

TORY BUDGET CON

Organise to fight for:

- **£15-an-hour minimum wage**
- **Above inflation pay rises**
- **Fully funded public services**

STEVE SCORE
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

In his budget statement, Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced an increase in the minimum wage and an end to the public sector pay freeze. Both will be wiped out by rapidly rising prices, the increase in National Insurance, and the £1,000 a year cut in Universal Credit.

Rising energy prices will mean this winter many people will once again face the stark choice between 'heating and eating'.

It's all part of Boris Johnson's so-called 'high-wage economy'. What garbage! Workers have suffered years of real cuts in living standards. In-work poverty has rocketed, as has job insecurity and casual working.

The Tories say they are ending a "one year pay pause" in the public sector, but in reality there has been a decade of real-terms pay cuts. We don't yet know what pay rises may be offered for next year; but workers will only get back any of what they lost over ten years through trade union struggle.

Even then, the Tories don't want to fund any pay

increases - so, without a battle, it will mean further cuts in public services.

The hypocrisy of announcing some money for new family centres, when their cuts have previously resulted in the closure of hundreds of Sure Start centres, is breathtaking! New money has supposedly been found for the NHS and social care by raising National Insurance - hitting mainly lower paid workers. Yet it will do very little to end the massive NHS waiting lists or solve the crisis in social care.

But Keir Starmer's Labour has no answers. He retreated from the idea of a £15-an-hour minimum wage, proposing only £10. Now the Tories have already virtually matched it at £9.50!

The Socialist Party boldly fights for a £15-an-hour minimum wage with no exceptions. We believe a coordinated battle across the public sector trade unions and beyond is necessary to fight for higher pay.

We don't have a high-wage economy; we have a high-wealth economy for the super-rich minority. Britain's 171 resident billionaires increased their vast wealth last year by 22%. It went up to £600 billion between them, at a time when millions were suffering cuts to their living standards.

Energy companies and key sectors of the economy should be nationalised to control prices and be planned democratically for the benefit of the whole of society. The NHS and public services should be fully funded. We need a new mass working-class party that will fight for socialist policies.

• See also page 2



PHOTO: STEVE EASON/CC

the Socialist

formerly **Militant**

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The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

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

Public spending under further threat from Tories



PHOTO: PAUL MATTHEWSON

DAVE NELLIST
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND
NATIONAL CHAIR TUSC

Tory chancellor, 'Richi' Sunak, was due to present his autumn budget and spending review statement on Wednesday 27 October, after the Socialist went to print.

Despite several previous announcements, on transport schemes, for example, and a minimum wage increase, this budget will have been no afternoon of joy for the working class. It is preparation for making ordinary people pay for the government's spending and borrowing used to prop up businesses during the pandemic.

The spending review sets out the government's plans for each government department over the next three financial years.

The overall spending 'envelope' had already been announced by the chancellor in September, setting public spending at £3 billion lower in 2024-25 than it had been in March 2020. Despite all the pressure on public services from Covid-19, Sunak is planning lower public spending than before the pandemic!

Separate announcements for some increases in spending, on the NHS and social care for example (though in both cases woefully inadequate compared to what is needed), will mean that other departments face further cuts. Sunak may end the

freeze on pay for most public sector workers, but if pay increases come out of existing budgets, that will also lead to cuts elsewhere.

In its pre-budget statement, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) predicted further cuts to what the Treasury has designated as 'unprotected budgets' - including prisons and courts, further education, and local government - of £2 billion in 2022-23.

The Tories had planned an overall increase of 8% in unprotected budgets in the three-year spending review final year (not coincidentally, the year by which a general election must be held). But further pressures of the pandemic could lead Sunak to bring some of that spending increase forward.

Inflation

If inflation exceeds 5% next year, as the Bank of England has predicted, increasing interest rates and the cost of servicing government borrowing will add to those pressures.

Public spending has suffered a decade of budget cuts: 30% on transport, 50% in the Department of Work and Pensions and 60% in local government, housing and communities.

At the beginning of October, the IFS estimated that English councils needed £10 billion extra in core funding by 2024-25 to maintain even existing service levels (though not restoring the libraries, youth and community centres lost - or any of



Despite all the pressure on public services from Covid-19, Sunak is planning lower public spending than before the pandemic!

the 600,000 local government jobs axed).

The Tory leadership of the Local Government Association, in March 2020, estimated £15 billion had been cut from council funding in the last decade. Last year, the chancellor gave local councils just £2.2 billion extra, but said that three-quarters of that had to be raised with a 5% increase in council tax.

That is likely to be the outcome of this week's budget and review: inadequate core funding for essential council services and the bulk of any increase in spending councils are allowed to make coming from higher taxes on working people. There is no call from the Labour Party for proper central funding of local services.

This further pressure on public spending makes even more significant Unite the Union's decision at its recent conference to call on Labour councils now "to set legal, balanced no-cuts needs-based budgets" (see page 7).

Unite has thrown down the gauntlet to Labour councils which continue to make cuts and privatise services. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will pick up that gauntlet and work with socialist activists across the unions in mounting the widest possible anti-austerity challenge in the elections next May.



Unfortunately, because of staff illness, this week's issue of the Socialist is only 12 pages. We hope to return to the full 16 pages in the next issue.

Tory NHS funding won't fix staff shortage



ALBERTO GIULIANI/CC

HOLLY JOHNSON
ONCOLOGY NURSE AND GMB MEMBER

Rishi Sunak's announcement of nearly £6 billion for the NHS to help clear the backlog of patients on waiting lists would, at first glance, seem a good investment into the NHS. However, it does nothing to address NHS staff shortages. We need the staff to work through the backlog of patients on waiting lists and 5.7 million awaiting treatment.

Much of the spending will no doubt be ploughed into private companies to provide the service; many diagnostic and IT departments are already heavily outsourced. But the

money needs to be given to NHS staff to run services in NHS hospitals, in NHS diagnostic departments.

What happens after the scans and tests have been done? Who delivers the treatment? We cannot work through the millions on treatment lists without addressing the staffing crisis.

There is no investment in decent pay for NHS staff, and no attempt to discontinue student debt. Student nurses come out of university with £60,000 worth of debt to enter a profession where working conditions are worse than ever, workloads are unmanageable and staff are undervalued.

Hospital bed numbers have been halved over the last 30 years. We need immediate investment in beds and to end the staffing crisis. We need to address the core issues of health inequality and delays in treatment that were happening before and during the pandemic. It's not even winter and we already have ambulances queuing outside hospitals.

Unless there is a determined struggle led by the unions for adequate funding where we need it, including to fund a decent pay rise for all NHS staff, the £6 billion will simply be used to grow private profits while NHS staff struggle on low pay or continue to leave in droves.

