to £9,000 cut from our pay in real terms over the last decade. We are not going away. We have been preparing for a year to respond to this 'award'. Thousands of NHS workers have mobilised and are ready for action, built from the bottom up. Now is the time for the leadership of our unions to act and ballot for industrial action to reject the 3%.

We need to keep pressure on our union leaderships, and

push them to act. We must turn them into the fighting unions we need them to be. We need to see clear and decisive leadership to show we are prepared to strike.

We need public support to smash down attempts by the government to divide public sector workers, we need to fight together. All of the public sector unions need to step up their fights, reject the pay freezes and insulting awards, call for a joint campaign, and prepare for co-ordinated strike action.

The Tories say they can't afford our demand for 15% for NHS workers, that this will cost £5 billion. But the cost of the failed test-and-trace scheme is already £37 billion. The cost of an NHS and public sector pay rise should be fully funded by the government. Make the super-rich who have profited from the pandemic pay.

Enough is enough, we will not stand back and let the appalling treatment of the NHS and its staff continue. We will fight it all the way.

The fight for our pay is a fight for our NHS, for our patients, ourselves and our class. We cannot do it without public support, so I urge each and every one of you to join and support the fight for the NHS.

• **Public sector pay – unions must prepare for action. Read more pages 4-7**



PAUL MATTSOON

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

Labour expulsions confirm need for new mass workers' party

LENNY SHAIL
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The news that Labour's national executive committee (NEC) has proscribed, aka expelled, a number of left-leaning groups that have clung desperately onto the Labour Party comes as little surprise.

Since the resignation of Corbyn, and under Starmer's leadership, every action by the Labour bureaucracy has been in the direction of destroying any remnants of Corbyn's leadership and strengthening the right wing's control. These expulsions follow the suspension from the party of Corbyn himself, one of the Unite representatives on the NEC, Howard Beckett, and hundreds of ordinary members on trumped-up charges.

Working-class people have seen the cuts carried out by Labour locally over the course of the last ten years, including during the period of Corbyn's leadership. For many of those who remember the Blair years, Labour is still the party of illegal wars, privatisation and selling out.

Supporters of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, were expelled from the Labour Party by the right wing in the 1980s and early 1990s. We explained back then that this would be the thin end of the wedge, and that a purging of socialist ideas would follow close behind.

Blairism's stranglehold
Unfortunately, we were proved correct as Blairism established a stranglehold on the Labour Party. It was not only socialists and socialist ideology which were expelled, even the idea of defending the living standards of the working class was trashed. With the transformation of Labour into New Labour, it was clear that the task for socialists then was to fight for socialist ideas and a new mass party of the working class.

The expulsion of Militant supporters came against the backdrop of a massive struggle, with Militant winning huge support for socialist ideas amongst workers and youth inside the Labour Party, and an important influence in the general class struggle of the time. Unlike the recent quick and simple NEC vote to expel left groups from the party, the expulsion of Militant - from the members of the Militant Editorial Board in 1983 to the Militant MPs Dave Nellist and Terry Fields in 1991 - took place following an almighty battle over many years.

That fact that Starmer and his cronies have been able to act so freely and confidently now reflects the dire weakness of the 'left' that remains in the Labour Party. A few tweets and comments from a small minority of Labour Campaign Group MPs, and a small protest outside Labour's HQ, were the only opposition Starmer faced.

Many will actually be surprised that there are still 'left' groups clinging to Starmer's Labour. It has to be said that, despite their opposition to Starmer and austerity in general, most of the groups banned have



These moves by the right to consolidate their grip are yet another illustration of the need for the workers' movement to create its own political voice



Supporters of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, were expelled from the Labour Party by the right wing in the 1980s and early 1990s PHOTO: DAVID SINCLAIR

campaigned and supported service-cutting councillors and right-wing anti-Corbyn MPs throughout the last period. But their proscription, reintroducing a procedure abolished in the 1970s and establishing a panel to examine other groups, will now make it easier to move more extensively.

These moves by the right to consolidate their grip are yet another illustration of the need for the workers' movement to create its own political voice, representing the interests not of the spivs and speculators but of the working-class majority. We would argue for such a party to put forward a clear socialist programme - based on the nationalisation of the major corporations and banks - so that all their resources could be harnessed to meet need rather than

being squandered on the profits of a few. Then decisions on housing, transport, and every aspect of our lives could be decided democratically, rather than behind closed doors by the bosses and the politicians who represent them.

The RMT (who themselves were expelled from Labour in 2004) should approach all unions - affiliated and non-affiliated to Labour - to call a conference that would be open to the Labour left and socialist organisations like the Socialist Party and those who work with us in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, to discuss how to organise a political force that can best represent workers and stand up to the stark Covid economic and health consequences for workers.

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'Pingdemic' exemptions

We need workers' control of Covid safety

NICK HART
BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

The rows of empty supermarket shelves, missed bin collections and lists of cancelled train services have proved what socialists have been saying all along. It's ordinary workers who keep society running, and without them things soon grind to a halt.

In response to the 'pingdemic', where increasing numbers of people are being 'pinged' by the NHS Covid app to notify them that they need to self-isolate after coming into contact with others testing positive for Covid, the government has announced that workers at supermarket depots and food factories will be exempt, provided they get tested on a daily basis themselves. In addition, double-vaccinated workers in other sectors, such as refuse collection and emergency services, will be able to apply for exemption.

Clearly a way for these essential services to keep running that doesn't put the workforce at risk needs to be reached. Though, as cases rose steadily from the end of May, many will ask why a plan to do this wasn't in place well in advance of 'freedom day'.

The reasons that Johnson and Co are being forced to constantly back-track and seemingly change the Covid rules on the hoof isn't just down to incompetence or lack of planning. Since the start of the pandemic the Tories have put big business first, and faced a backlash when this has impacted the health of workers and their families.

That's why, having rushed to ease restrictions in the face of rising infections, they're now trying to find a way through the 'pingdemic' that gives the illusion of life returning to normal without hospitals becoming overwhelmed with a fresh wave of Covid patients.

The confused advice of the Tories over everything from self-isolation to mask wearing in recent weeks will have encouraged cowboy employers to do away with any remaining social distancing measures in the



workplace and pressure their staff to come to work after receiving self-isolation pings.

The bosses, and their friends in parliament, cannot be trusted to keep workers safe. Decisions about workplace safety measures, including on issues such as exemptions from self-isolation, should be made democratically by workers and their trade unions.

Those workers who are still required to self-isolate should receive full pay, not the current rate of statutory sick pay of £96.35 per week, and protection from disciplinary measures or loss of hours post-isolation so that they're not forced to choose between their health and putting food on the table.

● Warehouse exemption risks

I am an USDAW union rep and branch secretary in a well-known food distribution centre. Our members have been affected by the so-called 'pingdemic'. During the pandemic, agency staff have been asked to cover staff



absence in a depot in Scotland with active Covid cases!

Now, in response to the 'pingdemic', workers at pre-agreed sites will no longer be automatically required to self-isolate after getting 'pinged' by the NHS app and will instead be offered daily Covid testing. The scheme is to start in 15 warehouses, increasing to 150, with a total of up to 500 in scope, affecting in total up to 10,000 distribution workers.

Nationally this could likely mean another spike in cases for the working class. As always, our union branch encourages the use of 'Section 44' of the Employment Act 1996, as used by the teachers in January, to refuse to work in unsafe workplaces, as a step towards collective action to defend workplace safety.

CONNOR O'FARRELL
FOOD DISTRIBUTION WAREHOUSE WORKER

● 'Pingdemic' pressure

The 'pingdemic' has forced over 600,000 workers to self-isolate on reduced pay, or in some cases on a measly £96.35 per week statutory sick pay.

The Tories have now been forced to change the rules due to potential food shortages as retail and distribution staff are being 'pinged'.

I have had first-hand experience. As a manager in a pub, and speaking to colleagues and other hospitality staff, we had all deleted the app a few weeks before the 'pingdemic' started. Those who didn't delete it found themselves having to self-isolate.

This has created staff shortages, and meant everyone else had to work longer days. In some hospitality venues bosses have tried to get those staff that have been 'pinged' to ignore it and work.

CRAIG BATES
BAR MANAGER, STAFFORDSHIRE

Socialist Party

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

Our demands include...

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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.

WORK AND INCOME

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

- Scrap Universal Credit. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Tories and Labour fail on child poverty

ELLA DOYLE

BIRMINGHAM NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Vast inequalities in the UK are predicted to worsen during the long post-pandemic recovery, entrenching child poverty across the UK. This is according to a recent government report by the Social Mobility Commission.

However, what the government-funded study fails to address, is why we began at a start point of almost a third of children living in poverty in March of 2020!

Years of Tory cuts, aided and abetted by Labour councils, have ensured that living standards for working-class families have continued to fall. In the past decade, spending on early support for vulnerable children has halved. The most deprived areas have been hit the hardest, with average spending cut by 59%.

Many local authorities are turning to charities and the third sector to fill in the gaps in welfare provision. This has certainly been my experience working in a charity-funded community centre in one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham.

Local families who visit the centre are frequently desperate for support that is often beyond the scope of a small charity that relies on often inconsistent sources of funding to provide a basic level of assistance.

Working-class families remained

the hardest hit by the pandemic and can look forward to yet more challenges with the 'return to normal'. The small concession of the £20 weekly increase in Universal Credit is set to be withdrawn in the autumn.

At the community centre where I work, a weekly foodbank, which was initially funded to support families struggling during the pandemic, has continued to find increased demand despite the easing of restrictions. The Tories' normal is one where thousands more children will join the already millions living in poverty.

