

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1154

4-10 November 2021

formerly **Militant**

Capitalism is destroying the planet

SOCIALIST CHANGE TO END CLIMATE CHANGE

JAMES LEACH
YORK SOCIALIST PARTY

It's been three years since the UN suggested 2030 as the cut-off date to prevent climate catastrophe. Since then - who can say we are on the path away from ecological disaster?

Understanding is growing that to stop climate change, radical transformation of society is needed.

A recent report by the International Energy Agency suggests \$4 trillion-a-year investment is needed to generate secure clean energy. What capitalist government, and what profit-seeking corporation, will ever make this level of investment? If we wait for the ruling classes to make serious change, we will be waiting for climate catastrophe.

It's fair to say most people feel some responsibility to help prevent climate change. Most people also recognise that a commitment to recycling and buying plastic-free products is not enough. People are beginning to realise that a mass movement from the bottom up is necessary to achieve genuine change.

Tens of thousands will be protesting at COP26 in Glasgow and elsewhere on 6 November. The trade unions represent 6.5 million workers in the UK with the potential power to bring society to a standstill. A glimpse of this strength can be seen in the workers' strikes taking place in Scotland during the COP26 conference (see page 14).

Concerned for their future, hundreds of thousands of school students have poured onto the streets in the last couple of years to demand climate action, winning huge public support. We need unity of youth movements with workers to demand what is needed to end climate change.

15% of Britain's carbon emissions come from housing. The movement against climate change must demand public spending to upgrade old, inefficient gas heating systems and insulation, with the work carried out by well-paid, qualified workers with trade union recognition.

Rather than punitive road taxes that make workers' commutes unaffordable, and cuts to bus and train services, the climate movement must demand free and accessible public transport.

The movement must demand that the wealthiest in society be made to pay, not the poorest. By nationalising the energy companies, and placing them under democratic public control, investment could be geared towards a quick transition to renewable energy. As part of a socialist plan based on democratic public ownership of the banks and big companies, investment into kick-starting well-paid and secure green jobs could provide a decent future for young people and the planet.

The situation is simple - those who currently run society are running the planet into the ground. As German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg once said - it is "socialism or barbarism". It is 'socialism or climate catastrophe.'

● See also pages 8-9

SOCIALISM 2021 (SEE PAGE 11) / A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE HOSTED BY THE SOCIALIST PARTY / FRIDAY 19 TO SUNDAY 21 NOVEMBER / IN PERSON AT QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY, LONDON E1 4NS, AND ON ZOOM - SOCIALISM2021.NET



Tory Universal Credit crumbs no solution to cost of living crisis

TANIS BELSHAM-WRAY
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

The £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit has left 4.4 million households around £1,000 a year worse off.

In a partial U-turn in the recent budget, the government announced changes to 'plug the gap'. The 'taper rate' has been decreased from 63p to 55p. In short, this means working households on Universal Credit will gain an extra 8p for every £1 earned. The change effects approximately 1.9 million households, so around half of those on Universal Credit. The other half get nothing but rising bills and prices.

In order to make up for the £20-a-week cut, a worker would need to earn an extra £250 a week. On a minimum wage of £8.91 an hour, this would equate to an extra 28 hours work a week!

The Tory budget did nothing to address the crisis of unaffordable childcare facing families. Working parents typically pay more than half of their wages towards nursery fees. The average cost of 50 hours of childcare

in a nursery for a child under two is £13,700 a year.

Universal Credit only covers 85% of childcare, and this is paid in arrears. For many parents, especially those on a low income or Universal Credit, going to work means having less money. Often the responsibility to stay at home falls on women.

The Tories continue to grapple with the problem of worker shortages in the economy. This is no doubt made worse by parents not being able to afford to work.

To encourage working families with children to increase hours or go back to work, we need a fundamental change to the childcare system. Currently, large parts of preschool education are in the private sector, run for profit. These providers must be taken into public ownership and childcare fully funded for those who need it.

We need to demand employers pay a wage that families can live off. That means getting organised in trade unions to fight for a pay rise, and to demand free childcare for all and a minimum wage of £15 an hour.

Tory plans won't fix social care

DAN SMART
BRISTOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

As huge numbers of exhausted staff quit the social care sector, "a tsunami of unmet need" is faced this winter. The Care Quality Commission's dire warning predicts that, if nothing is done, 170,000 vacancies are to be expected by the end of the year. This figure doesn't include those forced out by the mandatory vaccination policy coming into effect this month.

This will mean people being left without support at home - at risk of neglect, serious injury or worse. As a social worker, I currently have several people on my caseload who have been waiting for a care provider for months, despite being assessed as having multiple needs.

This latest crisis also has major implications for the NHS. Social care should address problems before they escalate to a person requiring hospital treatment, and enable people to be discharged safely from hospital, freeing up resources. With the unavailability of care, people will either remain in NHS beds or - as has frequently occurred during Covid - be sent home without adequate support, creating a vicious circle.

Pathetic funding
The government's knee-jerk response has been to announce a 'workforce retention and recruitment fund', amounting to a pathetic £108 per care worker. There's no clear explanation as to how this money is intended to attract new

staff. And while attempting to argue that it will help retain staff, the government's main argument for creating more 'hours in the system' is to give burnt-out carers more work by paying for overtime!

Common issues across sectors that face workforce shortages are tough work, with poor conditions and low pay. The GMB union is absolutely right that care workers need a minimum of £15 an hour, an end to zero-hour contracts and proper sick pay now, or they "will continue to leave and the sector will implode".

The GMB, along with other unions in the sector, must be at the forefront of fighting for the funding needed.

It is also necessary for the unions to put forward the need to take the private providers, who now constitute the vast majority of social care services, back in-house under democratic public ownership - making care provision accountable to workers, service-users and communities.

We need to end the unfettered profit motive in social care that siphons out money at the expense of overworked, underpaid staff and the quality and availability of care for those who urgently need it.



PHOTO: SOCIALCARE/CC

Pay freeze lifted for civil servants - prepare now for the struggle for a decent rise

DAVE SEMPLE
PCS AND SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND MEMBER

Prices have risen by at least 27% since 2010, according to the lower estimate of inflation, the Consumer Price Index. In the intervening period, a typical civil servant has faced Tory pay freezes, pay caps and unfunded pay offers. In ten years, a typical civil servant has seen their purchasing power decrease by around 20%. This is an unprecedented squeeze on pay and living standards for 400,000 workers.