Public sector pay thaw - union fight is on for a real rise and funding

CHRIS HOLMES
NORTH LONDON TEACHER AND NEU MEMBER

For teachers, the government's announcement that in April 2022 they will lift the public sector pay freeze imposed in November 2020 simply represents too little too late. Not so long ago, at the height of the

pandemic, teachers along with many other public sector workers, were acclaimed by Boris Johnson as front-line heroes. However, in real terms, since the financial crisis of 2007 our pay has fallen 8%.

On top of an ever-increasing workload, it is hardly surprising that there has been a chronic shortage in

teacher recruitment and retention. No figure has been given yet for what we can expect in April next year, but every worker knows that a pay rise that is less than the rising cost of living is no pay rise at all - and inflation is set to rise to around 5%.

Like all public sector workers, we cannot wait until April to find out how much this cut will be. We need our trade unions to take up this fight immediately. As Socialist Party member Martin Powell-Davies has raised in his NEU Deputy General Secretary campaign, we need to build now for a national strike ballot over pay.

Next year school funding levels will be 1% lower than in 2009-10. Schools budgets will be further squeezed by rising prices. That's why it is essential that the struggle for a pay rise is linked to a campaign for the funding our schools need.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

Our demands include...

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Fighting sexism and harassment, and for a safe night out

JANE NELLIST
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Many young people feel that the lockdown has 'stolen' what should have been the most fun time in their life. The impact of lengthy isolation has caused huge issues around mental health and wellbeing, as well as detrimentally affecting their education and earnings.

With the relaxation of Covid rules and the re-opening of night clubs and bars, along with the greater ability to mix, life should have started to feel more normal. However, the joy of going out with your friends for a night out comes with the risks of the darker side of life in our society, including the threat of sexual harassment and violence.

The increasing concerns of the spiking of drinks in clubs, with 'date-rape' drugs and the more sinister attacks of spiking by injection in a number of cities across the UK, has triggered huge anger and fear. Especially on university campuses.

Any act of 'spiking' is an illegal act, but the rate of prosecution and conviction is extremely low, even where evidence has been provided to police. The acute underfunding of the police and criminal justice system, as well as a culture of sexism and violence in the police exposed by

the murder of Sarah Everard and the killings of Bibbaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, mean that many victims fail to get any type of justice or support, even if harassment is reported. In the case of spiking, many don't report it, and many don't even know it has happened!

Resources

More resources need to be urgently provided to protect victims, identify crimes and properly investigate and prosecute. There also needs to be democratic community control of the police to root out sexism and decide on policing priorities.

The patience and tolerance of young women is wearing thin. The recent murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa have heightened the real fears of walking the streets in safety. Now women fear for their safety in crowded clubs and bars.

The #Girl'sNightIn campaign, which called for a one-night boycott of nightclubs, has been taken up across the country on university campuses. Some clubs are allowing female staff to stay at home as well in solidarity. It's great to highlight the anger and concerns of women, but what is needed is a programme for safety and action to achieve it.

It has now been over a decade since the first National Union of



Protests followed the murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 PHOTO: CARDIFF SP

Students report into sexual violence on UK university campuses and, if anything, the problem is getting worse. Safety on campus cannot be left to university vice-chancellors within the market-dominated university system.

Ideas such as more thorough searches and undercover cops in clubs may be seen as a solution by some, but given the record of the police it is clear that these can backfire and be used against young people, especially those most discriminated against.

What is urgently needed is a campaign for real solutions to stop these attacks which should include:

- Universities investing in social spaces for students and more on-campus support services for students and staff experiencing harassment and abuse. Build democratic student unions to oversee this
- All venues implementing more safety measures - such as more training for staff to identify and support those at risk, as well as providing free covers for drinks. Staffing levels must ensure that they have time to give support effectively
- Joint elected and democratically accountable committees of trade unions, local authorities, students and young workers to oversee safety measures in clubs and bars in their area
- With clubs and bars opening much later, there should be more investment in public transport and street lighting to ensure that young people can get home safely
- Democratic trade union and community control of the police
- Fight for a socialist alternative to the sexism, inequality and crisis of capitalism

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• Rivers of sewage

Here's the question. Who does the Tory government support: the privately owned water companies or the public?

It's a no brainer, and if you had any doubt then last week the government batted away a Lords amendment to the Environment Bill to make it illegal under certain circumstances to discharge untreated waste into our waterways.

According to the Environment Agency, the highly profitable water companies dumped raw sewage into rivers in England more than 400,000

times in 2020.

The main government objection to the amendment is that stopping this pollution would cost the companies too much.

The quality of water in our rivers has collapsed in the last five years as a result of raw sewage discharges, industrial chemicals being dumped and slurry run-offs from mega-farms. No river in the country is now certified as safe for swimmers.

If you don't want to swim in an open sewer, then fight to nationalise the water companies.

• Britain Thinks – we need socialism

Consultancy 'Britain Thinks' has commissioned the 'Net Zero Diaries'. People are writing their thoughts about tackling climate change, and they make fascinating reading.

Most think:

- The government should fund emergency measures, as it did during Covid
- Cop26 will not achieve very much
- The private companies can't

be trusted to lead the move to net zero because they always maximise profits

- Big business should be called on to pay higher taxes, not individuals
- Nationalisation is the simplest way to achieve coordinated national action

More evidence that the Socialist Party's demand for socialist change to combat climate change is the way forward.

Tory climate plans set to fail

Socialist planning needed



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

NICK HART
WOLVERHAMPTON AND BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

With weeks to go before the COP26 conference in Glasgow, the Tories have finally published their strategy for the UK to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. According to Boris Johnson, this will see the UK “lead the world in ending our contribution to climate change”.

So what is the plan? Essentially, do a little bit and then leave the rest up to the free market!

Of the money needed to carry out the strategy, £26 billion in funding has been pledged by central government, with another £90 billion “expected” in private sector investment. But far from ordering big business to turn over some of their £900 billion cash reserves to develop green technology, in effect the Tories are hoping that with some up-front grants and incentives, the capitalists can be convinced to decarbonise their operations.

Take for instance the report’s stated aim of having 600,000 energy-efficient heat pumps installed per year by 2028 in place of gas boilers. The government has pledged 90,000 grants to homeowners (not including private tenants) of £5,000 to bring the

price of installation down, though not to zero!

The Tories then hope that by the time the grants have all been dished out, firms making and installing heat pumps will have drastically reduced their prices. That’s if they stay in business - several contractors went bust or were forced to lay off staff due to problems receiving money from the similar ‘Green Homes Grant’ scheme that was scrapped in March 2021 after less than a year in existence. So far, no plans have been made to train up as many as 46,000 engineers that may be needed to meet the installation targets.

A similar ‘hit-and-hope’ approach is there to see, with the intention to use technologies such as carbon capture, small nuclear reactors and hydrogen fuel cells - all of which are yet to be developed on a mass scale.