The persistent failure of the government response to child poverty shows that the capitalist system in crisis cannot improve the lives of working-class people. Already, footballers such as Marcus Rashford - ambassador to FareShare, the charity which currently supplies our foodbank and thousands more like it - have been able to achieve results that are far beyond the scope of limited Tory concessions, or the so-called opposition Labour Party.

In order to fight against child poverty, we need to fight for socialist policies that see food, housing, education and security as basic rights for all people. That means fighting for the working class to get our hands on the vast wealth of the super-rich, so that society can be planned to meet peoples' needs.

Public sector pay Unions must prepare for action



Unison members in Wales protest against the pay freeze SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY

GLENN KELLY

SOCIALIST PARTY INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER

The Tories have announced the pay award for NHS workers and teachers. After all they have done, a million health workers have been told that they are only worth a 3% pay rise, less than the current rate of inflation. A million teachers have been told they are worth nothing in terms of a pay rise this year. Hundreds of thousands of civil servants face a pay freeze (see page 7). A million and a half council workers have already been told they are only worth 1.5%.

These insults don't include all the care and NHS workers employed in the private sector; many of these will get no pay rise.

Today there are nearly three million public sector workers in a trade union. They must now come together to prepare to fight the pay freeze/cap.

- Each respective union must prepare now for action
- The leaders of the public sector unions must urgently meet to plan a coordinated fight
- The TUC should call a meeting of their public services committee to name the date for a national demonstration to fight for pay justice and help prepare for coordinated strike action across the public sector

Teachers' pay freeze

'Let's not delay' - prepare for a national pay campaign

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The school teachers' review body (STRB) report was finally released, predictably late at the end of term, and predictably inflicting a pay freeze on the vast majority of school teachers.

And we knew that was coming. Because the government has made absolutely clear that it wants us to pay for the crisis that it has created. This is despite all the work we have done throughout the pandemic, alongside our colleagues in the rest of the public and private sector.

And so the National Education Union's (NEU) press release is absolutely correct to say that it is unacceptable to be imposing a pay freeze. When inflation is rising it is, in reality, a pay cut. But it's going to need more than a press release to stop these kinds of attacks.

We need to learn the lessons of how we forced the prime minister into a U-turn over Covid-related health and safety. That was by using our collective strength, and using it nationally.

That's why in November, when the

pay freeze was first mooted, I called for unions to call a joint conference to put together a plan of action, of meetings, rallies, demonstrations and industrial action, to oppose the attacks that were coming on pay.

In the hustings for the NEU deputy general secretary election, similarly, I've consistently explained that we need to organise that kind of a plan. To go out to inspire and explain to our members the action that's going to need to be taken. To make sure that we put in place the steps that can help us to meet the ballot thresholds, with addresses being checked, so that we can return those ballot papers with the maximum possible turnout.

And I've also said that we need to produce materials for parents and the public to explain why, when the review body says that already a fifth

of teachers are leaving the job within the first two years, and a third within the first five years, a pay freeze like this will make things even worse and create even more instability in the classroom.

Some of my opponents say: 'The problem is that Martin underestimates the difficulties ahead of us. He thinks we can win a national ballot very easily'. Well actually, no, the opposite is the case. I know the hard work that is required to win a national ballot, and that's why I'm so frustrated that the preparations haven't been done.

And we cannot delay now. The preparations have to be made so that we can defeat the pay cuts and win the demands that we also have in order to get rid of performance-related pay; and also to win on workload, a limit on overall hours - all things that are covered by the remit of the STRB and the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

And last but not least, we also need urgently to bring the unions together to work out a joint plan of action so that we can work together to defend our conditions and pay, and also defend the services that we work in. Let's get on with it, let's not delay.

3.5%

the rate consumer price inflation could hit by the end of 2021



Health workers and campaigners protested outside Whipps Cross hospital on the 73 anniversary of the creation of the NHS PHOTO: PAUL MITCHELL

Fight the local government pay cut

Unison members are angry and bitter. Especially the lowest-paid workers such as school support staff, library workers, and street cleaners - who have continued to work on the front line throughout the pandemic, risking their health and safety. Some members have had to go to food banks.

Another year of a next-to-nothing pay rise means that only a real fight, including industrial action, will win a decent pay rise. We really need the new Unison leadership to step up and begin organising for this, linking with the health workers.

APRIL LASHLEY

UNISON NEC (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Model trade union motion

Visit socialistparty.org.uk to view our model motion. Can you assist in getting the motion passed in your trade union branch or organisation?

NHS pay insult

Workers' action can force another U-turn

3% is such an insult to NHS workers. It's a tiny fraction of what health unions have been campaigning for. Our unions must launch a campaign now for members to reject the offer, and start preparing for action.

Our unions must campaign for a vote for action, and show they are prepared to lead a strike.

The government thinks it can make working-class people pay for its horrific mishandling of the Covid crisis. We need to prove it wrong. Unions must coordinate action across the public and private sector to break the pay freeze/pay restraint that the government is trying to enforce.

All the other key workers who kept society running throughout the pandemic deserve a proper pay rise too. We need to link up NHS workers with council workers, teachers and civil servants who've been offered even less or nothing at all. Outsourced workers in the NHS deserve NHS pay and conditions, including a proper pay rise!

The fiasco over the NHS pay offer announcement shows the government is deeply divided. It has made U-turn after U-turn. We have the power to force it to U-turn over public sector pay as well.

NAOMI BYRON

HOSPITAL WORKER AND RECENTLY ELECTED UNISON NEC MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Say no to pay offer, fight the health and care bill

My conversations with members are favouring a 'yes' for strike action to secure an improved offer. 3%, with or without part-consolidation, is a further real-terms pay cut. This is in the context of five million patients on hospital waiting lists, projected to be 13 million by the year's end. The virus has been increasing, and staff are set for a further pummelling. Now is the time to say no; and fight for the full justified claim, linking that to fighting to stop the Tories' privatising health and care bill.

LEN HOCKEY

UNITE SECRETARY OF BARTS HEALTH BRANCH, AND UNITE LONDON AND EASTERN HEALTH REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL SECTOR COMMITTEE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)



Health workers submitted an 800,000-strong petition calling for an NHS pay rise to Downing Street PAUL MITCHELL

Invest in NHS to address staff shortages

The 3% award from the government is an absolute insult and will cause more injury to an already overwhelmed NHS. Staff have gone above and beyond and have shown their worth during the pandemic. Now they are on their knees.

This offer makes clear that the government does not intend to invest in the future of the NHS or its staff. We are heading into another Covid wave with millions on waiting lists. We simply cannot do this without urgent prioritisation of recruitment and retention to address the 100,000 staff vacancies.

Patient care and safety will continue to be compromised and we will take all necessary actions to fight for their safety, our working conditions and to protect the NHS.

HOLLY JOHNSTON

NHS WORKERS SAY NO!

Labour won't defend our NHS

The NHS pay review body in Wales has made a 3% pay offer, the same as the paltry amount offered in England - another below-inflation increase which will leave many workers worse off in real terms.

This was announced by Eluned Morgan, Labour's Welsh health secretary. Ms Morgan thanked staff for their "extraordinary efforts over the course of this pandemic".

"Many staff have worked extremely long hours under enormous pressure," she said. Disgustingly, NHS staff in Wales have not been recognised for this sacrifice, and the calls by Welsh health unions for a 12.5% increase have been ignored by Welsh Labour.

The Welsh government has the power to award a 15% pay rise to NHS workers. The trade union movement in Wales should be putting pressure on the Welsh government to pay up!

£37 billion

the cost of the failed test-and-trace system

Starmer's Labour in England put forward a 2.1% rise in March, less than the Tories' final offer, and Welsh Labour's offer proves again that the party does not represent the working class. Trade unions must set about the creation of a new party to represent our interests.

In May, Socialist Party Wales stood in the council elections as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, including health workers in our list of candidates. This is a step towards creating a new, mass party that will fight for the future of our NHS.

ANDY BROMHALL

SWANSEA AND WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY AND RETIRED NHS NURSE

Doctors consulted over strike action

Hospital consultants, organised in the union the British Medical Association (BMA), will vote on whether or not they would be prepared to take strike action in response to the NHS pay offer.

The consultation will run through to mid-August, to be potentially followed by a formal ballot. If doctors decided to go on strike over pay it would be for the first time since the 1970s.

Tory U-turn on NHS funding

After initially telling NHS bosses that they would have to find much of the cost of the 3% pay 'award' from their existing budgets, impacting funding for vital services - the Tories have made their umpteenth U-turn. Feeling the pressure of ever expanding NHS waiting lists, and splits among their own ranks, the government has now made the additional funding available.

Now is the time for unions across the public sector to step up the fight for a decent pay rise, linked to a campaign to reverse years of austerity cuts and for fully funded services, paid for by the super-rich

£5 billion

the cost of giving health-workers a 15% pay rise

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Unison's new left NEC meets - organise the fightback now

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN UNISON

The government's recent announcement of a teachers' pay freeze and below-inflation rise for health workers shows that the Tories are intent on making public sector workers pay for the Covid crisis - and why the trade union leaders must organise a coordinated fightback on behalf of the 1.3 million members affected. (See page 4)

While the attack on pay was entirely predictable following the government's spending announcements back in November, for months the union leaders have done little, or even opposed campaigns like the 3 July NHS anniversary pay protests.

That is why, even before the government's formal announcement on pay, Socialist Party members on the Unison public services union national executive council (NEC) proposed to the meeting held on 14 July that it should immediately convene a meeting of the leadership in each sector of Unison to prepare the fight necessary, including protests and a ballot for industrial action.