The absence of adequate leadership on the part of the civil

service trade unions during Covid, best exemplified by the PCS leadership parking the full national pay claim at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2021, has allowed the Tory government to pick off groups of workers in individual departments, providing some extra money on pay pay freezes, pay caps and unfunded pay offers. In ten years, a typical civil servant has seen their purchasing power decrease by around 20%. This is an unprecedented squeeze on pay and living standards for 400,000 workers.

For those of us who have not been offered this extra money, we aren't impressed by Rishi Sunak's announcement about the "end" of the pay freeze. We are used to Treasury

sleight of hand, and know the devil will be in the detail of the 2022 pay remit due in February next year. The best way to secure a favourable remit is to prepare to fight right now.

Only a fighting, democratic union leadership with socialist policies can unite members across departments, with different experiences and different needs. Only a socialist leadership can win support from the tens of thousands of civil servants who have stood their distance from the union because the current leadership is seen as inept and detached from the workplace.

Socialist Party members urge all civil servants to join the PCS union, get active and join the Broad Left Network to secure in our union the policies needed to win on pay.



PHOTO: AJEHALS/CC



● Big polluters' profits

Shell and BP have a carbon footprint five times bigger than that of Britain. Together they produce 1.7 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases every year. Together they have paid zero corporation tax on oil and gas production in the North Sea for three years. In the same period they have paid out £44 billion in dividends to shareholders.

● Hooked on coal

20 of the world's richest nations that make up the G20 are responsible for 78% of greenhouse gas emissions. Coal-fired power plants are the largest contributor to global CO2 emissions. When the G20 met ahead of COP26, they failed to agree a plan to phase out existing plants.

● Empty promises

Global leaders at COP26 have agreed a deal to stop and reverse deforestation. This would be great news, if there was any guarantee it would actually happen. Similar promises were made by leaders at a 2014 conference in New York. Since then deforestation has not even slowed down.

● No trust in capitalism

Capitalist politicians cannot be trusted to save the planet. In competition with each other to ensure maximum profits for their own nations' boss class, they are unwilling to agree necessary measures, or be held accountable to them. Only a socialist plan based on taking the world's resources into democratic public ownership, with collaboration internationally, can save the planet from climate destruction (See pages 8-9).



Water companies put profits before protecting our environment



PHOTO: SABINANEPAL/CC

JANE WARD
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

In July, Southern Water was fined a record £90 million for dumping billions of litres of raw sewage into the sea. The company had been taken to court for its persistent pollution no less than 168 times, but it had no effect. It had done this for over six years, simply as a means to avoid the expense of treating the sewage and maintaining the necessary infrastructure.

Between 2010 and 2015, the company stored large quantities of sewage in storm tanks which they then

released into the sea in north Kent and Hampshire. During this time the illegal spills amounted to 61,0704 hours of releases. Although the company has been fined, none of the money goes to redress the damage to the environment.

Raw sewage carries pathogens and can cause people to contract diseases such as E-coli and Hepatitis A. The wildlife in the water can be badly affected by the chemicals found in the sewage, and when the sewage is broken down by micro-organisms, the oxygen in the water can become severely depleted resulting in an inability to sustain life.

The fining of Southern Water certainly forced the issue into the spotlight, but it is not the only company to have been fined. Most water companies regularly dump raw sewage into our rivers and seas, sometimes legally. Britain's antiquated sewerage system can no longer cope in times of excessive rainfall. The storm overflow map for the UK is a real eye-opener as it shows that spills occur right across the country.

There have been long standing campaigns against the dumping of sewage from anglers and groups like Surfers Against Sewage. The government promised to address the issue

in its Environment Bill. But the proposed legislation went nowhere near far enough. It required the water companies to reveal data on storm discharges, but there was no legal duty on them to reduce those spillages!

Protests

Protests were held on beaches across the south of the country. The House of Lords then passed an amendment to the bill which required a progressive reduction in overflow spills. All but 22 Tories voted to defeat the amendment.

This provoked a national outcry from people on all sides of the political spectrum. The Tories were then on the run. They used the excuse that the Victorian water and sewage system would need updating at a minimum cost of £150 billion. This did nothing to stop the protests which were fuelled by well-publicised drone footage of sewage discharge into Langstone Harbour in Hampshire. The government has now been forced into a U-turn and will now require the companies to reduce spillages.

Water companies have consistently put profits before protecting the environment. They have paid out £57 billion in dividends to shareholders in the past 30 years. In the last five years, bosses of the companies were paid £58 million in salaries and other benefits.

This money should have been used to invest in infrastructure. Water companies, and other utilities must be nationalised under democratic workers' control and management. Then the wealth can be used to invest in improving infrastructure and to protect the environment. As part of a wider socialist planned economy, production could be planned to not only stop water pollution, but to enable the investment needed to start to solve all aspects of the climate crisis.

Tories threaten arts students: we are prepared to fight back!

EVE JONES
UAL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

It is not surprising that our government would pass a motion for vast, brutal cuts to the arts and humanities courses in higher education, but it is deeply harmful and enraging nonetheless.

The Conservatives decreed that, as of June 2021, funding to arts and creative degrees - referred to as 'dead-end courses' by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson - would be cut by 50%. A move that not only affects students but university staff, field professionals, and the creative industry as a whole.

In addition to a withdrawal of funds, the Tories are also considering raising A-level entry requirements into arts courses, a decision more likely to affect students from poorer backgrounds, as well as students that struggle with the dogmatic standardised exam methods that mark the end of secondary education.

Finally, the Tories have also decided that the London weighting should



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

be cut, leaving a number of arts universities in London with a loss of £64 million in an expensive and gentrified city.

These diverted finances will be

funnelled into what the Tories consider to be more 'useful' subjects - STEM and medicine - where graduates generally earn higher wages and therefore guarantee a return on student loans.

Rather than combat this issue of student debt by raising wages in the arts industry or scrapping tuition fees altogether, the Conservative ethos continues to be punching downward - considering lowering the loan repayment threshold to £23,000 a year, for example.

Students, staff and creatives alike shouldn't have to put up with this. That's why we campaign for free accessible higher education, and it's why we will support university staff in the University and Colleges Union if they decide to strike, and university cleaners when their strike resumes on 12 November, as we did at the start of term.