Investment

The report acknowledges that much will depend on “the extent to which individuals and businesses adopt green choices”. With investment in new machinery by British firms having fallen steadily in recent years, this begs the question of whether they will be willing to take a short-term hit to their profits to stump up to replace polluting vehicles and equipment.

Even if big business could be persuaded to take the steps needed to

completely decarbonise by 2050, this may be too late to avoid global warming reaching dangerously high levels and creating knock on natural disasters.

Already massive disruption to daily life in the form of flooding, droughts and wildfires is becoming increasingly common around the world. Many climate scientists estimate that keeping average global temperatures to just 1.5°C more than their levels before the dawn of industry 200 years ago still risks drastic environmental consequences.

The Tories boast that the UK has already made good progress towards this goal in reducing its carbon emissions by 44% since 1990. But in that time large amounts of manufacturing, farming and extraction have been moved overseas, essentially exporting Britain’s greenhouse gases to China, India and elsewhere.

Despite Johnson’s boast that Thatcher’s mine closure programme was an early start on decarbonisation, all it achieved during the two decades that followed was a drastic increase in coal imported from overseas being burnt by UK power stations. Even today, research by the World Wildlife Fund estimates that emissions from goods imported to the UK make up as much as half of the UK’s true carbon footprint.

The way in which former pit communities have been hollowed out following the winding down of coal mining shows the need for a planned transition with alternative employment found for workers in polluting industries.

But looking at the way the Tories and other capitalist governments

around the world have dealt with Covid, who’d trust them to stop climate change in a way that doesn’t favour big business and the super-rich over workers and ordinary people?

Attempts to nudge the market away from fossil fuels can result in costs being passed on to the working class in the short term, with the tapering off of production capacity by oil and gas producers being a factor in the recent price spikes. While electric vehicles and renewable heating remain unaffordable for many, allowing the costs of running a petrol car and gas boiler to rise won’t automatically lead to people taking up low carbon alternatives!

No trust in market

While the situation facing the climate is serious, it’s not hopeless. But we can’t leave halting global warming to chance.

For those planning to protest on 6 November as COP26 meets in Glasgow, in other towns and cities, and many millions more, it’s clear that rapid and wide-reaching decarbonisation of all aspects of daily life is needed. But how can we achieve this?

It won’t be by waiting to see if the 100 large corporations responsible for 71% of global emissions since 1988 can be guilt-tripped or incentivised into adopting sustainable practices. The chaos of the free market has been there for all to see during the bidding war for PPE and vaccines during the pandemic.

A socialist plan for the economy would see the large businesses that dominate industry, energy, agriculture, transport and finance placed under the democratic control and ownership of the working-class majority in society. The wealth, research, resources and infrastructure that these corporations hold between them could then be brought together and directed as part of a plan to end polluting practices as soon as practically possible, not simply when shareholders and directors decide it’s profitable.

It is utopian to imagine that the 1%, who can buy their way out of the worst effects of climate change, will do the right thing by the planet and the people who live on it. The looming environmental catastrophe is undoubtedly one of the reasons why two-thirds of young people in the UK, and many older people, are drawing the conclusion that a socialist system is needed.

If you’re one of them, join the Socialist Party to make sure that we can stop complete climate breakdown and create a planet for the millions, not the millionaires.



Far from ordering big business to turn over some of their £900 billion cash reserves to developing green technology, in effect the Tories are hoping that the capitalists can be convinced to decarbonise their operations.

Climate change - for a workers’ transtion

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Royal Mail workers stand against 'unachievable workloads'

FORMER ROYAL MAIL WORKER

Despite the promise of benefiting delivery workers' conditions, the rollout of the 'Pathway to Change Agreement' between Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) is proving to be the opposite

At Wakefield Delivery Office, West Yorkshire, the agreement rollout of a structural revision resulted in 94% of the workforce voting it down, after it produced unachievable workloads.

However, true to form, management imposed it regardless, leaving the CWU as the only side to stick to the deal. That leaves the very principle of workers' democracy in tatters, and does not protect postal workers open to management bullying, as they are scapegoated for the delay to mail.

This deal was supposed to recover what the union lost under Rico Back's tenure as CEO, when the employer reneged on the previous agreement.

In practice, it has not stopped the employer reverting to type and effectively draining substantially more

work out of delivery staff when the working week is due to be reduced by an hour. Unbelievably, that means doing more than before, when they have an hour less to do it in!

So far, the only thing that appears to have been held to is the 2.7% pay rise given this year. The further 1% next year, a promise of no compulsory redundancies, and a legal obligation to prevent the company breaking up are yet to be carried through.

It is obvious from its actions that Royal Mail is not sticking to the agreement and the CWU must suspend these revisions and urgently move to halt the management bullying that has come with them. Policy to remedy the whole situation must be made.

The general public must also be made aware of Royal Mail's drive for profit in the booming packets and parcels market. Forsaking a reliable letter delivery service, in the process, it significantly delays the likes of hospital appointment notices and other vital mail as manpower is under-resourced.

Gwent Stagecoach workers driving for victory on pay



Cwmbran picket line 22 October DAVE REID

DAVE REID SOCIALIST PARTY WALES

Over 200 Stagecoach bus drivers at Cwmbran, Blackwood and Brynmawr depots, members of Unite, have completed their sixth day of strike action, the first of six phases. The next strike day is due to be 29 October, unless the company gives in to the union demands for a rise to £10.50 an hour from £9.50.

The company has responded by offering £10.10 an hour, barely above the £9.50 minimum wage next year, later increased to £10.30. But even this unacceptable offer will be paid for by the drivers through cuts in breaks and sick pay, and will not be available to new entrants. All the workers understand the importance of ensuring that new entrants get the new rates and that the existing workforce is not undermined by a two-tier pay structure.

The managing director of the three depots had accused the union of demanding "fantasy wages" of £10.50 an hour, until it was revealed that his pay rose from £181,000 to £229,000 between 2019 and 2020 - a pay rise of £48,000! The only fantasy wage is being paid to the managing director.

And despite the pandemic, Stagecoach South Wales boasted a pre-tax profit of £2.1 million, up from £1.5 million in the previous year. That included £1 million government funding from the furlough.

The anger at the contempt that

Stagecoach had shown to the workers' pay claim was explained by one driver: "They want to discipline us for not being professional when they claim we've done something wrong, but when they decide our pay we're 'unskilled'".

This corporate greed has strengthened the resolve to see the dispute through to the bitter end. Morale on the picket line has been sky-high - even when the sky opens up with torrential downpours. Hundreds of strikers have rallied at the bus depots every day.

At a rally during an Acas conciliation service negotiation music blared out in the cold autumn sunshine. Apparently Santa Claus is on strike and comrade Claus danced with the Unite flag on the road verge. This really was an all-singing, all-dancing picket line!

And all through the dispute there has been a cacophony of car horns as it seems every car driver in Cwmbran hoots their horn as they drive past the picket line.