Disgracefully, the general secretary Christina McAnea, the candidate of the union's right wing elected at the end of last year, responded that it was a matter for each sector in the union to discuss, abdicating any responsibility. This is why the new NEC, with a 41-27 left majority (including four Socialist Party members) following the elections in June, and the newly elected left-wing NEC presidential team, need to take control of the campaign.

This should include calling for an urgent meeting of the Trades Union Congress public sector liaison committee to coordinate a cross-union campaign. The left now has a majority of Unison's TUC general council seats and they must use that position too to give a lead.

The first two brief online meetings of the newly-elected NEC have shown that the big majority of the union's full-time officialdom, along with the supporters of the old

right-wing regime who remain on the NEC, will not go quietly, and that the left must maximise its majority at all times. It is unfortunate that, already, some of the 'Members Team' left - who backed Paul Holmes in the general secretary contest, and who have the majority of NEC seats - have made some unnecessary errors that we tried to persuade them not to.

A new NEC elects a 'presidential team' of three - a president and two vice-presidents - which are the key lay member posts in the union for the day-to-day handling of the officials at HQ. However, instead of electing a full team of three, the Members Team chose Paul Holmes as union president even though he could not take up office because he is currently suspended for allegations, which he denies, relating to his conduct as a branch secretary. At best this means the left presidential team is one person light; at worst, it opens a door to the right wing to shoe in their candidate.

It is clear that the right are going to rely on the alleged powers of the general secretary to try and force their position over the left NEC - which is why the left must be prepared to use its majority on every occasion to push matters to a vote to ensure they are not thwarted.

This includes taking all necessary steps to ensure that elected lay members gain control over the union. That is why Socialist Party member Hugo Pierre proposed that the current vacancies for two assistant general secretary (AGS) positions are put on hold or only filled temporarily so that the union can look at electing them. Again Christina McAnea opposed.

Another point of contention was the election of the union's representatives on the TUC general council, the highest trade union body in the UK. For decades the right have ensured that Unison's representatives have comprised a majority of full-time officials, including the unelected official Gloria Mills OBE. Our proposal that this long-standing



PAUL MATTSON

right-winger should be replaced by April Ashley for the Black women's seat was met with the claim that she had to have one of the seats as it was in her contract! This must not be allowed to stand.

But more generally, while it is crucial that the left on the NEC gains control of the union for the members, it must make sure that the members see the relevance of this in

the difference that the new left leadership is making.

That is why, with a left majority in place, it is not acceptable that the general secretary was allowed to get away with ignoring the call from Socialist Party members on the NEC for a united fight on pay to be launched. The same thing happened to the proposal from the newly elected health worker and Socialist Party member

Naomi Bryon for the union to agree a campaign against the new health and social care bill that threatens an even greater role for the private sector in the NHS.

The left has a majority on the governing body of the biggest public sector trade union in Britain, a powerful lever in the events now opening up. It must use it to move decisively to organise the fightback now.

Bexley bin workers strike for better pay

BERKAY KARTAV
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Bexley bin workers have now been entered their third week of industrial action, with more strike action planned in August, effectively going indefinite.

Running the refuse and cleansing service on behalf of Bexley council, private company Serco has offered a measly 1.5% pay rise - which was rejected by workers - and it refuses to hand over the back pay it owes to 50 workers.

Outrageously, Serco has also failed to include refuse staff on a stipulated pay progression scale, which means workers doing exactly the same job are paid differently by the company.

Since the beginning of the strike, refuse workers have also been appalled by heavy-handed policing against workers who, not wanting to

let refuse trucks cross the picket line, walked and stood on the zebra crossing in front of the depot in Crayford.

At the same time, the police have turned a blind eye to overloaded trucks that are a safety hazard! They have shown that they are on the side of private companies such as Serco, not the workers.

Living wage?

Serco's contract with Bexley council will expire in October, and another outsourcing company, Countrystyle Recycling, will replace it. The council has said that workers will be paid the London Living Wage (£10.85 an hour) when they are transferred to new contracts, which is an increase of 50p an hour. But even this is not enough. Refuse workers in Greenwich earn a minimum of £13 an hour.

On 21 July, Socialist Party members joined the protest organised by

Unite outside Bexley Civic Offices, as the council is dodging responsibility even though it is handing out contracts for council services.

Serco shouldn't just be replaced by another private company. We call for all outsourced services to be brought back in-house, and an end to privatisation in local government and across the public sector.

STOP PRESS RMT night tube strike

RMT members working on the night tube are to strike over London Underground plans to abolish the Night Tube Train Drivers' grade after the company blocked progress in ACAS talks. The walkout takes place on consecutive days from 3-6 August and 24-27 August. See socialistparty.org.uk for updates

Further education set for industrial action over pay

LIAM OLDFIELD
UCU NON-TEACHING STAFF REP

University and College Union (UCU) members in 15 further education (FE) colleges have voted to take industrial action over pay, with 89% in favour on a 62% turnout. This follows an insulting 1% pay recommendation made in autumn 2020. We all know a 1% rise is a pay cut in real terms. After years of below-inflation pay offers, we need a minimum 15%-18% pay rise to match the pay of ten years ago.

Last year colleges received increased funds of over £400 million. Where is the workers' fair share? Our pay in FE needs to be the same for comparable jobs in Higher Education and our schools. In England, FE teachers are paid on average £9,000 less than schoolteachers.

Additionally, it is only fair that the benefits are the same across the board for teaching and non-teaching staff. We do a lot more than educate! All those working in FE should be prioritised and treated as equal; no FE worker should be on a substandard term-time only contract, have

less holiday entitlement, fewer benefits or inferior pension to those they work alongside.

The money is there for all workers, including care workers, NHS workers and other key workers. The government expects us, the so-called 'essential' workers, to settle for less and less. But it won't wash in FE, as the ballot result shows!

The 15 colleges voting to take action could be just the start. The recent UCU FE sector conference voted to campaign for a 10% pay rise for all plus pay bonuses for the additional work education staff carried out instead of external examiners this year. The conference decided to ballot all other colleges in England to join any industrial action in the autumn.

FE workers have voted to fight back on pay, and to fight for it on a coordinated, national basis - starting with the 15 colleges. UCU should now reach out to other unions, especially in education, but also the health unions fighting for a 15% pay rise, to discuss coordinating the fightback on pay as part of a wider strategy of fighting any attempt by the Tories to make workers pay the cost of Covid.

SINGLEHAMMER/CC
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Sheffield University UCU will fight closure of archaeological department

Despite nearly 47,000 signatures on a petition and at least three protests of well over 100 staff and students, the Sheffield University Council voted on 12 July to go ahead with their Executive Board's proposal to effectively close the Archaeology Department.

In response, an Emergency General Meeting of over 200 University and College Union (UCU) members voted overwhelmingly to ballot for "sustained industrial action" in the autumn if the decision isn't reversed.

UCU branch officer Robyn Orfitelli said: "We do not accept this closure, we will not accept redundancies, and we will not accept a university which is not run in a transparent, democratic, and accountable manner", after the decision had been "railroaded through the university's governance processes" in the face of widespread opposition from staff, students and the wider archaeology community.

Last year, UCU industrial action at the University of Sheffield beat an attempted implementation of controversial 'fire and rehire' contracts.

ALISTAIR TICE
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

BEIS workers strike to demand end to low pay



Cleaners, security guards and other support staff employed by contractor ISS at government department BEIS walked out last week in London to demand an end to low pay and improved working conditions, extra bonuses for working through lockdown, and annual leave entitlement owed from last year.

national shop stewards network
www.shopstewards.net

NSSN TUC Rally 2021
Sunday 12th September 12 noon

United action against the Tories on public sector pay!
Fight for workplace safety! Defend jobs, pay and conditions!
Stop yet more privatisation of the NHS!

Confirmed speaker so far:
SARAH WOOLLEY, BFAWU GENERAL SECRETARY

This is an open forum to have your say

Zoom details: Meeting ID: 861 1677 4093 Passcode: NSSN2021

The NSSN is supported by the following national trade unions

RMT FAWU PCS ECU NUJ JOURNALISTS napo Unite

PCS union: Fight and fight again to avoid another lost decade on pay

DAVE SAMPLE

Rishi Sunak's decision to impose a pay freeze on 1.3 million public sector workers, announced in late 2020, was confirmed in the Budget in March 2021. UK government departments, battling aside objections by the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, have one by one moved to impose the pay deal on the very workers who have helped keep the country running during the chaos of the pandemic.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the largest department, is among the latest to announce that those earning under £24,249 will receive a pay rise of up to £250, which is the only part of the offer that will be added to pensionable pay. The performance pay pot will be divided among the vast majority of staff to give just a £145 one-off payment before tax.

With inflation rising - 2.5% as of July, according to the BBC - the amounts announced for the vast majority of staff are not a pay freeze, they are a pay cut.

Worryingly, the union's key negotiators on DWP pay decided that they would wait until after negotiations had ended to begin any kind of campaign activity. This is despite clear policy carried at the group conference in June to work with branches to mount collective pressure on the DWP senior management to demand the funding from the Treasury to address the pay problems.

Denying reps such concrete information about whether or not their site had smashed the 50% turnout threshold imposed by the anti-union laws has hobbled any fightback.

For several years now, Socialist Party members in PCS have argued for a different approach to pay. While the union's national leadership insisted for two years that pay had to be a standalone issue, we argued that other issues, especially pensions, had to be built into the campaign. The union's national executive committee (NEC) later reversed its position on this.