A mobilised generation is a dangerous generation for those in established power, so we will continue to fight for a free and decent education for all.



SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN NEU

For the first time, members of the National Education Union (NEU) have had the opportunity to vote for a deputy general secretary. In the ballot, which concluded on 29 October, the candidate of the majority 'NEU Left' leadership bloc on the union's national executive, Gawain Little, was defeated.

Socialist Party member Martin Powell-Davies, standing on a fighting programme, won a quarter of the first preference votes. (The NEU uses a transferable voting system, which means voters put candidates in order of preference). The election was won by Niamh Sweeney, former president of the ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers) section of the NEU.

Teachers and support staff have been on the frontline of the fight against Covid for 18 months, and continue to be so. In a cruel attack by the Tories, teachers in England have been hit with a pay freeze this year, while support staff and teachers in Wales got a miserly 1.75%.

At the start of 2021, a national lead on the coordinated use of 'Section 44' workplace safety legislation defeated the Tories and forced them into a U-turn over Covid safety. The NEU reported that 400,000 people participated in an online briefing and tens of thousands joined the union.

Yet fewer than 28,000 NEU members out of an overall electorate of 422,585 voted in this election, a turnout of only 6.6%.

This is the result of a leadership that was pushed by pressure from the members to act at the start of the year, but has failed to show the same boldness over the ongoing threats to pay and workload.

As the nomination meetings during the deputy general secretary election themselves showed, many district meetings are attended by only a dozen or so members. What it revealed is that the union has to build from below through campaigns that engage and involve union reps and members.

Due to the NEU Left's influence among many district leaderships, Gawain Little won a clear majority of nominations, but the vote shows that in reality that bloc has very shallow roots among the wider membership.

Clear strategy

Of course, there can be broad unity around general ambitions for a better-funded, child-centred education system, but what the 'NEU Left' leadership group lacks is a clear strategy for achieving those goals. As the response to the latest attacks on pay has shown, they demonstrate a deep lack of confidence in the NEU ever managing to overcome the ballot thresholds needed to achieve national action.

Instead, the union increasingly resorts to campaigns that ask members to do little more than send emails and sign petitions, in essence making hopeful appeals to politicians to 'do the right thing' for education. It is an approach that reveals an underestimation of the steely determination of the Tories and their backers to cut the costs of public services and atomise and undermine trade unions, not least in education.

Niamh Sweeney comes from the previous ATL legacy union which joined with the National Union of Teachers in 2017. While she

NEU deputy general secretary election Strategy needed to bring members together to take national action



Supply teachers rally outside NEU headquarters to demand support for their fight for better pay for supply teachers PAUL MATTSOEN



Martin Powell-Davies presenting to a group of children in a classroom PAUL MATTSOEN

portrayed herself as an 'independent' candidate without the backing of 'factions', she is a Labour councillor and has been congratulated by the likes of Blairite/Starmerite MP Wes Streeting - who has stood aside while NEU members strike at Oaks Park school (see opposite page) in his Redbridge constituency.

Niamh highlighted some of the key issues for members, such as excessive workload. She will also have gained support for being a woman in a union where women are a big majority of the membership. However, adopting the timid approach previously adopted by the ATL will fail to find answers to those issues.

Joining the NUT and the ATL together into a new NEU union potentially increased union strength, bringing together a larger membership embracing both teaching and support staff. However, it also risked the conservative approach of the ATL, one that had failed to grow its membership, having more influence, particularly within the NEU's union bureaucracy. That influence has indeed grown and may now seek to assert itself further.

A rightward drift to a 'service-led union', rather than being a lay-led fighting union based on workplace strength and collective action, would be disastrous for NEU members.

Martin Powell-Davies

Martin Powell-Davies won a quarter of the first preference vote, standing as a socialist candidate with a proven record, taking only a teacher's salary, and offering a clear strategy to win on pay, workload and funding based on collective action.

Martin set out a strategy emphasising building workplace strength, but also on bringing members together to take national action, rather than leaving them to struggle in isolation. The union needs to campaign and organise to win a new national contract that can improve pay, workload and conditions for all NEU members. Immediately, it needs to urgently organise to build action against the clear threat to impose yet another real-terms pay cut on school staff.

The NEU's latest 'Value Education, Value Educators' campaign is, rightly, also calling for districts to turn towards the workplace and to make sure the union is seen as relevant to the wider membership. But the way that the campaign is being sold as a "five-year orientation" demonstrates an ongoing lack of confidence and a lack of urgency in building collective action.

It is not enough to put all the responsibility onto hard-pressed workplace reps and union groups to try and organise small victories in their own workplaces. Yes, individual victories are needed, but real gains, and a real defence against the further attacks to come, require a clear and confident lead from the top of the union.

Martin Powell-Davies would have helped to provide such a lead. But, without such a clear lead from the top, the importance of building from below is now even greater.

Those who came together around the Martin4DGS campaign should continue to work together to offer a fighting alternative way forward.



Oaks Park school strike spurred on by head's lies

JAMES IVENS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Defiant Oaks Park school workers hit the ground running with a picket line of over 30 on 2 November. The first strike day after the half-term break followed fresh insults from bosses.

National Education Union members at the secondary in Redbridge, east London, have been striking against management bullying since summer. But in a letter to parents after half-term, the head claimed this issue was news to her!

She dismissed her staff's "false narrative" as having given "no evidence". She knows full well that the Labour council responsible for Oaks Park received a whole dossier of evidence months ago. Recent negotiations - which she broke off - included attempts to agree an independent inquiry!

Meanwhile, pickets told the Socialist that right before half-term yet another staff member was forced out. It would seem he is just the latest victim of the bullying culture at Oaks Park, joining sacked rep Keiran Mahon and countless others.

Louise Cuffaro, NEU executive and Socialist Party member, joined the



PAUL MATTSOEN

HGV drivers day of action

On 1 November, HGV drivers around the country took their breaks at 11am as part of the #TruckedOff campaign and backed by Unite the Union.

Socialist Party members went along to support them. This is the first step in the action that needs to be taken to win for workers.

The last few months show the chaos of the economy in the hands of big business. Workers need an alternative to the crisis-ridden Johnson Tory government.