On the first Sunday of the strike the drivers returned to work for one day and the reaction of passengers was brilliant. One regular passenger said: "I'm not getting on the bus - I just wanted to tell you that we support you all the way. You were there for us during Covid and I'm not giving Stagecoach any more money while you are on strike."

Support from the trade union movement has been growing too.

Cardiff Trades Union Council has been building support and thousands of pounds are flowing into the strike fund. GMB Stagecoach drivers at Porth and Aberdare are getting ready for action at their depots.

The support of local politicians who have visited the picket line has been appreciated by the strikers. But more important than tweets is action.

The spectacle of a multinational company making big profits by paying its local directors huge salaries to hold down the wages of its drivers has exposed the massive scam being carried out by Stagecoach and Arriva on public transport in Wales. The companies are subsidised by millions of pounds by the Welsh government, but charge exorbitant fares, pay poverty wages and make millions of pounds profit.

The Welsh government plans to introduce integrated transport systems on the South Wales and North Wales Metros. It must immediately step in, reverse the Tory privatisation of buses and renationalise them, into one train and bus company under Transport for Wales.

And this must be carried out without delay. Stagecoach and Arriva cannot be allowed to run down the bus infrastructure in the way that Arriva did on the railways in Wales as its franchise expired.

The Welsh Labour government must make it clear that 'Slavecoach's' days in Wales are numbered.



PAUL MATTSSON

Gary Evans reinstated

Gary Evans, a Communication Workers Union (CWU) member at Llanelli Delivery Office who was wrongfully dismissed, has been reinstated following a 24-hour strike on 13 October that halted postal deliveries after a solid 98.6% vote for action.

Socialist Party members joined the workers on the picket line and congratulated Gary and the CWU branch on their victory.

Scaffs strike into fourth week

"We're on the gate till you pay the rate", is the chant on the picket line outside British Steel Scunthorpe. Now in their fourth week of all-out strike action, around 60 scaffolders employed on the maintenance contract by Actavo, remain solid in their fight for the national industry (NAECI) rate which would be a 10-15% pay rise.

While there have been talks, so far Actavo have made no new offer, so the strikers have increased the pickets and are exploring other ways of stepping up the pressure.

The Unite branch inside the plant has donated £1,000 to the strike fund but needs to organise more active solidarity.

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Unite policy conference

Significant breakthroughs in policy and workplace organising

KEVIN PARSLAW
UNITE UNION CONFERENCE DELEGATE
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

There was an emotional farewell to Len McCluskey at the recent Unite policy conference, which recorded the progress of the union in the ten years under his leadership. His was an overwhelmingly positive tenure. But the general feeling in the conference was that the election of Sharon Graham as Len's replacement heralds a new beginning.

Significant throughout the conference was the emphasis on workplace organising and the development of 'combines' in different sectors of the economy. This would mean bringing the reps in an industry to discuss common issues and negotiating for better pay and conditions.

The mood of the conference allowed significant breakthroughs in policy. Particularly in local government, where Unite is now committed to "adopt a policy calling on Labour councils to set legal, balanced no-cuts needs-based budgets", in passing a motion from the Local Authorities National Industrial Sector Committee.

And on public services, a motion was passed opposing privatisation and calling for workers' control, which was amended by the LE1228

branch to read: "Publicly owned industries and services should be run with full workers' control and management, involving the participation of trade unions in conjunction with service users."

Significantly, at a fringe entitled 'Time for a Deeper Industrial Strategy', Dave Ward, CWU general secretary, called former militant RMT leader Bob Crow "the greatest trade unionist of our generation", to which Sharon Graham nodded in agreement. If it was to follow a similar path to the RMT under Crow, Unite's million members across most sectors of the economy would prove a powerful challenge to the bosses, and give confidence to millions of workers to fight back against attacks.

Action was also discussed in the fringe meetings, for example with HGV drivers preparing for action at a meeting by 'taking their break' on 1 November at 11am. This could show the potential strength that lorry drivers have in the battle for better pay and conditions in the road haulage industry.

Unite's conference presented the first opportunity for those who campaigned for Sharon's victory to come together and discuss building a new left in Unite. In a pre-conference meeting there was a lot of enthusiasm

for a proposal made by Socialist Party members for a public meeting during conference, even offering our own public meeting to facilitate a discussion. However, despite no meeting being called, Zoom meetings are being planned, which should be used as the basis for ensuring Unite's new fighting strategy and policies are implemented by building a new left organisation in the union.

The Socialist Party meeting was nevertheless a success, with 30 delegates, visitors and local workers present. The meeting was addressed by victimised St Mungo's rep Vicko Plevnik, who came to conference to build support for the end of his victimisation (he also addressed the blacklisting meeting called by construction workers in Unite).

Rob Williams from the Socialist Party executive committee, spelt out the fighting programme and tasks needed to build Unite, and there was a discussion on how a new left could be built. £300 was raised for the Socialist Party fighting fund, and three delegates over the week expressed an interest in finding out more about our party.

SOCIALISM 2021
Socialism 21 session:
Do trade unions need
a political voice?
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Clarks shoe workers strike to give 'fire and rehire' the boot



Clarks picket line 15 October MIKE LUFF

TOM BALDWIN
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Picket lines of striking Clarks workers were joined by about 50 trade unionists on 'Solidarity Day' on 15 October.

Workers at the Somerset-based shoe manufacturers are fighting a brutal 'fire-and-rehire' attempt by management. They've completed two weeks of an initial four on strike but are determined to continue for as long as needed if the attack on their terms and conditions is not withdrawn.

That resolve was boosted by the support they received, the presence of several other union banners and the almost non-stop beeping of horns by passing motorists. Pickets have been consistent with a well-organised rota system. They've also been supported with full strike pay from their trade union, Community.

Strikers spoke to the Socialist about what the proposed changes will mean for them. They will receive a 15% pay cut, down to just £9.50 an hour. They

will have to work an extra 2.5 hours a week thanks to the removal of paid lunch breaks. Sick pay and redundancy pay are also being cut. Workers are being given just four weeks to sign the new contracts before they will be sacked. The company are playing hardball with workers while management are still getting pay rises.

Workers feel particularly aggrieved as they have already endured changes that management have demanded. They have faced a six-year pay freeze. The Christmas bonus has been withdrawn. Insultingly, night shift workers were offered a McDonald's meal instead last year. That shift has since been cut.

These latest attacks are a bridge too far and workers will fight tooth and nail to defeat them.

• You can help them by sending messages of support via mail@community-tu.org and signing their petition at [megaphone.org.uk/petitions/clarks-end-fire-and-rehire](https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/clarks-end-fire-and-rehire)



PAUL MATSSON

GPs vote to reject government plans

JON DALE
SECRETARY UNITE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HEALTH
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Health workers are dangerously overworked and tired - threatening their own health and the services they can provide to patients.

The latest signal they've had enough is the British Medical Association England GP Committee's 53 to

2 vote rejecting the government's new plans for general practice.