For the same two years, the NEC, dominated by the rightward-drifting 'Left Unity' faction, argued that there could only be one aggregated ballot, meaning either everywhere would get over the 50% threshold or nowhere would. The result was that twice the union failed to secure the threshold. Worse still, there is no sign of a national 2021 pay campaign, despite the fact that we are midway through July.

The impact of that on the union's leaders in DWP is clear: they don't believe members will fight. They are part of the national leadership who threw out the union's national pay claim at the onset of the pandemic last year. This led directly to the union's leadership in Revenue and Customs ducking a fight on their recent three-year pay deal, which resulted in detrimental contractual changes.

Only by fighting will we be able

to secure the extra money from the Treasury needed for pay and permanent contracts. Socialist Party members holding elected positions will continue to argue for this at all levels of the union. But, increasingly, any hope of a serious campaign is going to come down to whether we can mobilise branches, reps and members to demand that their leaders do what they were elected to do: fight, fight and fight again to avoid another lost decade on pay.

● Read the full article at socialistparty.org.uk



Protest outside Bexley Council offices on 22 July LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY



CUBAN PROTESTS - WHAT DO THEY REPRESENT?

TONY SAUNOIS

COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL (CWI)
SECRETARY

On 11 July, Cuba was rocked by the largest protests to have taken place since the 1994 'Maleconazo' protests. The 1994 protests followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the abrupt cut-off of Soviet aid. It resulted in a staggering 30% decline in Cuba's Gross Domestic Product (GDP, ie total output) and the introduction of what president Fidel Castro dubbed at the time the "special period".

The July 2021 protests have been undoubtedly magnified by imperialism for political gain, yet they may represent a decisive change in the situation in Cuba.

They may also have shocked some on the left who look towards Cuba as an alternative to capitalism and standing up against the might of US imperialism.

Many have been impressed by the gains made in Cuba in health, education, literacy and other areas following the 1959-60 revolution. The CWI has consistently defended these conquests. At the same time, we have criticised the bureaucratic top-down methods of rule, and the absence of genuine workers' democracy and democratic workers' control and management of the nationalised economy.

Unfortunately, most of the gains of the revolution have been eroded over the last 30 years. It is therefore necessary for socialists to accurately assess what is unfolding in Cuba and draw from it crucial lessons.

The 11 July protests come on the back of a further dramatic economic crisis, which has been accelerated and worsened by the pandemic, and the sanctions imposed by US imperialism. The vindictive embargo, imposed by US imperialism in 1960, was intensified by Trump and has continued under Biden.

From the outset the CWI has fought against the embargo and demanded that it be lifted.

In 2020, the economy shrank by at least 11%. The Covid-19 pandemic has devastated the economy, which is increasingly reliant on tourism. Poverty has dramatically increased, with hunger rearing its head for the first time since the revolution.

But the crisis has also been exacerbated by the bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy, the lack of genuine democratic workers' control and management, and the mistaken policies adopted historically by the regime.

How the situation will develop in the coming months is uncertain. Nonetheless, the Cuban regime, led now by the President and Communist Party First Secretary Miguel Díaz-Canel, faces its greatest threat since the revolution. For the first time there is not a Castro in the official leadership. The Castros, especially Fidel, and other communist leaders, had an immense authority because of the material gains of the 1959-60

revolution. This is lacking in the current political leadership.

The initial reaction of the regime was to denounce the protesters as "criminals", "delinquents" and "counterrevolutionaries". This was subsequently modified to acknowledge that real grievances exist.

The crucial question now posed is: What lies behind the current protests? Are its participants merely reactionary counterrevolutionaries working together with the Miami Cuban exiles and US imperialism? Also, what is the future for the Cuban regime? And what attitude should socialists adopt towards these developments?

These questions have provoked debate and discussion on the socialist left internationally. Some have simply dismissed the protests as counterrevolutionary and lent uncritical, or virtually uncritical, support to the regime.

The threat of a full capitalist counterrevolution is now undoubtedly a serious threat. Should it occur, it would be a blow for the international working class. The capitalist classes internationally would use it to step up their ideological offensive against the idea of socialism.

Yet the question arises as to why this threat is posed. The answer lies in the bureaucratic methods, false policies, and missed opportunities by the regime which have left Cuba isolated, despite enjoying the sympathy and support of many workers and youth around the world.

Cuban revolution

The Cuban revolution enjoyed mass support among the overwhelming majority of the Cuban population. It swept away the hated Batista dictatorship, which was a puppet of US imperialism. Prior to the revolution Cuba had become a playground for the rich and powerful in the US in particular, with its beaches, casinos and brothels.

Millions greeted the victory of Castro's guerrilla forces as they marched into Havana with a general strike. However, Castro's original idea was not to break with capitalism but to establish a 'modern', 'progressive' capitalism.

Fellow revolutionary Che Guevara, however, defended the idea of socialism from the beginning, although he did not have a worked-out understanding of how it was to be achieved and which social class would lead it.

US imperialism would not countenance Castro's regime when it implemented reforms it opposed. In retaliation, imperialism struck blow after blow against the regime.

The new regime responded in turn by taking more and more radical measures. In a series of tit-for-tat strikes, the economy was nationalised and capitalism was snuffed out. Cuba declared itself 'socialist'. This aroused massive international enthusiasm, especially in the neocolonial world.

The new regime in Cuba was increasingly drawn into the camp of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union which agreed a favourable trade arrangement. Through this,

massive reforms were introduced by the Castro regime. And despite the absence of genuine democratic workers' control and management, the regime was immensely popular.

The mass organisations which were built, especially the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), although initially enjoying a high level of participation from workers, and some authority, were in effect transmission belts for the government, rather than independent democratic organs of workers' power.



The 11 July protests come on the back of a further dramatic economic crisis, which has been accelerated and worsened by the pandemic, and US sanctions

This led to economic zigzags and serious mistakes. Repressive measures were taken against those who criticised the new authority, even from the left. Yet, for a lengthy period of time, the regime continued to enjoy massive social support.

This was reflected in the ability of the regime to cling on to power even following the collapse of the Soviet Union 30 years ago and its devastating effects on the Cuban economy. Given the catastrophic economic collapse which has taken place, it is surprising that big protests have not broken out earlier.

In 1994, Fidel Castro, going to meet the protesters, was able to use his authority to stabilise the situation and promise some reforms. Today, the regime faces a changed situation and lacks the authority of Castro.

The repressive and stifling bureaucratic methods have increasingly alienated more and more young people who, unlike their elders, have not experienced the gains of the revolution. They have only endured decades of stumbling from one crisis to another.

For an allegedly revolutionary socialist regime, to lose the support of the youth is a dangerous and negative feature.

In addition to the economic crisis, there is also a thirst for democratic openings and expression. This was reflected in protests by artists and musicians prior to the events on 11 July. The demand for more democratic rights and expression is also a powerful factor undermining the regime.

Confronted with economic crisis and stagnation prior to the pandemic, and the loss of cheap oil which it secured when Hugo Chávez headed the Venezuelan regime, the Cuban government had already taken some further steps towards introducing pro-capitalist measures and allowing



Recent anti-government (above) and pro-government demonstrations in Cuba PHOTO (ABOVE) JAYMEDIO/CC (BELOW) PERLAVISION CIENFUEGOS-CC



private ownership in sectors of the economy.

The sectors allowed to be in private hands, have increased from 127 to 2,000. But how far this has actually developed is questionable, and the state probably retains control of the decisive sectors of the economy.

Inequality

Yet these measures, alongside the introduction of the dual currency nearly 30 years ago - the peso and the convertible peso (CUC) - have enormously increased inequality, with those in the tourist sector and others using the dollar.

Now, the government has eliminated the CUC and opened up stores that accept dollars using a bank card. This partial dollarisation of the economy is being used as a further pro-capitalist step.

Apart from the dire economic situation, a further factor that has fuelled the recent protests is the worsening health situation during the pandemic. Initially, the regime managed the

situation relatively well, and succeeded in mobilising the renowned Cuban health system with its army of trained doctors and health practitioners.

However, desperate to gain income from tourism, the government in July last year opened up Cuba and allowed foreign tourists in. As a result, Covid infections have rocketed. This is against the background of only around 15% of the population being fully vaccinated.

The protests that broke out on 11 July seemed to have included an element of right-wing counterrevolutionaries with some links to Cuban exiles in Miami, with an intense social media campaign under the slogan #SOS Cuba.

At the same time, others came out of frustration; demanding vaccines, an end to the power cuts, an end, shortages, and an end to the dictatorship and more democracy.

At the same time, not reported in most of the western capitalist press, some pro-government supporters mobilised to defend the Communist

Party offices in some areas, reflecting that the regime retains a layer of support.

A confused and mixed political consciousness is likely to be present in all the demonstrations. Many protesting about the economic crisis and demanding more democracy will not be demanding a return to capitalism.

However, without an organised revolutionary socialist alternative programme to combat imperialism and, at the same time, establish a genuine system of workers' democracy, a movement can morph into capitalist restoration in one form or another.

Collapse of Stalinism

A similar process took place in the GDR (the former East Germany), other Eastern European Stalinist states, and the USSR. The process of capitalist restoration did not begin with demonstrations demanding a return to capitalism. They were for democratic rights and an end to the shortages, economic stagnation and decline.

However, in the absence of working class organisations with a programme to remove the political bureaucracy and replace it with workers' governments - based on democratic workers' control and management of the planned economy - the attraction of the higher living standards in western Europe resulted in the movements mutating into the process of capitalist restoration, which swathes of the former bureaucracy embraced.