The answer is to fight for the rights that drivers have won and have since seen eroded. These include higher pay, shorter hours, permanent employment not agency or temporary, and proper facilities.

The driver shortages and the increases in pay forced out of some bosses show the strength that HGV drivers have, as well as all workers across the logistics sector that has exploded in size during Covid.

picket line again on its 24th day. "I've asked a few of you what should I be saying to the top of the union? And people say 'support' - and you do have support. But actually, real support by the union is national action."

"The victimisation and bullying at this school is replicated everywhere. If we can have some national action, like we had with 'Section 44', then I believe all these things would be driven back. The national union needs to show that we will stand up and fight."

"And I raise pay, and I raise workload - because that's really where the bullying comes from. If we're going to fight back on pay, workload, and the bullying culture that encompasses that, we're going to need national action. The union now needs to move to do a national ballot."

A growing number of parents are getting organised, and due to meet soon. And having been ignored by their Labour council and MP, strikers will take the fight to London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan.

Join the rally outside City Hall on Monday 15 November at 5.30pm. Strikes are due to continue every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until 25 November.

Scunthorpe scaffs strike into fifth week



Picket 1 November ALI STAIR TICE

ALISTAIR TICE
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Now into their fifth week of all-out strike, the Actavo scaffolders at British Steel Scunthorpe remain solid and determined in their fight for the national industry (NAECI) rate for the job.

All the strikers picket the three main gates every day from 5.30am till 2.30pm. British Steel bosses are trying to intimidate the Unite members by 'investigating' their social media!

A strike committee has been set up to involve more strikers in the running of the dispute, and are considering ways to up the ante on Actavo and British Steel bosses. A family

and friends Saturday town centre march has been suggested, and also a 'solidarity with the Scaffs day' to appeal to the 900 Unite members on site to join the strikers on the picket line.

There has been support from other construction workers on nearby Keadby and Drax power stations, and the strike will be discussed at the upcoming national engineering construction shop stewards forum.

But to win, the dispute needs active support inside British Steel, to stop other scaffolding firms doing Actavo work, and for British Steel Unite stewards to lead from the front by standing on the picket lines and talking to their members not to cross.

Unite leaflets supermarkets to build support for Weetabix fire and rehire strike

CLARE WILKINS
NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Around the country from 29-31 October, Unite regions and branches leafleted shoppers at supermarkets to boycott Weetabix, Alpen and Ready Brek products and get involved in the campaign to put pressure on supermarkets to contact Weetabix bosses to withdraw the company's fire-and-rehire attempt.

Despite huge profits, Weetabix is proposing to cut engineers' pay by £5,000 a year and worsen conditions.

On 29 October in Nottingham, leafletting took place outside Asda in Arnold. We had a good response from shoppers and passers-by. While we all gathered there to begin with, other teams went on to Tesco at Top Valley and then Morrisons at Bulwell.



PAUL MATTSOEN

Unite East Midlands also did leafletting at three supermarkets in Leicester and three in Northampton. This is an ongoing campaign of solidarity with Weetabix engineers on strike in Corby.

The Unite officials, reps and members are buoyed by the election of

Sharon Graham as Unite general secretary, and have a new confidence in campaigning. They agreed that it is long overdue that the Trades Union Congress steps out of the shadows to provide a lead campaigning against fire and rehire and all the other attacks on workers.

Gwent bus strikes continue into third week

Gwent Stagecoach bus drivers continue into a third week of strike action after bosses failed to budge during talks on 29 October. Workers are fighting for £10.50 an hour for all with no cuts to sick pay and paid breaks, and no new starter rate.

The Unite members have continued with solid picket lines at Blackwood, Brynmawr and Cwmbran depots, and have forced the South Wales Argus to ditch a paid advert by Stagecoach having a go at the strike. As workers pointed out, the money would have been better spent paying drivers the pay they deserve.

The managing director of the three depots has accused the union of demanding "fantasy wages" of £10.50 an hour, but it was revealed that his pay rose from £181,000 to £229,000 between 2019 and 2020 - a pay rise of £48,000!

The next strike dates are 8-9 November.

● See 'Gwent Stagecoach workers driving for victory on pay' at socialistparty.org.uk for more

North Wales Arriva drivers vote for action

Nearly 400 Arriva bus drivers in Unite have voted overwhelmingly to strike for five weeks in a pay dispute.

Arriva Cymru bus drivers at depots, including Amlwch, Bangor, Hawarden, Llandudno, Rhyl and Wrexham, will strike continuously from 6am on 14 November until 1am on 19 December. This follows a 95% vote in favour of strike action.

Plant engineers pay dispute

The entire shop floor workforce at power plant engineers Doosan Babcock in Tipton in the Black Country took two days strike action after the insult of below-inflation pay deals were added to by the injury of wage arrears.

One worker told us: "Our wages have been slipping further and further back each year. This is a multinational company that made £5 million in profit last year."

Another added: "If the cost of living keeps going up because the government want the likes of us to pay for Covid, we won't be the only ones out on strike!"

NICK HART
BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

SOCIALISM the podcast

The Marxist podcast from the Socialist Party
● Listen and subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, YouTube, and all major podcast platforms
socialistparty.org.uk/podcast

Nuclear power and energy

Nuclear power is cited, including by some in the trade union movement, as part of the solution for a zero-carbon energy alternative. Boris Johnson's government has given the green light to France's state-owned EDF and China's GNPNG to build a new nuclear power station at Sizewell in Suffolk. EDF are also building Hinkley C in Somerset.

Socialists oppose nuclear power. It's not safe. The Chernobyl, Fukushima and Three Mile Island nuclear disasters underline that reality. Building nuclear power stations is also massively expensive. Commissioned in 2008 at an estimated cost of £4 billion, Hinkley C's current cost is over £22.5 billion. The issue of radioactive waste - a by-product of the fission process - is another major factor, as it has to be stored safely for thousands of years.

The trade union movement should campaign for the nationalisation of the energy sector under workers' control. This should be linked to a massive programme of state investment into renewables and other carbon-free technologies, energy efficient production and housing. These alone would constitute a massive job creation programme with guaranteed jobs without loss of pay for workers moving over from the fossil fuel industries.

Transport should also be publicly owned to allow for worker-controlled transition to electric buses, cars and trains.