Years of NHS underfunding and increasing privatisation have taken their toll on GPs' physical and mental health. Receptionists and other staff face unrelenting pressure. Despite hollow Tory promises to increase GP numbers, there are 1,800 fewer fully trained full-time equivalent GPs than five years ago.

The pandemic forced massive changes amid increased risks. Crowded waiting rooms had to be closed. Consultations were mostly by phone and video call. A massive vaccination programme has been organised. Many patients with non-Covid problems stayed away - but now have worse health and need more urgent attention. Hospital waiting lists are going through the roof.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid wants GPs blamed for the crisis his government has caused. He demands GP practices collect figures on face-to-face consultations, with 'naming and shaming' league tables and penalties for the bottom 20% - the practices that already have the greatest problems in recruiting staff!

Javid's plan will increase growing abuse of GP staff some frustrated patients feel driven to, whipped up by Tory cheerleaders in the press.

GPs should now join with the health trade unions that voted overwhelmingly to reject the government's

insulting 3% pay rise. A co-ordinated campaign of all health workers' trade unions is needed - highlighting the threat to patients from Tory cuts and privatisation. This could gain massive public support and defeat the Tories.

But empty warm words from Starmer's Labour will not end this crisis. Health workers and patients need a party to take the socialist action needed to reverse privatisation and fund the NHS.

SOCIALISM 2021
Socialism 21 session:
Can the NHS survive?
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The fight for Hackney's children's centres continues



HACKNEY AND ISLINGTON SP

ROB THOMAS
HACKNEY AND ISLINGTON SOCIALIST PARTY

The fight against the closure of two of Hackney's affordable children's centres, Fernbank and Hillside, continued on Wednesday 20 October. Families and staff rallied to protest the closures outside of Hackney Town Hall, supported by trade unionists and Socialist Party members, as a full Labour-controlled council meeting was underway inside.

The closures would see the loss of 109 affordable childcare places and over 25 local jobs at centres that have served the community for 40 years. This is the latest attack on working families already suffering from the recent return to austerity policies at the hands of the Tory government. The continued stripping back of public services forces more and more families into the expensive private sector, which results in more money going into the hands of bosses.

The UK already has some of the highest childcare costs in the world.

After real-terms pay freezes caused by ten years of austerity and inflation, national insurance uplifts and recent cuts to Universal Credit, what working families need is more support.



The closures would see the loss of 109 affordable childcare places and over 25 local jobs at centres that have served the community for 40 years

If the mayor and the councillors had looked out the window on Wednesday night, they'd have noticed the growing discontent and appetite for alternative politics. The Save Fernbank and Hillside campaigns were not alone in their demonstration outside the council meeting.

Morning Lane People's Space was fighting the council's plans to redevelop the local Tesco site into office space, retail and residential units, with little-to-no affordable housing available to residents.

Save Ridley Road, St Mungo's workers, and Low Traffic Neighbourhood campaigns were also holding rallies against the council's proposed plans. It paints a stark picture of the council's priorities and the growing discontent among the public for real change. It shows the need for a real political alternative and party that fights for working-class people; standing candidates in council elections who demand what is needed for our local communities and are prepared to take on the Tory government for the necessary funding.

Over 1,000 people have already signed the petition to save Fernbank and Hillside Children's Centres. Help us fight back against these cuts by searching for the petition online and adding your signature. See 'Save Fernbank and Hillside Children's Centres' at change.org

Southampton People's budget Building an alternative to Tory and Labour austerity



Bin workers in Southampton took strike action in 2011 against Tory cuts

administration which will carry on the bidding of Johnson's government. What credibility could the Labour councillors possibly have in opposing them following their record of abject cowardice and lack of fighting leadership?

This is the backdrop to the decision of Southampton Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to call a People's Budget conference. It will be the first step in bringing together trade unions, community organisations, local campaign groups and all who want to develop a plan and an alternative budget based on the needs of our community, not the diktats of the government.

We have named the date and booked the venue. We are inviting as many people and organisations as we can. We now plan visits to trade union branches and others, and are inviting speakers. A flyer has been printed to advertise the event that we can use on campaign stalls and meetings we attend.

The event will also be an opportunity to see who would like to stand as a no-cuts candidate in next May's local elections, as we aim to stand in every seat.

With a system in crisis, we need socialist policies and councillors who are prepared to fight for them. Our conference aims to play a leading role in building this alternative.

● **Southampton People's Budget conference, Saturday 13 November, 2-4 pm at Friends Meeting House, 1A Ordnance Road, Southampton**

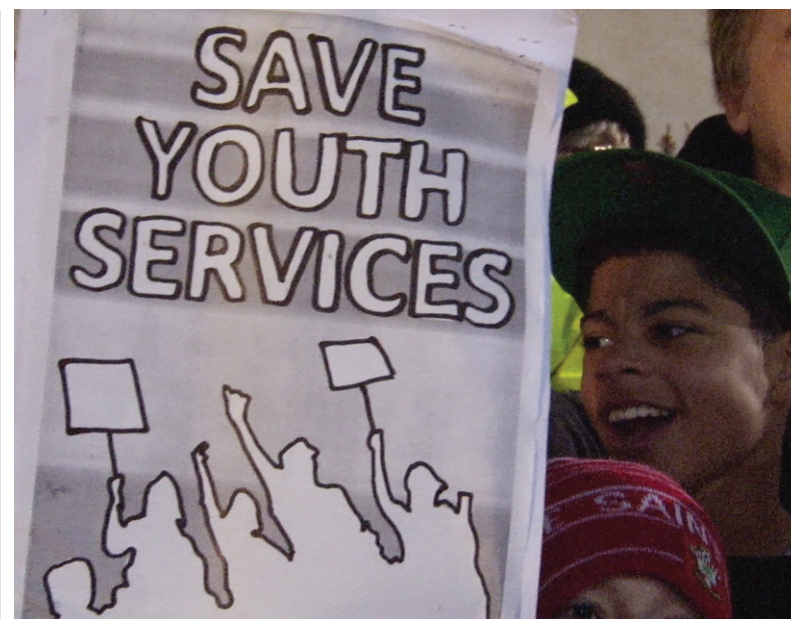
SUE ATKINS
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Local authorities up and down the country, including Southampton, face a financial crisis. The chancellor's budget will do nothing to plug Southampton's budget gap. Already the city council has carried out £164 million cuts and 1,000 jobs lost in the last eight years, with further cuts to come. This has impacted most seriously on the poor and vulnerable in the city. 30% of the city's children are growing up in poverty, and there

are 10,000 families on the housing waiting list.

The Labour council failed to stand up for the people of Southampton during the last decade when they were in charge. Libraries have been handed over to volunteers and care homes have closed. Council youth services have been shut down and any remaining service has been pared to the bone.