A similar process may now develop in Cuba, especially with Biden in the White House as opposed to Trump. A layer could be drawn to the idea of removing the regime, opening up the economy and ending the embargo as a means of ending the devastating crisis which exists.

Such a process would not result in the Cuban masses seeing their standard of living rise. Rather, they would be plunged into the destitution facing the masses in the rest of Latin America.

The CWI is opposed to capitalist restoration in Cuba or any intervention by imperialism. However, this is not enough to halt the threat of capitalist restoration which would represent a setback or defeat for the working class.

Some on the left argue that the Cuban regime has had no alternative but to implement the policies that it has done due to the US embargo and isolation of the regime.

Any revolutionary socialist government can find itself isolated and compelled to take temporary emergency measures to safeguard its position. The Bolsheviks found themselves in this situation after the 1917 socialist revolution. They were compelled to take emergency measures, including the New Economic Policy in 1921, which allowed a temporary reintroduction of some capitalist market mechanisms.

The Bolsheviks under Lenin saw this as a temporary retreat, forced on them by the situation they confronted - of isolation of the revolution and civil war. It was to buy time and not viewed as a lasting programme. Only through this would it be possible to begin to develop the international revolution and build real socialism.

This is not the approach of the Cuban regime, which regards its pro-capitalist measures as the way forward and fails to pose the issue of spreading the socialist revolution.

The wrong methods and programme of the Cuban regime historically have served to isolate the regime. On numerous occasions it would have been possible for a socialist revolution to have been carried through in other countries in Latin and Central America.

The Cuban revolution at its height did raise the ideas of internationalism and international revolution. This was reflected in the 'Second Declaration of Havana' published in February 1962, which showed how far the revolutionary process was developing.

Later, Cuban forces were deployed to Africa to support the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. The sentiment of



Leaders of the 1959-60 Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro (left) and Che Guevara PHOTO PERIODICO AHORA-CC

internationalism which developed at the height of the revolution has also been reflected in the deployment of Cuban doctors to other countries prior to and during the Covid pandemic.

However, the 'internationalist' sentiment was not linked to the idea of struggling for socialist revolution by the working class.

Che Guevara did look towards spreading the revolution. Unfortunately, he looked towards the idea of a guerrilla army rather than the working class to carry through a socialist revolution.



The CWI defends the conquering of democratic rights for the Cuban people, but not as the capitalist class hypocritically advocates

Castro and the regime, however, used Cuba's interventions as part of an strategy to gain a geopolitical advantage or sphere of influence, particularly for the bureaucracy in the USSR.

This allowed the Cuban regime to develop a strong following, particularly in the neocolonial world. It took up the mantle of 'anti-imperialism' which won it some support. However, this was not part of a programme of class struggle to defeat imperialism or the reactionary bourgeois/feudal regimes which ruled in the neocolonial countries.

Under the banner of 'anti-imperialism', it has backed the Iranian, North Korean and other regimes. Following the massacre of the Tamil peoples in Sri Lanka in 2009, Cuba supported a resolution at the United Nations backing the bloody regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa.

When other revolutionary movements developed in the South American continent, the Cuban regime used its influence to encourage the leadership, to try and apply the brake and pressured them not to overthrow capitalism and landlordism.

In Chile, Castro visited left president Salvador Allende in Santiago prior to the US-backed coup in 1973. Before an audience of hundreds of thousands he presented him with a machine gun. Yet, at the same time, he and his Chilean supporters advised Allende to slow the revolution down and not provoke reaction.

In 1979, in Nicaragua, when the Sandinistas took power and overthrew the Somoza dictatorship, again the Cuban regime pressured the Sandinistas to limit themselves to the 'democratic revolution' and not break with capitalism.

More recently, with the revolutionary upheavals in Venezuela under Chávez, in Bolivia under Morales, and in Ecuador under Correa, had these regimes broken with capitalism and introduced democratic workers' and peasants' governments based on a nationalised planned economy, it would have been possible to break the isolation and unite in a socialist federation of independent republics together with Cuba.

This could have been a first step to electrifying the continent and winning support from the working class throughout Latin America and internationally. Tragically, this opportunity was also lost. Again, it was the Cuban officials who advised against going 'too far' and provoking reaction.

A socialist federation would not have been able to resolve all of the economic and social problems, and would still have had to confront the colossus of US imperialism and its sanctions. However, it would have been in a much stronger position to do so, and could have acted as a beacon to the working class in other countries like Brazil, Argentina and Chile, and indeed in the US itself.

A new revolutionary wave is unfolding in Latin America. An aspect of this is the recent election of a left president in Peru, Pedro Castillo. Yet the Cuban regime issued statements saying the task was to end neoliberalism and did not call for a socialist transformation.

The CWI defends the conquering of democratic rights for the Cuban people, but not as the

capitalist class hypocritically advocates. The struggle for democratic rights by the working class, poor and youth in Cuba is crucial.

The CWI supports committees in every workplace and community, elected with delegates subject to immediate recall. All officials need to be elected and subject to recall, and receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

A full debate to draw up an emergency economic plan to deal with the crisis needs to be elaborated by the working class and the mass of the population. There needs to be an end to the one-party political system with the right of all socialists and the people to organise political parties and groups if they reject taking up arms to support US imperialism or capitalist restoration.

Popular tribunals need to be established to open the cases of those political prisoners currently incarcerated by the regime. Workers and youth should have the right to produce papers and magazines free from control by the state, along with free access to the internet. And for the right of workers to form independent trade unions, run democratically.

Such a programme should be linked with an appeal to the working class of Latin America and the US for support and solidarity, and to join in a united struggle to establish a socialist federation of Latin America and the Americas. This is the way forward to prevent capitalist restoration and counterrevolution.

● This article can be read in full on socialistworld.net



Nationality and borders bill

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM

UNITE TO FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

ISAI PRIYA
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The nationality and borders bill has had its second reading in parliament. Home Secretary Priti Patel has said that this bill will give British people control back over our borders, and that the Tories' priorities are the people's priorities.

Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Working-class people have no real control over most aspects of our lives. If we did, we wouldn't let the super-rich and private profiteers come in and exploit us and our resources.

If we had real control, we would give our health workers, teachers and all key workers the pay rise they deserve instead of increasing military spending by £16 billion or, as this bill proposes, spending £412 million a year jailing refugees who cross the

Channel - five times more than the cost of housing them in the asylum support system!

If the bill is passed, people fleeing war, persecution and oppression will be denied asylum based purely on how they arrive in the country. Refugees and asylum seekers arriving by boat, many of them already severely traumatised, will be formally classified as criminals and face the prospect of punishment, including being jailed for up to four years.

Only those coming via 'safe and legal' routes will be considered for asylum. But only a very small percentage of refugees and migrants have access to such routes.

"While people are dying we have a responsibility to act," declared Priti Patel. There is no end to her hypocrisy. Already there is huge anger against her opposition to England footballers taking the knee and then condemning the racist

abuse they received.

This is the same person who went as far as wanting to bring in wave machines to stop the boats from crossing the Channel. The idea was so brutal that even her advisers were forced to reject it over safety concerns.

But the reality is that the Tories don't care about people dying. Tens of thousands have unnecessarily died from Covid because the Tory government chose to put profit before people's lives. Refugees and asylum seekers are dying precisely because the legal routes to asylum have been closed off! Making routes more dangerous is not going to stop those who are prepared to risk their lives to find safety.

We can't trust the Tories with our NHS and other public services that have been cut to the bone, and we can't trust them to run the asylum system either. The nationality and borders bill should be scrapped. We need a fair asylum process, democratically controlled by elected committees of workers, community and migrant organisations.

With this bill, migration and the lives of asylum seekers are once again being used as a weapon to divide working-class people and divert attention from the crisis of the Tories and the capitalist profit system they defend.

The working-class and young people in Britain need a party that fights in the interests of all workers: that will fight for investment in jobs, homes and services for all, and for the nationalisation of the banks and the major companies so that the vast wealth that is currently held in the hands of a few can be owned, controlled and planned democratically for the benefit of the majority.

This must form part of a global struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalism worldwide, so that we can bring an end to the wars, poverty and persecution that force people to flee, and can create a world that guarantees a decent standard of living for working-class, young people and the poor everywhere.



Refugees have linked up their fight with the need to defend public services from cuts PHOTO TIPPAU MATTHEWSON

Australia has long been held up as a particularly repressive immigration system, and has served as an inspiration for both Labour and Conservative governments in Britain. As the UK government considers following the 'Australian model' yet again, we carry a review of the 2020 Netflix drama *Stateless* which takes place within the Australian immigration system.

BEN ROBINSON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Stateless is a dramatisation of the 2004-05 case of Cornelia Rau, an Australian citizen who was falsely detained by the Australian immigration services for ten months. In the midst of a mental health crisis, and fleeing an abusive cult, Rau played up her German roots in an attempt to be deported.

In the six-part Netflix series, Rau is the inspiration for the character Sofie Werner. Her struggles take centre stage throughout.

While her individual story is an interesting extreme of the impact of mental health on a person's life, often the sharpest writing is found in other scenes which cover the life of others in the detention centre. However, this is the backdrop rather than the focus, and ultimately the show feels compromised as a result.

Tragi-comic episodes are scattered throughout. Protesting Tamils on the detention centre roof are sent a Sinhala translator, visiting nuns smuggle mobile phones in via roast dinners, and an exchange about cancelled camp activities is reminiscent of *Catch-22*.