This year, the workers and the Unite union at the GKN Automotive factory in Birmingham drew up a plan to move the factory to sustainable car production. This echoed the 1976 Lucas Plan when aerospace workers proposed a plan to move to socially useful production.

In other words put the workers' movement in charge of a transition to carbon-free production based on nationalisation of the economy rather than profit-hungry capitalism.



Big business nature of COP26

COP26 - a gathering of the world's most powerful capitalist nations and their advisors - will be lobbied and sponsored by the very same multinationals which are causing the climate crisis in the first place.

The big business nature of COP26 in Glasgow is indicated by the names of the 'major sponsors': Sky, the energy giants Hitachi, National Grid, Scottish Power and SSE, US company Microsoft, and multinationals GSK, NatWest, Reckitt, Sainsbury's and Unilever.

The opportunity to greenwash capitalism and their billionaire owners by some of the most polluting companies clearly cannot be missed. The energy companies involved here are also among those driving up the prices of energy bills in Britain and internationally.

We demand the nationalisation of the corporate giants to be put under the democratic control and management of the working class.

£200 million

Over £200 million alone is being spent by the UK government in policing at COP26. Large parts of the city have been cordoned off causing massive transport disruption. But not for the estimated 30,000 delegates and participants at COP who have also been given free bus and rail passes, in contrast with the Glasgow working class who have to continue to pay exorbitant fares to privatised transport companies.

SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

November issue includes...

- How to save the planet
- Talking hot air - COP summits have not led to action
- Len McCluskey - The life of the recently retired Unite leader

socialismtoday.org/subscribe
020 8988 8777

- Paper sub £3 a month, e-sub £2.50

COP26: Zero trust in capitalist class FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM TO END CLIMATE DESTRUCTION

PHILIP STOTT
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

COP26 - the global climate summit taking place in Glasgow from 1 November - will probably agree on something. Promises to hit a 'net zero' carbon emissions target by 2050 for example.

But actually delivering it under capitalism, is ruled out.

That's why the fight against climate change is inextricably linked to the struggle for socialism.

As Martin Wolf, writing in the Financial Times, the house journal of British capitalism, put it: "We know what to do about it [climate change], in substantial detail and at an affordable cost. Yet we are not doing what we should do, and so emissions continue to rise. Will that change at COP26 in Glasgow? I doubt it."

It's not as if the capitalist class are unaware of the scale of the crisis. Indeed, multiple reports from bodies like the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prove that 'human activity' has now produced a temperature increase of 1.1°C above the pre-industrial (pre-capitalist) period, heading to 1.5°C by 2030, if not before.

At present trends the world will be 3°C hotter by the end of the century, with catastrophic consequences for human, animal and plant life. The IPCC says correctly, this is a "code red for humanity."

COP21 - the Paris agreement - underlines the serial failures of capitalist solutions. Even if all the targets set then, and since, were implemented, temperatures would still increase.

This is because, under these plans, CO² emissions would only reduce to around 20 gigatonnes by 2050 - the same CO² levels as the 1990s.

Given the systemic impact global warming will have on humanity - including capitalism's profits - why are the ruling class so incapable of delivering a solution?

Many of the technologies to allow a transition away from fossil fuel production and the industrial-scale production of greenhouse gases do exist. For example, electricity produced by renewables like solar, wind and wave energy.

Others, such as hydrogen technology, bioenergy, advanced batteries and CO² capture could be rapidly expanded and implemented under a socialist plan of production.

There are blueprints and reports by the dozen outlining what action



should be taken, one of the latest being the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook (WEO) 2021.

The WEO report says that investment to deliver net zero emissions will need \$4 trillion every year, a massive quadrupling from the current annual global investment.

It goes on to say that "governments must play a central role in dealing with this huge global externality. Only by acting cooperatively can they create the policy framework."

As Martin Wolf says: "If this energy revolution is to happen, it must be planned..."

And here is the issue: sustained government investment, planning and global cooperation among competing capitalist nation states is precisely ruled out.

The inherent contradictions of capitalism itself mitigate against the scale and global action required to tackle the climate crisis.

Capitalism is not a planned but an unplanned system of exploitation - of human labour, primarily, but also of the environment - for profit.

It is by its nature anarchic and based on competition among nation states for spheres of influence, markets and investment opportunities. Just look at the ratcheting up

GDP. Some green investments could displace other, more productive, investment opportunities.

"Climate action in the UK can lead to economic activity moving abroad if it directly leads to costs increasing, and it is more profitable to produce in countries with less stringent climate policies". It also commented on fears over "erosion of tax revenue from fossil fuel-related activity."

These comments, no matter what is said for public consumption by the Tories, vividly expose just how much of an obstacle short-term, profit-driven capitalism is to a sustainable economy.

At the same time as claiming his government will rival Kermit the Frog in his greenness, Johnson has given the go-ahead for a possible new coal mine in Cumbria, new licences for oil and gas exploration in the North Sea; a £27 billion road-building plan, and slashing incentives for electric cars as well as airport expansion schemes.

In Scotland, the SNP has long supported 'big oil' and is not campaigning to clearly oppose new oil and gas exploration. This despite forming a de-facto coalition with the Scottish Greens at Holyrood.

The misnamed 'progressive' Joe Biden in the US is cutting his proposed 'green' stimulus package from the \$3.5 trillion proposed to about \$2 trillion, to try and get it through the senate. But his Build Back Better Act will not achieve net zero either by 2050.

At the same time, Biden's administration has also approved new oil and gas drilling permits, appealed to oil-producing countries to ramp up production to help lower petrol prices, and declined to stop major fossil fuel projects such as Line Three, an oil pipeline expansion in Minnesota.

The current energy crisis, following the end of the worst of the Covid economic shutdown, has also led to a further turn to coal production in China, as well as moves back to fossil fuel production by major capitalist powers internationally to alleviate the shortages.

These examples underline why socialists say we can have zero trust in the capitalist class or capitalist-based solutions to resolve the climate emergency.

Combined with the fact that the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions are precisely capitalist production methods and global multinationals, it is clear that only a socialist plan on a global scale can protect the planet and end exploitation in all its forms.

of tensions between the two major world powers, China and the US, for global influence.

Trade wars, the race to exploit the working class and the poor at lower and lower wages, and the exporting of capital - imperialism - to the poorest areas of the globe for profitable return are the DNA of capitalism.