Labour paid the price at the ballot box in May this year when they lost seven seats and their majority on the council. We now have a Tory



Save Southall youth centre - stop all cuts

HELEN PATTISON
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

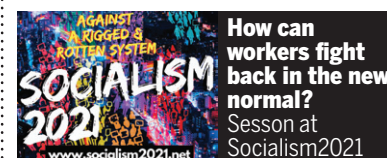
Young people, trade unionists and supporters gathered at Ealing Town Hall to oppose the demolition of a youth centre in Southall on 19 October. One of the service users was able to give a speech to the council because of the huge number of people who have signed their petition. She spoke about how few youth clubs exist despite the growing number of young people living in the borough.

The council meeting descended into crocodile tears, and cheap shots. The Tories blamed the Labour council for making the proposal, the Labour council blamed the housing crisis and the Tory government. But really, both are to blame!

The council's plan is to build

housing on the youth club land, while simultaneously demolishing council housing in other parts of the borough. This shows they aren't really interested in meeting the needs of working-class and young people across Ealing, but are happy to pit groups of people against each other.

Next month, when Ealing Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition hosts a People's Budget meeting, it won't be a question of either building housing, or maintaining youth services - we will demand both are protected!





Carlisle says make the richest pay, not the poorest!

BRENT KENNEDY
CARLISLE SOCIALIST PARTY

Carlisle Socialist Party held a protest on 16 October against cuts in living standards. With the retail price index already at 4.8% and expected to rise to 6%, this year's meagre wage rises are turning into bigger real-terms pay cuts.

After a decade of austerity to bail out the bankers, living standards have stagnated for the longest period since the Napoleonic wars, leaving real wages in July at the same level as in February 2008. But with energy price rises, fuel and food shortages - things are about to get worse.

The Tories' vindictive snatching back of the £20-a-week increase in Universal Credit, the biggest overnight cut of benefits in history, means that 1 in 3 children will now bear the scars of child poverty for the rest of their lives. This will save Rishi Sunak £6 billion, yet this year alone his billionaire friends increased their wealth by another £106 billion. Why

doesn't he make the richest pay instead of the poorest?

Families came to our stall to take leaflets, sign our petition and share their desperate stories of having to choose between hot meals or shoes for their kids. Some of these belonged to the 40% of families having to claim benefits even though they are in full-time work, given their low wages and precarious employment contracts. Others with young children complained that they can't afford to work because of the highest childcare fees in Europe.

Our petition calls for the £20 to be restored, for a minimum wage of £15 for all ages, for the scrapping of the rise in national insurance and for taxing the rich.

We are also supporting the demand by NHS workers for a 15% pay rise. Public sector workers are now voting by big majorities of up to 99% to take industrial action against the government pay offers. We hope their unions use their full strength through coordinated action in a coming winter of struggle against the wealthy elite.

Youth climate protests

● York

EDDY JINKS
YORK SOCIALIST PARTY

On 25 October, around 30 mostly young people and students gathered in York to protest against the destruction of our environment and the imminent threat of climate catastrophe. The Socialist Party was present with a campaign stall and two of our members spoke.

Maurice Cooper brought up the need for students nationwide to fight for student unions, as schools have introduced harder and more aggressive sanctions to students choosing to strike. And James Leech gave a powerful speech on how we need a socialist approach in order to effectively combat climate change and putting the blame for ecological disaster where it really belongs: capitalism.

"The picture in front of us is quite

clear: the planet is burning. And it is the rich, the corporations, big business - what we socialists would call the capitalist class - that are holding a torch to the face of the Earth."

Climate change isn't an issue that will simply dissolve, as long as the capitalist class reigns dominant they will continue to destroy our planet for every last bit of profit they can extract. Only as a united working class can we take action and force governments to make policy to combat climate change, such as nationalising carbon-intensive industries.

Our environment can't be truly prioritised until we replace the capitalist system with a system that puts the interests of humanity and the planet first. As James put it: "It is, as a famous German revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg once said - socialism or barbarism. It is socialism or climate catastrophe. It is socialism or extinction."

● Bristol

TOM BALDWIN
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

About 150 young people took to the streets of Bristol in the latest climate strike on 22 October. The event was officially supported by the student unions of both the city's universities, which marks a step forward.

Most participants were university rather than school students, who have made up the bulk of previous larger climate strikes. The demonstrations around COP26 give an opportunity to rebuild the momentum of the movement that was cut across by last year's lockdown.

Socialist Party and Socialist Students members joined the demonstration and got a very positive response to our call for socialist planning to stop climate change. Two people have said they want to join the Socialist Party.



Socialist Party and Socialist Students members joined the protests PHOTOS: YORK YOUNG SOCIALISTS

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- or call **020 8988 8777**
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Socialist Party, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q4: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2021	DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2021
Northern	333	750	44%	
London	1,552	4,600	34%	
South West	504	1,800	28%	
East Midlands	372	1,850	20%	
Yorkshire	386	2,550	15%	
North West	132	1,150	11%	
Wales	252	2,300	11%	
West Midlands	229	2,600	9%	
Southern & SE	138	2,350	6%	
Eastern	32	1,200	3%	
Other	130	3,850	3%	
TOTAL	4,060	25,000	16%	

TV review **The Riots 2011: One Week in August** BBC documentary ignores cause

DEJI OLAYINKA
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Following the murder of Mark Duggan by the police, riots rocked London, and many other cities, a decade ago. This documentary follows the progression of the riots. It contains interviews and clips from activists, police, government officials and convicted rioters.

Stafford Scott, an activist from the Broadwater Farm estate that Mark grew up on, was the stand-out person interviewed. He says there is no "riot or disturbance that happens in a vacuum", and for it to happen, "people have to feel they've got no stake in society... that they've got nothing to lose".

After Mark Duggan's killing, police drove around the estate laughing, and indicating '1-1' with their fingers to claim the killing as an equaliser for the death of police officer Keith Blakelock in 1985. The police did not contact the family for two days after Mark's killing.

When Mark Duggan's family peacefully marched to the police station, the police physically closed the door and shutters of the police station to the family members that had gone in to ask for the truth. It's no surprise that the BBC chose to mark the ten-year anniversary by focusing on the riots, rather than looking into the police killing that triggered the events.

The documentary includes the capitalist media response, and the political elite's belief that the riots had nothing to do with poverty. At the time, this peaked with a racist rant from David Starkey on Newsnight. He said that Enoch Powell's prophecy in the Rivers of Blood speech was "absolutely right", except instead "whites had become black".

The state revenge on rioters was cruel. It led to teenagers' lives being

destroyed over a few moments of madness. Some faced sentences longer than murderers.

Current Labour leader Keir Starmer, then director of public prosecutions, set up 24-hour courts to support the Con-Dem coalition government in handing out excessively punitive sentences.

One person recounts how he was targeted as a 'ring leader' and was given the harshest sentence. Not because of what he had done during the riots, but because of previous convictions.