As the drama progresses, these notes are replaced by darker overtones, such as the immigration case



A still from Netflix's *Stateless* PHOTO NETFLIX

worker uncovering a plaintive 'help' scratched into her desk underneath stacks of incomplete paperwork, and a violent camp guard ends up promoted to running the entire facility, alongside the struggles of Sofie's family to track her down.

TV Review: Stateless blames mismanagement rather than system

The show's liberal message chimes with the protagonists' struggles with her mental health. The idea is that everything Sofie undergoes is an aberration, rather than the norm under capitalism for wealthy countries such as Australia.

The show's wider limitations are ultimately a reminder and a reflection of the racism in capitalist society, and the immigration system in particular. Refugees flee war, poverty and state persecution, facing brutal conditions along the way, before very few can even face up to the challenge of building a new life in a new country. Those stories are at best haltingly told here.

The show's secondary characters represent different facets of the system. Afghan refugee Ameer faces tragic consequences of his boat journey, and dealings with careless people-smugglers.

Case worker Claire is confronted head-on by the choices policies she co-developed force those claiming asylum into. New detention centre guard Cam struggles to acclimatise to the culture of the other guards.

However, this is aimed at the bureaucracy and mismanagement

within the system, rather than the system itself. This is compounded by the central narrative of a white Australian citizen who clearly should not be detained by Australian immigration services.

Darren Proctor, RMT national officer for maritime, spoke about the longstanding race to the bottom that has seen seafarers' wages attacked by the bosses.

Claire from PCS in East Midlands outlined how far deregulation had spread across Europe with 83 Freeports already in the European Union. It's not only coastal ports that are the targets, but also flight hubs such as East Midlands Airport, which is now second to Stanstead in terms of air freight.

Reeling from a decade of government funding cuts, cash-strapped local councils, including Labour councils, are supporting these measures, attracted by the increase in revenue from business rates, despite the

Fight Freeports to stop bonfire of workers' rights



NICK CHAFFEY
SOUTHERN SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY

Over 50 trade unionists from unions such as Unite, RMT, PCS, Usdaw, and NEU, and reps from local trades councils in Southampton, Hull and Liverpool met with the assistance of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) to discuss what 'Freeports' mean for workers and how trade unions should respond.

Rob Williams, chair of the NSSN, introducing the meeting outlined the importance of raising awareness about the development of Freeports and the danger they pose to workers: "There must be no bonfire of our rights", he warned.

On the day of the meeting, Unite secured a significant union recognition agreement with XPO-Nestle over the East Midlands Gateway logistic hub that will eventually cover six million square feet of warehousing. It is a glimpse of how the Tory 'levelling-up' agenda will impact the workplace as incentives are offered for investors in the form of deregulation and tax breaks.

Dave Williams, Unite executive member said: "This is a welcome step in the right direction but there is a lot at stake to stop a continuation in the race to the bottom that will weaken and undermine jobs and the future."

Darren Proctor, RMT national officer for maritime, spoke about the longstanding race to the bottom that has seen seafarers' wages attacked by the bosses.

Claire from PCS in East Midlands outlined how far deregulation had spread across Europe with 83 Freeports already in the European Union. It's not only coastal ports that are the targets, but also flight hubs such as East Midlands Airport, which is now second to Stanstead in terms of air freight.

Reeling from a decade of government funding cuts, cash-strapped local councils, including Labour councils, are supporting these measures, attracted by the increase in revenue from business rates, despite the

threat to workers. Evidence already shows that Freeports don't create jobs but promote job transfers. The role of Labour councils makes this a political issue that must be addressed by the unions.

The meeting was unanimous that trade unions must defend all existing national and local agreements. Where current agreements exist with companies like UPS and DHL, trade unions must ensure that job transfers to Freeports are fought in order to defend workers' pay and conditions. Our approach must be to demand that all new jobs, including apprenticeships, are at agreed trade union pay rates and conditions.



Unite secured a significant union recognition agreement with XPO-Nestle over the East Midlands Gateway logistic hub

The Socialist Party gives its full support to the development of a co-ordinated trade union response to Freeports. The meeting proposed a further national meeting in the autumn and a national day of action to raise awareness and mobilise opposition. This should include making links with trade unions in the 83 Freeports across Europe who will face their own attacks in the period ahead.

The only way to ensure a real levelling up for all is through implementing socialist policies that should include the renationalisation of the ports and transport as part of an integrated plan of production and distribution to ensure full employment and improve current pay and working conditions.



Priti Patel's new borders bill raises the entry bar even higher for refugees PHOTO TIM HAMMOND/JO DOWNING/ST/CC

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Barnsley ‘Big Green Space’ protest

ANGIE WALLER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

50 people marched behind a samba band on the ‘Big Green Space’ protest, calling for our local green spaces not to be destroyed by housing and warehouse developments. The giant Hermes warehouse is all but built in Hoyland, but the residents are angry at the lack of consultation from the council.

When we did get to talk to the councillors, they just said it would bring jobs. We all know what type of jobs they will be - low-paid and very long hours. Campaigners are not only worried about jobs, they are concerned about the loss of recreation space and the effects on the natural habitat of wildlife. We have found a new strength in campaigning together, and are now talking about standing in next year’s council elections.

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2021	DEADLINE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2021
Southern & SE	1,346	2,350		57%
Wales	1,298	2,300		56%
West Midlands	1,420	2,600		55%
South West	935	1,800		52%
London	1,724	4,600	37%	
East Midlands	645	1,850	35%	
Northern	260	750	35%	
Yorkshire	825	2,250	32%	
North West	201	1,150	17%	
Eastern	7	1,200	4%	
Other	173	3,850	1%	
TOTAL	8,833	25,000	35%	

East London resident fighting eviction again

LINDA TAAFFE
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Nadia Zaman has to fight once again (see ‘Protesters halt Nadia’s eviction’ at socialistparty.org.uk) - this time to stop her and her three children being relocated to Stoke-on-Trent. Nadia has lived all her life in Walthamstow, east London. She resisted eviction, and then accepted the council offer of a single room in nearby Leyton for her whole family. Her supporters are submitting a realistic plan on how she can be housed locally - given willingness to listen and with sensible flexibility on both sides.

But these plans could go down the drain now that Mears are involved - the private contractors have a £80 million deal to cleanse the borough of its poorest families, and ship them off to Stoke. The prospect of being isolated away from family and community fills Nadia with dread - as it would anybody. It is grossly unjust - even cruel and inhuman.

Councillors must stop this crisis for Nadia right now. They should pull into line the council officers pressing ahead with the ‘offer’ of Stoke or ‘out on the streets’. They should respond to Nadia’s supporters’ proposal. We are sick of the torrent of sad stories in the media about people in housing difficulties. We need action. Take the profit motive out of housing provision. Instead, housing should be considered a social service. Build masses of council homes at council rents, not unaffordable tower blocks.

Tower Hamlets Labour backs Tory cuts and housing for rich

Vote TUSC in Weavers on 12 August

HUGO PIERRE
TUSC BY-ELECTION CANDIDATE

The Tories have taken away more than 50% of the government grants to run local services. And Tower Hamlets Labour mayor John Biggs has gone along with it. Every year the mayor asks us: What do we want to cut so the council stays afloat? Our Labour mayor preferred to ‘fire and rehire’ all council staff rather than fight a weak

government for the cash our services need. In the next few years, the Tories aim to give us less to pay for their mishandling of the Covid crisis. Meanwhile, the number of billionaires has increased, and the Tories’ friends got multimillion pound handouts for pandemic services they didn’t deliver. We don’t need another Labour councillor that nods through Biggs’ austerity budget. I am standing as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in the Weavers ward by-election.

The wealth is there

I will fight to reverse all the cuts to our youth services, libraries, community centres, social care, mental health, community safety and special education needs. I say no voting for cuts - we need funding that meets our needs. The wealth is there in society, let’s build a mass campaign based for the government to fund it. There is a massive shortage of affordable housing. There are over 20,000 on the council’s housing waiting list. There are more house building programmes in the borough than anywhere else in the UK. But these are snapped up by large landlords for speculation and profiteering. Tower Hamlets private renters pay the seventh highest rents in the country for the type of accommodation on offer. Rents have gone up faster than wages. They are unaffordable. Private landlords continue to make big bucks. Public campaigning and direct action, led by the Socialist Party, successful forced City Rooms - a big housing agency - to accept a reasonable agreement for rent that Lawanya

Ramajeyam supposedly owed on a room she’d vacated months before. Tower Hamlets also has the highest proportion of children living in poverty. Those on the lowest income often pay around half their income on housing. We demand that the council builds over 2,000 council homes a year at rents that the majority can afford. Local rents should be based on paying 15% of your income.

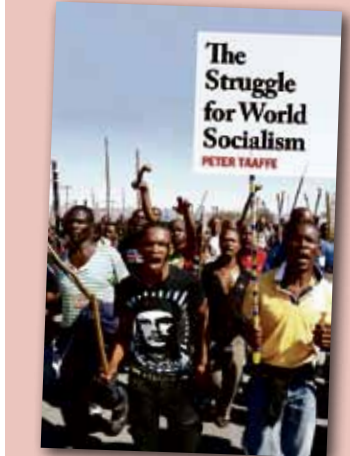
Not for us

Housing developments in Aldgate, Bow and many other parts of the borough are not for us, but the super-rich. They contain no truly affordable housing. The new Truman development in Brick Lane will become a ‘white elephant’ with little or no benefit to local people. The council, in collaboration with the local community and trade unions, should develop a plan that provides services, including good-quality council housing to the highest environmental standards. These could also provide employment for local people and apprenticeships, with a guaranteed job at the end, for young people. End low pay with a £15-an-hour minimum wage.