The obscene amounts spent by the national capitalist elites on military and arms spending - not least to use against their own and their rivals, poor and working class - are another case in point.

In 2020, global military spending was \$2 trillion (double the current expenditure on net zero technologies). The five biggest spenders, accounting for 62% of global military expenditure, are the US, China, India, Russia and the UK.

Capitalism is the barrier

The profit-driven barriers to the necessary action on the climate were recently underlined by the Tory chancellor, Rishi Sunak, and the UK Treasury.

In leaked documents earlier this year, Sunak's department blurted out their unvarnished truth: "More green investment is likely to attract diminishing returns, reducing the positive impact of ever more investment on

Role of the working class

For many young people active in the climate movement today there is often agreement that capitalism is the climate destroyer. There is not, understandably, a clear idea of how to take on and defeat that system, or what to put in its place.

The working class and the trade unions are the key force for the youth to link up with in order to take on the planet wreckers in mass struggle to overthrow them. Organised in industry, transport, retail and public services, the working class has the power to hit capitalism where it hurts.

It's likely that around 1,500 bin workers, school janitors, cleaners and catering staff, employed by Glasgow City council and organised in Unison and the GMB unions, will take strike action during COP26. If this action goes ahead it will shut down the schools and cleansing services in Glasgow.

Collectively, the workers' movement has massive potential power to halt capitalist production. It is far more powerful than, for example, small numbers of Extinction Rebellion activists seeking to disrupt roads and travel - with little support from workers affected by such tactics. In contrast, strike action by workers involves and has widespread support among working-class people generally.



Climate change - for a workers' transition

nationalshop
stewardsnetwork

NSSN online forum
9 November 7pm
Zoom ID: 8398811682

Join the fight for socialist change

- **Youth organise!** Build mass strikes and walkouts from school, college and uni. Establish democratic committees that link up with trade unions to organise joint struggle. Build a mass youth movement to fight for our futures - jobs, homes and the environment
- **Workers' collective action!** Support industrial action by workers during and beyond COP26. Fight for the trade union leaders to coordinate the struggles
- **Defend the right to protest and organise.** We need police accountability through democratic control by communities and trade unions
- **Socialist transition to renewables!** Plan internationally for a worker-controlled socialist transition from fossil fuel production. Fight for public investment into research and a mass programme of job creation, including in publicly owned renewable energy. Guarantee skilled jobs, decent wages and safe working conditions for workers moving out of fossil fuel industries
- **We can't control what we don't own.** Nationalise under democratic working-class control the 125 biggest businesses and banks that form the main levers of the economy, as a step towards a democratic socialist plan for the economy to end capitalist climate change, exploitation and inequality
- **No trust in the defenders of capitalism.** Build new mass workers' parties to fight for socialist change
- **Socialism and internationalism.** Build working-class international solidarity in the struggle for a socialist world. End climate destruction, war and all oppression



WHY I JOINED THE SOCIALIST PARTY - AND WHY YOU SHOULD TOO

RHYS DAVIES

CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

To explain why I joined the Socialist Party, I need to go back to 2008 and the global financial crisis. I worked for a financial start-up that was directly funded by Wall Street investment firm Merrill Lynch.

As far as I was aware, business was going from strength to strength. What I didn't know was that Merrill Lynch would soon be instrumental in the sub-prime mortgage crisis - a major factor in the recession to follow.

The funding for the business was pulled, and we had to cease trading. I was made redundant shortly after. I vowed never to work in the financial sector again after being exposed to the predatory and exploitative practices that plagued the industry.

I decided to retrain as an electrician. After becoming fully qualified, I was excited to embark on my new career.

Unfortunately, the construction industry was also badly affected by the crisis. My efforts to find work as a spark were futile, despite offering to work unpaid just to get experience under my belt.

I spent long periods unemployed or in various temporary jobs on far less pay than I had been used to. All the savings I'd managed to set aside were used on paying the mortgage, bills and two young kids over the following years.

Mental health

My physical and mental health suffered greatly during this period, but not as bad as some of my contemporaries. The suicide rate for men of my age during this time skyrocketed. Families fell apart, and people lost their homes.

I was always proudly left-wing and a traditional Labour voter. But by now I'd given up on the Labour Party due to Blairism and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

I bounced between the Greens and Plaid Cymru for a while, but I was essentially politically homeless, and in desperate need of guidance.

Had I found the Socialist Party at this point, it would have made for a much happier ending, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. I was in an extremely vulnerable situation due to financial stresses and poor mental health.

I came dangerously close to sinking a lot of money into 'multi-level marketing' schemes, trying to recoup lost savings. I also fell into pseudo-scientific wellness practices in an attempt to ease the pain of everyday life.

Social media platforms were beginning to dominate. It was becoming very easy to fall down conspiratorial rabbit holes, so this was also a danger. I can sympathise with the many alienated and disillusioned people that fall victim to these scams



JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Join the fightback

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join • Or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206** to find out more
- Call **020 8988 8777**

in the absence of a convincing alternative to the status quo. So many people could be won over to socialism given the opportunity.

I am part of a generation that saw the fortunes of our parents better than our grandparents, who also had it better than their parents. Naturally we expected to have it even better, entitled to greater wealth and comfort than all before us, and expect to provide an even brighter future for our children.

Despite being left-wing, I still had vague illusions in the 'trickle down' economics that we were taught to trust in. So I was confused, and blamed myself for not being able to be the provider of a lifestyle my family deserved, rather than the systemic failures of capitalism.

In 2016, things started to change. Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour Party, and Bernie Sanders came close to winning the nomination for the Democratic Party in the US.

The word 'socialism' was becoming less taboo, and the ideas were gaining popularity. I voted for Labour for the first time in ten years, and decided to look for socialist groups locally to discuss the ideas and get involved in activism.

I submitted my email address on the Socialist Party website, was contacted the next day, attended my first branch meeting and joined within a few weeks.

Capitalism

In hindsight, I can now identify capitalism as the system that had such a devastating effect on my life and continues to have on billions of people across the world. Over the last four years in the Socialist Party, I have spoken at meetings on subjects I knew nothing about when I joined, at my own and other branches.

I've been voted onto the local branch committee. I've attended the annual Socialism event, Socialist Party national council meeting in 2021, congress in 2020 and was present at the historic refoundation of the Committee for a Workers' International in 2019.