The riots devastated working-class communities. But communities organised to make sure that local shops were protected. Tariq Jahan and his sons were called to defend local shops that the police had abandoned. But his son was tragically killed in a hit-and-run.

The documentary ends on the note that riots of that scale haven't occurred since in the UK, but that is only through luck. The Conservatives have worsened the conditions that led to the riots. Austerity has continued, funding for youth services is being cut, their response to the Covid pandemic has left another generation of youth with no hope for the future, and, of course, the police continue to be unaccountable for their crimes.

To ensure there is no return of the riots, the vast inequality in our society needs to be ended with socialist policies. In response to police crimes, we need independent workers' and community public inquiries, and we need democratic working-class control of the police as proposed in the Socialist Party's Black Workers' Charter.

● *'Black Workers' Charter: A programme to fight racism'* at socialistparty.org.uk

● *'The Riots 2011: One Week in August'* is available on BBC iPlayer



To ensure there is no return of the riots, the vast inequality in our society needs to be ended with socialist policies

TV review **Maid** Ablly showing inadequacy, red tape and inhumanity of capitalism



KAREN SEYMOUR
MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

This ten-part dramatisation is based on Stephanie Land's 2019 memoir, 'Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive'. The book is a no-holds-barred account of Land trying to raise her young daughter while working as a maid-for-hire.

The TV series is the story of Alex, played by Margot Qualley, a young woman from Washington state in the US. In the opening scene, Alex wakes up in the middle of the night, sneaks out of bed, where her emotionally abusive, alcoholic, and violent husband Sean is sleeping, and carries their two-year-old daughter, Maddie, to the car to drive off.

She doesn't know where she is heading, all she knows is that she has to get out. She has \$18 to her name.

That \$18 dwindles with every purchase of another gallon of gas or dollar-store toy for Maddie. Showing the amounts she has to outlay on screen, for her cleaning uniform and cleaning materials, and other items she should not have had to purchase, was a clever addition.

Alex is told by social services she needs a job to access benefits, seeming to ignore that she has fled an abusive relationship and has a two-year-old daughter to look after. With no money to pay for childcare, Alex has no choice but to leave Maddie in the care of her dysfunctional mother - played by the Qualley's own mother, Andie McDowell - and her dodgy boyfriend.

A scene in the first episode caught my attention. Alex opens the fridge of the person she is cleaning for. She finds it crammed with beautiful fresh fruit and vegetables. Her employer, an attorney, wants it disposed of, because she doesn't want "the house to

smell of kombucha". Alex eagerly eats some of the fruit, as she has not had time for breakfast that morning.

Alex has to negotiate all sorts of minefields - fighting for custody of her daughter, holding a series of, let's be honest, 'crap' cleaning jobs, and trying to find a stable place to live, including domestic violence shelters, and poor-quality mould-infested housing.

'Maid' summed up for me how anyone can so easily find themselves in dire straits. A tiny issue can quickly become a major emergency. Yet the capitalist system blames people like Alex for their own predicament.

The sheer bureaucracy and maze of forms that Alex is forced to fill in for support demonstrate this. The system is deliberately designed to deter claims.

We need welfare systems with benefits at a level people can actually live on. We need a £15-an-hour minimum wage. And we need decent jobs with trade union rates of pay, not the sort of zero-hour-contract work, with rubbish pay, that Alex had no option but to take.

The politicians responsible for creating these 'welfare' systems, in Britain and the US, want them to be feared and loathed. The ruling class will never use them themselves, so why should they care?

Those who do rely on benefits are demonised and stereotyped. The ruling class want to divide us, because they fear that the working class will unite in struggle. That is what we urgently need to do.

Maid ably shows the inadequacy, red tape and inhumanity of a system that is supposed to support people during hard times. It should make you angry. If it does, join the fight-back. Join the Socialist Party.

● *Maid* is available on Netflix



We need welfare systems with benefits at a level that people can actually live on



Military coup in Sudan - Defiant masses take to the streets

For a revolutionary workers' and poor people's government!

JOHN GILLMAN

READING SOCIALIST PARTY

At the time of writing, a military coup is taking place in Sudan. The army has arrested civilian ministers and their advisors. However, tens of thousands of protesters have taken to the streets in defiance with chants of: "The people are stronger, stronger!" and "Retreat is not an option!"

Workers at the central bank have gone on strike and a general strike has been called. Ominously, the army has fired on the crowds with reports of at least ten people shot dead and many more injured.

The coup plotters have seemingly ignored pressure from the Biden administration and EU countries to stick to the previously agreed 'transition to democracy', which followed the country's 2019 revolution.

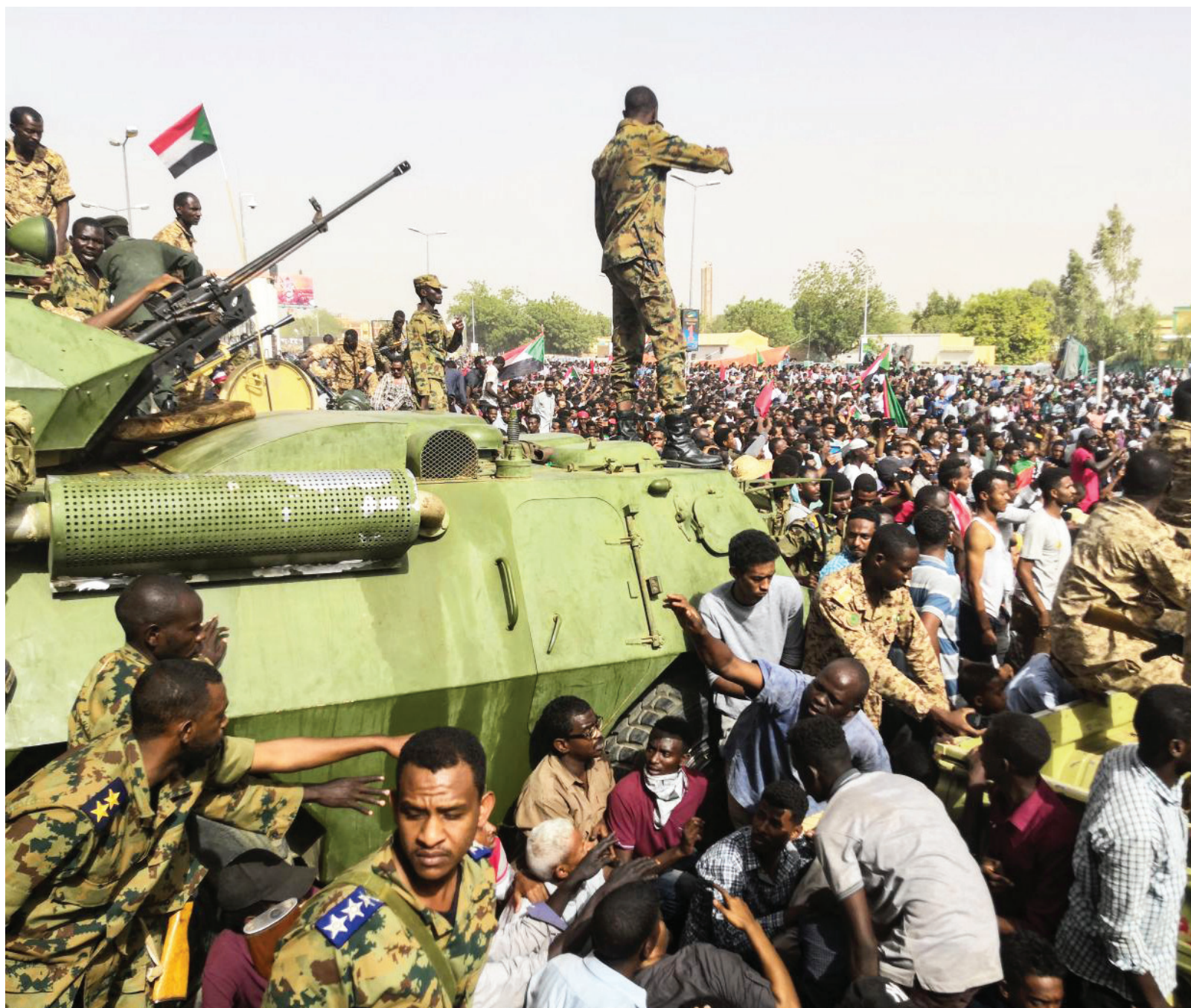
The military tried to carry through a coup last month but the masses came onto the streets and pushed it back. However, the military chiefs have, over recent months, been stirring up national tensions and causing a blockade of Port Sudan, stopping vital supplies of food, medicine and fuel getting through.