If elected, as a socialist councillor, I will:

- Fight for rent controls to cap rents to a real affordable level
- Seek to use whatever powers councils have to give security to tenants
- Help renters to get organised to protect their rights
- Support action against evictions
- Demand the council take action against private landlords seeking to evict tenants who are not able to pay

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Youth Fight for Jobs is officially relaunched

FERDY LYONS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The relaunch of Youth Fight for Jobs officially got under way, with the national steering committee meeting on 14 July. Delegates attended, in a personal capacity, from eight trade unions. Sarah Woolley general secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) also attended. We discussed what the key demands of Youth Fight for Jobs should be: a decent job for all, end zero-hour contracts, £12 an hour minimum wage as a step to £15, mass programme of council house building, rent control, and trade union rights and recognition in all workplaces.

The committee agreed to hold a national day of action to make these demands on 9 October when furlough is due to end. Protests will be held up and down the country, so join us then and help our fightback.

- youthfightforjobs.com
- See ‘Jobs and homes for all’ on back page

Scottish socialist breaks running record

LEAH GANLEY
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Wow! At just after 3am on 21 July, Socialist Party Scotland member Luke Ivory finished the 518 miles of the NC500. Luke’s attempt was the fastest ever in five days, 23 hours, 4 minutes and 17 seconds. This is an incredible two

days, 20 hours less than the current record. Luke ran the equivalent of 20 marathons, and a total elevation of climbing Everest and two Ben Nevis - this is with extremely limited sleep and no proper food. He’s a machine - an amazing achievement Luke. Surprisingly, he is now feeling in pretty good shape, not much worse than a few blisters. Luke is raising money for the fantastic work of Socialist Party Scotland. If you are as impressed as I am, you can donate here:

- justgiving.com/crowdfunding/luken500forsocialism
- socialistpartyscotland.org.uk



SARAH O’NEILL
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

LGBTQ+ people have always had to fight to survive, let alone thrive. At the Reclaim Pride protest on 24 July, there were plenty of placards reminding us of this struggle - but that struggle has been co-opted and appropriated by corporations and capitalists. There were placards with direct and distinct demands - end conversion therapy, stop the deportation of LGBTQ+ refugees, and for adequate trans healthcare - in opposition to the empty platitudes of ‘rainbow’ capitalism.

Just the start

Peter Tatchell’s call for Reclaim Pride protests is a promising start. The vital next step is a democratic decision on the demands and slogans the movement will stand behind. This must involve workers and the trade unions - the struggle cannot be divided, but must be fought en masse. Starting at Parliament Square in central London, and ending in Hyde Park, 4,000 joined Reclaim Pride to demand real equality, not whatever crumbs have been offered by bankers and bosses who willingly make deals with viciously homophobic governments.

Thousands march to Reclaim Pride



Instead, Reclaim Pride was filled with radical people of all ages, angry and willing to fight for change. Black Lives Matter activists, young people

and students, all demonstrated their support, alongside trade union banners showing solidarity with LG-BTQ+ people.

The Socialist Party had built for Reclaim Pride among the workers’ movement. We got the demo announced at trades councils and other

London floods: Privatisation and heavy rain are a dangerous mix

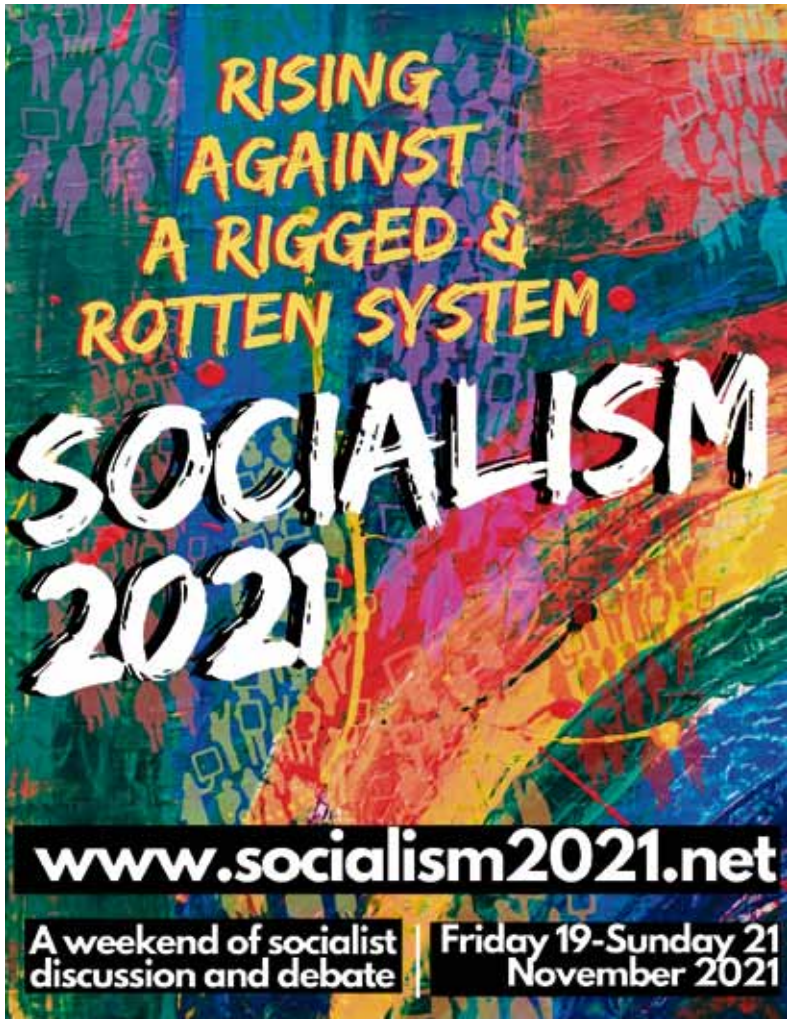
LEE HAWKSBEЕ
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Just days after the images of floods devastating whole areas of Germany and Belgium filled our screens (see pages 14-15), the skies opened on 25 July, and the rain came crashing down across London and other parts of the UK. The capital was brought to a standstill - hospitals flooded, tube stations filled with water over a metre deep, roads became rivers, streets and houses were ruined. Understandably, the discussion quickly focused on climate change, and this is an important factor shaping the unpredictability and severity of the weather. However, global warming doesn’t entirely explain how a few hours of heavy rain could wreak havoc like this. No rivers burst their banks here, the problem was surface run-off and inadequate drainage. The reason for this can be found in the chaos of capitalism. The privatisation of all the old



utilities, construction, highways maintenance, and almost all major services has led to devastating consequences. Firstly, services performed by private companies are cut in pursuit of profit. Secondly, governance and standards that could improve the quality of work are removed in a hail of Tory euphoria eliminating ‘red tape’. Finally, funding to all services is cut to the bone. The evidence is all around us. As a kid growing up on a suburban estate in Essex, I remember vividly the huge noisy trucks that came regularly with their enormous vacuums to suck the silt and debris from the drains. I have

lived in Walthamstow, east London, for a decade, and have never seen one. Every facet of our lives has been privatised, which is why these flooding problems are linked to the lack of adequate housing, potholes in the roads, endless traffic, and the lack of health services. We say bring back all the utilities, construction projects and services into public ownership with democratic workers’ control and oversight. Bring back the standards and governance that ensure the quality of the work undertaken for the long term, not for private individual interests in the short term.



Hereford

I was very anxious about hitting the streets with the first campaign for the

Socialist Party in Hereford. There is not a socialist base here. But meeting Sean from Worcester Socialist Party and carrying the kit to where we set up was quite liberating. We set up in the centre of High Town, outside an empty shop. Our table was adorned with posters and copies of the Socialist. A fighting fund pot was set out on top. We put posters on the windows behind us, and set to shouting about

the NHS pay ‘rise’ and against the privatisation of the NHS. It was not long before we had our first signatures and discussions. 22 Socialist papers and £81.65 for the fighting fund on top later, and, more importantly, four people interested in the Socialist Party. We heard about another campaign at Westfields School in Leominster. It is being centralised to Hereford, with no apparent thought given to parents and pupils who have extra needs. We

will be there. We are the only party visibly standing up against Tory cuts. I look forward to the next one, and may there be many more. AMELIA WASHBOURNE

Coventry

We were back out building our campaign against parking charges. The anger at the parking charges couldn’t be clearer than when a member of

union meetings across London. Two thirds of the trade union banners had been mobilised by Socialist Party members. We did this because the workers’ movement has the power to challenge LGBTQphobia - both in the workplace and wider society. It was a very welcome change from capitalist tokenism. The crowd was made up of people, old and young, families with push-chairs, multiple generations in one group, partners, friends and supporters. It was inclusive and lively, but angry and visible.

Radical roots

Pride can never be removed from its radical roots. Everywhere you looked there were Socialist Party placards which boldly linked the need to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation with the need to fight for socialism. Chants of ‘Tories, Tories, Tories, out, out, out!’ and ‘What do we want? Liberation! When do we want it? Now!’ show Pride is not a party - Pride is political. If we are to take away anything from this event it is this reminder - the first Pride was not a parade, but a riot.