Joining the Socialist Party has changed my life, and Marxism has taught me so many important lessons. One of the most important is the need for a mass party of a united working class.

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is likely that we will have more austerity forced on us. And there is a real possibility of another economic crisis.

I can't avoid this, but I'm now part of an organisation that will lead the fightback against this. And I'm better equipped to help others make sense of what they're experiencing, and how we can solve the problems.

I would urge anyone who's yet to make that step to join the Socialist Party, get involved and join the struggle for a better, fairer society.

SOCIALISM 2021

Hosted by

Socialist Party

www.socialistparty.org.uk

A weekend of discussion and debate on ideas to change the world

Friday 19-Sunday 21 November

In person at Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Rd, London E1 4NS, and on Zoom

Includes the main rally on Saturday 20 November 4-6pm, workshops on Saturday and Sunday and an online introduction to the key themes of the weekend on Friday 19 November 6-7pm



020 8988 8777

www.socialism2021.net
socialistparty.org.uk

THEME	SAT 10AM-12	SAT 1-3PM	SUN 11AM-1PM	SUN 2-4PM
FIGHTING FOR SOCIALISM TODAY	Britain: how can workers fight back in the new normal? Speaker: Rob Williams, Socialist Party industrial organiser	How do we take the wealth off the 1%? Speaker: Helen Pattison, London Socialist Party secretary	Northern Ireland and Brexit Speaker: Niall Mulholland, International Executive, Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)	Lessons from defeating Thatcher's poll tax Speaker: Nancy Taaffe, Socialist Party National Committee (NC)
TROTSKYISM - IDEAS THEY COULDN'T KILL	Is fascism on the rise? Speaker: James Ivens, Socialist Party National Committee	Anarchism and socialism Speaker: Lenny Shail, Socialist Party National Committee	Is the theory of permanent revolution still relevant? Speaker: Berkay Kartav, London Socialist Party organiser	A transitional programme - what it is and how to use it Speaker: Bob Labi, International Executive, CWI
HOW DO WE CHANGE THE WORLD?	Can workers' organisations lead a revolution? Speaker: Glenn Kelly, Socialist Party National Committee	Students and the class struggle Speaker: Theo Sharieff, Socialist Party youth and student organiser	Why does LGBTQ+phobia still exist? Speaker: Michael Johnson, Socialist Party LGBTQ+ members group convenor	How can we fight to end violence against women and sexism? Speaker: Corinthia Ward, Socialist Party national women's bureau
WHAT HAPPENED IN RUSSIA?	The Russian Revolution 1917 - what happened? Speaker: Josh Asker, the Socialist editorial team	The legacy of the collapse of Stalinism Speaker: Clive Heemskirk, editor Socialism Today	Was Stalinism inevitable? Speaker: Clare Doyle, International Executive, Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)	Why hasn't the Communist Party delivered a 'century for socialism'? Speaker: Roger Thomas, South West Socialist Party Regional Committee
SOCIALIST CHANGE TO END CLIMATE CHANGE	Food production in a socialist future Speaker: Mark Best, Socialist Party National Committee	What came out of COP 26? Speaker: Matt Dobson, Socialist Party Scotland Executive Committee (EC)	Can local government play a part in fighting climate change? Speaker: Nick Chaffey, Socialist Party Southern region secretary	SNP-Green government in Scotland: will they deliver on climate, workers' rights and independence? Speaker: Philip Stott, Socialist Party Scotland EC
LESSONS FROM THE CORBYN EXPERIENCE	Modern Monetary Theory v Marxism Speaker: Hannah Sell, Socialist Party General Secretary	Forum: how can a workers' politics be achieved? Speakers from the trade union movement	Do trade unions need a political voice? Speaker: Hugo Pierre, Socialist Party National Committee	Lessons from the Corbyn experience Speaker tbc
IDEAS TO FIGHT BACK	After BLM - the fight to end racism Speaker: Deji Olayinka, Socialist Party Black & Asian members group	Britain's broken housing model and why we need genuinely social housing Hosted by the Unite housing branch	Culture war or class war? Speaker: Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialist Party Executive Committee	Can the NHS survive? Speakers: Naomi Byron, Socialist Party National Committee and NHS workers
INTRODUCTION TO MARXISM	Marxist economics - understanding capitalism in crisis Speaker: Iain Dalton, Socialist Party Yorkshire Secretary	The ABC of dialectics Speaker: Ross Saunders, Socialist Party Wales Secretary	Dialectical historical materialism - what it is and how to use it Speaker: Isai Priya, Socialist Party national Treasurer	Marxism, the state, and the right to protest Speaker: Nick Hart, Socialist Party West Midlands organiser
WAR AND IMPERIALISM	Will there always be war in Israel and Palestine? Speaker: Judy Beishon, International Secretariat, CWI	Youth rising in Sri Lanka Hosted by Young Revolutionaries in Solidarity and Tamil Solidarity	20 years since 9/11: lessons from the anti-war movement Speaker: Tom Baldwin, Socialist Party South West Secretary	20 years since 9/11: world relations and decline of a superpower Speaker: TU Senan, International Secretariat, CWI
A WORLD IN CRISIS	Cuba and the left Speaker: Tony Saunois, Committee for a Workers' International Secretary	The world and Covid - what is the economic outlook? Speaker: Robin Clapp, Socialist Party National Committee	What's happened to Europe's 'new left'? Speakers from the CWI in France and Germany	'Barbarism or socialism' - Africa in the 21st century Speakers from the CWI in Nigeria and South Africa

All Saturday workshops are in person with the opportunity to attend on Zoom. The Sunday workshops in white boxes will be on Zoom only.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIALISM: FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER 6-7PM

Topics to include: why young people want socialism; what is the role of the working class in changing the world; why climate change is a socialist issue; and: rising against a rigged and rotten system

SATURDAY RALLY

Saturday 20 November 4-6pm

Speakers include:

- **Hannah Sell**, Socialist Party general secretary
- **Sharon Graham**, Unite the Union general secretary
- **Peter Taaffe**, Socialist Party political secretary
- and more

People's Palace, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Rd, London E1 4NS



Protests against Sudan coup reach Britain

On 30 October, thousands of Sudanese people living in Britain, and their supporters, took to the streets to protest against the military coup. Read more about what's happening in Sudan on page 15.