The usual tactics of a military takeover have happened: namely, the imprisonment of the civilian leaders of the transitional government (Sovereignty Council), the removal of state governors, shutting down the airport, internet, taking over the state broadcaster, calling a state of emergency, as well as calling for elections, under the slogan of "freedom, justice and peace".

The statement of general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sovereignty Council, saying the military will speed up the process to elections and abide by a draft constitution is utterly disingenuous. Even if they do hold elections, they would only accept a puppet government of the military at best. They may, however, go for quicker elections, ensuring pro-military parties from the old guard form a government and hoping new forces do not emerge.

Prior to the current coup there was a joint military-civilian government known as the Sovereignty Council. This uneasy and unstable coalition of forces emerged following the country's 2019 revolution which overthrew the 30-year-old dictatorship of president Omar al-Bashir.

But as the Socialist Party and its co-thinkers in the Committee for a Workers' International warned at the time, the workers and urban and rural poor cannot place any trust in the pro-capitalist transitional government, which effectively left the capitalist state in the hands of the military old guard (see 'Sudan the revolution under threat' at socialistparty.org.uk).



Soldiers stand guard during the 2019 revolution as demonstrators protest against the regime near the army headquarters in the Sudanese capital Khartoum AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the international socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to. The CWI is organised in many countries. We work to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against capitalism, and to fight for a socialist world.
socialistworld.net

Furthermore, we argued that, as proved to be the case, the military would simply bide its time, sabotage the economy and government administration, and then, against this chaotic backdrop, organise a coup d'état.

The civilian component of the government - organised under the banner of Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance - simply acted as a fig leaf for the military power. And while the Sovereignty Council did carry out some social reforms, it acted primarily in the interests of capitalism. This included implementing the diktats of the International Monetary Fund to cut food and fuel subsidies.

Inevitably, these counter-reforms caused the prices of bread and fuel to rise and poverty to increase, further disillusioning the masses. This stalling of the revolution also produced splits within the FFC.

Taking advantage of the growing

chaos the military, spearheaded by Mohamed Hamdan 'Hemeti' Dago, the right-hand man to former president al-Bashir and responsible for widespread atrocities against civilians in the Darfur region, called for pro-military demonstrations against the Sovereignty Council in the days prior to the coup.

Why has the military done this? Firstly it is utterly opposed to any curbing of its power and privileges. It has a history of carrying out bloody coups. It was also responsible for horrendous atrocities against activists in its attempt to crush the 2019 revolution and, before then, committing genocide in Darfur.

In addition, it is notoriously corrupt. The top brass has its fingers in the gold industry, financial sector and elsewhere. It does not want that flow of money into its bank accounts to dry up.

The Neighbourhood Resistance Committees which emerged during the 2019 revolution should not only organise armed defence of districts where workers and the poor live and work, but also attempt to split the

ranks of the army away from the military chiefs to defeat the coup.

What is also urgently required is the construction of an independent, revolutionary workers' party, with a programme for a revolutionary constituent assembly of the working class and poor people. Such an assembly could then form a government which, in order to achieve security and an economy run in the interests of the majority, would need to take socialist measures such as nationalisation of the key companies.

Above all, to take the revolution forward means overthrowing capitalism and, as history amply shows, that requires the building of a mass revolutionary socialist party.

• More in a future issue

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the Socialist

Issue 1153

28 October - 3 November 2021

formerly **Militant**

COP26: protest for SOCIALIST CHANGE TO REVERSE CLIMATE CHAOS

The UN's climate change panel, the IPCC, says that it is 'code red for humanity'; that a rise of 1.5°C in global temperatures is unavoidable over the next few decades and rises above that are likely unless there is a major shift in how the world is organised. This will bring with it devastating consequences and misery for millions of people.

This report will come as no surprise. It has been clear for some time that, without change, there is no stable future on offer for most young and working-class people. There is no future on offer that includes a secure and well-paid job, a decent home, and even a planet on which we can live comfortably and safely.

The leaders of the capitalist world gather in Glasgow to discuss what to do about the climate crisis. They know that people are angry at their inaction and the continuation of the polluting status quo. There will be pressure on them to come out with new agreements and be seen to be doing something about the issue. But as was shown when Trump pulled out of the Paris Accords, whatever is agreed won't be worth the paper it's printed on. And not



only that, it is likely to be too little too late.

Here, the Tories have pledged to make the UK carbon neutral - but not until 2050. This is miles off what is actually needed (see page 5).

The previous IPCC report calculated the cost of the measures that would need to be carried out to prevent climate catastrophe would be \$900 billion a year.

The wealth and resources do exist, but they are in the hands of the super-rich. The major corporations that dominate the economy are responsible for the bulk of carbon emissions, and there is no prospect of them accepting a \$900 billion hit to their profits in order to take the action needed.

Therefore we fight for the nationalisation of the big businesses, the banks and other financial institutions under democratic workers' control. Wealth and resources could then be democratically planned to meet the needs of people and the planet. To make sure it is not workers and the poor who pay for the environmental crisis, and to secure a decent future for all.

• **Join the Socialist Party on 6 November as COP26 meets on local protests and in Glasgow**

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 3