- See ‘LGBTQ+ workers’ charter’ at socialistparty.org.uk

the public came up unprompted and helped us hand out leaflets and encouraged others to sign! One man told us plainly: “I voted Labour until now, but never again. I’ll vote socialist in future.” ADAM HARMSWORTH

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Flood devastation in Europe

Capitalism

responsible for

climate change and

lack of protection

The German federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as Belgium, the Netherlands and other neighbouring countries, have been devastated by torrential rains and massive flooding. Such 'once in a lifetime' extreme weather events are becoming frequent as global heating, caused by capitalism, produces devastating climate change. Indeed, Henan province in China has also recently suffered deadly floods, when a year's rainfall fell in only 24 hours. The recent severe floods in Europe were predicted and warned of, but governments and authorities in the affected countries did nothing to protect people, their homes, and infrastructure. **Caspar Loettgers**, in Mainz, and **Tom Hoffmann**, in Berlin, members of Sozialistische Organisation Solidarität (CWI Germany), report on this preventable disaster and what should happen now.



The flooded River Ahr in Altenahr, Germany. Such extreme weather events are becoming the norm under capitalism

from this flood to put their own demands in the interests of working people to those in power. When the floods recede, the next crisis is already waiting for many, especially in Rhineland-Palatinate, where only 35% of property owners have so-called natural hazard insurance. This is often due to the fact that premiums are far too high or that insurance companies are not willing to offer such policies in high-risk areas. Even if you have one, the process of getting a payout is often tedious and bureaucratic. Sozialistische Organisation Solidarität therefore calls for all insurance companies to be merged and transferred to public ownership under democratic control in order to help all those affected as quickly as possible. No one should lose their livelihood because of a natural disaster. The effects of this crisis will be felt for a long time. From the Ahrweiler district, which was particularly affected, it is said that the restoration of the gas supply can take months. All such problems must be addressed immediately. **Let the rich pay!** One question will arise: Who will pay for these necessary measures and the reconstruction? So far, the state government in Rhineland-Palatinate has promised €50 million in state support. That is less than a drop in the ocean. The state must use all available resources for the necessary measures. But after that, the working population must not pay through cuts elsewhere. What spending was already necessary due to the pandemic and the economic crisis is now even more urgent: the wealth of millionaires and billionaires must be tapped.

The debt brake, the law that pushes public authorities into taking austerity measures, must finally be abolished and the municipalities must be provided with the necessary finances. Repair and reconstruction work must not result in profiteering by private companies. Therefore, the transfer of the entire construction industry into public ownership under democratic control is necessary in order to rebuild the affected areas and to ensure that no one lines their own pockets. Climate change has long been a threat. Extreme weather, such as severe rain or drought, is now more frequent than in the past. In the USA and Canada, peak temperatures of 49.6°C have been measured in recent weeks, and wildfires are raging in the USA and in Siberia. **“There were alerts going out... saying there's some very serious rain and floods coming: 'be aware'. It's then for the national authorities to take that information and go with it.”** She added: “We should not be seeing this number of deaths from floods in 2021. It's just unacceptable. There's something going wrong with the system.” Despite all this, the world's ruling politicians refuse to take serious action. Targets keep getting pushed back and weakened. They do this because pressure from profit-driven big corporations outweigh concerns about the impacts of climate change. It is therefore necessary to react to climate change and to protect ourselves. All areas of society - including urban and transport planning, as well as workplaces - must be put to the test with regard to necessary protective measures in the interest of the working population and the socially disadvantaged. In order to counteract climate change, we have to break with capitalism. Among other things, the big energy companies must be

Israel: Hospital ancillary workers' strike suspended

AMNON COHEN

Following three days of strike action by government hospital ancillary workers, the employers have agreed to cancel the elimination of 200 posts created to handle the Covid pandemic. But there is no concrete agreement on the main issues of the strike - pay parity with workers employed by the health funds, and excessive workloads (see 'Israel: Hospital ancillary workers strike over pay parity and workload' at socialistparty.org.uk). The health minister has promised the strikers that he will do his best to sort out the problem of pay parity within 45 days. But the funds required to solve the dispute are controlled by the minister of finance. The strike action was solid and showed the strength of the ancillary workers. If there is no progress on dealing with their demands, workers are prepared to resume the strike action. But the expiry of the 45-day suspension will fall within the Jewish holiday period and is likely to coincide with a new Covid wave, both factors which will make a resumption of the strike harder. The strikers thank the Socialist Party for the many messages of support they have received. But they are disappointed that the strike was not continued until their demands were



Striking health workers at Assaf Harofeh Hospital in central Israel PHOTO ELI YOSSEF

met. It's believed that the strike was suspended due to pressure from the right-wing Histadruth (trade union organisation) bureaucracy that is negotiating a national deal with the government, which will freeze wages in return for a moratorium on redundancies. The strike has shown the combativity of the hospital ancillary workers. But they need to assert democratic control of their own struggle to ensure its success. ● For immediate pay parity with health fund workers ● No to deals by bureaucrats behind the backs of the workers. ● For democratic control by the strikers of their own struggle. ● No end of suspension of a strike without a ballot of the strikers

In brief: News, reports and analysis from the Committee for a Workers' International

The following short extracts are from recent articles posted on the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) website. They are mostly written by members active on the ground in their respective CWI sections and provide analysis, programme and perspectives from a Marxist standpoint. Read them in full on socialistworld.net

Afghanistan: Taliban makes rapid gains in wake of Western forces humiliating withdrawal

As Taliban forces conquer large swathes of Afghanistan, the 20-year occupation by American and allied imperialist forces is ending in humiliation, chaos, and an ignoble retreat. Describing the war against the Taliban as “unwinnable”, US President Joe Biden announced American withdrawal by 11 September, and other Nato allies followed suit. A staggering \$2.26 trillion was spent by Washington in both military and civilian operations during the two decades of occupation. It is conservatively estimated that over 175,000 Afghan civilians were killed during the long war. More than 2,320 US personnel died. The other main imperialist occupier, the UK, spent £40 billion in its disastrous operations in Helmand province alone and lost over 400 soldiers. Yet two decades ago, Afghanistan was held up as the model of 'nation building' and supposed 'liberal interventionism', after the US-led a war to overthrow the Taliban in 2001.

South Africa: Riots and looting a dead end - Workers' unity to fight for jobs and services

Following the imprisonment of former president Jacob Zuma for corruption, South Africa has witnessed the most widespread unrest in decades. Tens of thousands of the poor, the destitute, and the hungry have raided supermarkets and shopping malls for food, clothes, and other consumer goods. At the same time, however, forces with entirely separate agendas have inserted themselves among those genuinely looking to relieve the suffering of their families. More significantly, behind these were the organised forces of the 'pro-building' and supposed 'liberal interventionism', after the US-led a war to overthrow the Taliban in 2001.

Niall Mulholland, of the Committee for a Workers' International details this monumental failure by imperialism and explains what socialist programme the workers and poor of Afghanistan and the region must pursue to achieve lasting peace and an end to poverty and unemployment. The Marxist Workers Party condemns the instigators of the riots - the ANC's RET forces. With their backs against the wall after suffering one defeat after the other in the 'lawfare' with the Ramaphosa faction, they have cynically exploited the grievances of the destitute for their own factional ends. Responsibility for these developments lies squarely at the feet of the ANC - both the Ramaphosa and the Zuma faction. This government must go! **MARXIST WORKERS PARTY (CWI SOUTH AFRICA) STATEMENT** **Tunisia coup**

On 25 July, Tunisia's president, Kais Saied, carried out a coup in the country which had been labelled “The Arab world's only democracy”. He sacked the prime minister, Hichem Mechichi, along with the ministers of defence and justice. Parliament was closed down and surrounded by troops who barred the way of the Speaker, Rachid Gannouchi, who heads the Islamist party, Ennahda. With only 20% support, it is still the largest in parliament. The party's offices and local headquarters were

stormed and set alight. Gannouchi has denounced the president's action as, “a coup against the constitution and the revolution”. But in the past ten years there has been no resolution of the seething discontent among the poor and unemployed in Tunisian society. As the ‘i’ newspaper put it: “The dramatic move... followed violent nationwide rallies demanding the resignation of the prime minister and dissolution of parliament, amid a disastrous coronavirus outbreak that has pushed the healthcare system to the point of collapse and escalated economic woes” (27 July). For a full account and programme, see socialistworld.net



JOBS AND HOMES FOR ALL

Protest on 9 October

CHARLIE WELLS
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY

Youth Fight for Jobs is back. We have been on the streets campaigning for the right to a decently paid job for young people.

But the issue of housing is also crucial. Our housing demands - for rent control and council homes - fit alongside our demands for better jobs and equal rates of pay.

House prices leave young people in a position where we are forced to rent. That comes with its own problems, such as unscrupulous landlords breaking and bending housing laws in order to extract as much profit as possible.

The housing needs of young people have been systematically forgotten and ignored by successive governments in Westminster as well as by devolved powers like in Wales. Our needs are not complex - all we want is good-quality, affordable housing.

Implementing demands such as rent control and harsher penalties for greedy landlords is not difficult. However, the Tories would rather keep the £11 million donated to them by various representatives of the property and rental market than fix very apparent issues.

The Tories attitude is best illustrated by their own housing secretary, Robert Jenrick. Jenrick helped a billionaire Tory donor dodge tax and avoid already measly affordable housing requirements by approving a £1 billion luxury development.

The government is clearly on the side of big business landlords, not young and vulnerable people. That's why Youth Fight for Jobs is organising youth marches across the country on 9 October.

If you want to help out, you can find campaign ideas here: 'Youth Fight for Jobs is back' at socialistparty.org.uk. Or get involved by contacting us via:

- Instagram: [@yffjjobs](https://www.instagram.com/yffjjobs)
- Facebook: 'Youth Fight for Jobs'
- Email: yffjjobs@gmail.com
- Or youthfightforjobs.com