● London

The revolutionary energy of Khartoum echoed through the streets of London. Many demonstrators were recent refugees from Sudan.

Revolutionary sentiment was fever-pitch, with Arabic chants of "revolution" and "democracy". Further protests are being planned.

Many agreed with the Socialist Party when we said not to trust the capitalist politicians, the need for a revolutionary government of workers and the poor, and for a socialist Sudan.



London ISAI PRIYA

Demonstrators readily took our leaflet, and read and studied it closely. One demonstrator carried his copy of the Socialist open at the Sudan article high above his head, using it as a poster.

IBRAHIM YASSIN AND AMNON COHEN

● Sheffield

"Those killed in the revolution are still living amongst us". Over 100 Sudanese people protested, mostly refugees and students. Many had been involved in the 2019 uprising that overthrew the hated al-Bashir dictatorship.

With all internet and social media closed down since the coup, they were worried about their family and friends in Sudan, but also hopeful that the masses would once again overturn military rule. And one of the protesters agreed to speak at

our Socialist Students meeting on 2 November.
ALISTAIR TICE

● Leeds

"We don't want the military in government anymore." Over 100 people rallied, predominantly from Leeds' Sudanese community, although a banner brought solidarity from Leeds Trades Union Council (TUC). We ran out of copies of the Socialist Party's leaflet.

I spoke on behalf of the Socialist Party, bringing solidarity with the resistance against the coup, and raising the need for the struggle against the military leaders to be based on grassroots organisations of workers and the poor, like the Neighbourhood Resistance Committees, which should be rebuilt.

IAIN DALTON



Fund the fight for a socialist world

ISAI PRIYA
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL TREASURER

If you only read the establishment papers, doomsday is upon us. According to them, there is no alternative to the misery coming for ordinary people.

Get used to jobs losses, low pay, benefit cuts, price rises, tax increases, and supply shortages. They are the new norms.

For years, the capitalist class has told us that we are all in this together - despite the world's richest 1% having more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people - that we all have to put up with terrible conditions to save their system.

But it is no accident that thousands of working-class and young people are drawing the conclusion that this

system is not for us. In the pages of the Socialist, week after week, we report on many workers' struggles, and where we are fighting back against exploitation and oppression.

The Socialist Party fights for a socialist society. We are confident that we have the ideas and programme needed to fight for an alternative system.

From 19 to 21 November, the Socialist Party is hosting the socialist event of the year, Socialism 2021 - an opportunity to discuss the ideas that are needed to change the world (see page 11).

Socialism is an annual event. Every year we set a target for the fighting fund appeal at the Saturday night rally.

This year, 20% of the target will go towards supporting the international

that the Socialist Party is affiliated to - the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) - to assist the struggles, revolts and uprisings taking place in Sudan, Chile, Nigeria, South Africa, India, Pakistan and elsewhere, and fight for a socialist world.

Can you help us reach our £30,000 target? You can make a donation today by going to socialistparty.org.uk/donate, or you can make a pledge to be paid by the end of the year - email finance@socialistparty.org.uk. If you are a Socialist Party member, your donation will also go towards your branch target.

Help fund the fightback
DONATE
socialistparty.org.uk/donate



Hackney children's centres: Campaigners see through council deception

BRIAN DEBUS
HACKNEY TRADES UNION COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Responding to the closure of Fernbank and Hillside children's centres in east London, Hackney Labour mayor Philip Glanville claimed: "If we did not have to do this we wouldn't".

Glanville uses a flawed report to justify closure, claiming a 23% vacancy rate at council-run nurseries. Parents have picked apart this consultation document.

Pre-Covid, for many months in 2019, Fernbank was running at over 100% capacity, and had a financial surplus. To try and use figures from the Covid period is down right

dishonest. Nationally, similar settings suffered a significant decline in attendance.

There is an alternative, and that is to fight, as parents and staff have decided to do.

The workers' union, Unison, will conduct an official ballot for strike action of all its members at the two centres to stop the closures and job losses.

Mayor Glanville and all Labour councillors should use council reserves in the interim, and join us in demanding the government returns the £140 million it has stolen from Hackney in the last decade. The Tories have given billions of pounds to their rich mates, a few crumbs from

this cake would solve Hackney's problems.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is helping to draw up a People's Budget that spells out the needs of the population of Hackney, and the bill should be presented to the government. If Labour councils adopt this fighting strategy, local community campaigns, trade unions, and the wider population would be only too willing to join them.

If this does not happen, many will draw the conclusion that we need alternative candidates in next year's local elections. TUSC is ready to stand against those parties implementing budget cuts.

Sheffield students tirelessly campaigning for socialist change

NOAH EDEN
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST STUDENTS

I am a 2nd year student, and an avid socialist. Since term began in Sheffield, the Socialist Party and Socialist Students have been working tirelessly to campaign for the change we want to see.

Since freshers week, we have had weekly Socialist Students meetings, with new faces turning up every week, eager to get involved in discussions and ask questions.

Our six meetings have included topics like 'violence against women and police misogyny' and 'colonialism, imperialism and racism'. Both of those meetings had talks given by our own Socialist Students members. And we have had weekly campaign stalls.

In one meeting, we were very lucky to have talks given by Chris

Rawlinson, the Unite union branch secretary for the University of Sheffield, and Lisa Gibson, a fellow Unite rep and cleaner. They told us about the campaign to try and get the university cleaners £10 an hour. We ran stalls to get signatures to help their campaign, which has won!

We took part in the Youth Fight for Jobs demonstration in Leeds (see 'Hundreds march with Youth Fight for Jobs' at socialistparty.org.uk), marching around the city centre for a £15-an-hour minimum wage and the abolition of zero-hour contracts.

The rally had a plethora of great speakers, including Sarah Woolley, the bakers' union BFAWU general secretary. The demonstration was covered by ITV News. We have many more plans, including a climate change demo on 6 November.

● socialiststudents.org.uk

East London gentrification plans exposed

LINDA TAAFFE
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

All kinds of old buildings get knocked down, tower blocks are thrown up, property developers rub their hands, and the juggernaut of private profit locks out thousands of poor households from decent truly affordable homes, while burdening others in mountainous mortgage debts or sky-high rents.

Architecture specialist Philip Steadman attended a special meeting of our local Save Our Square campaign on 28 October. His research quantifies how tall buildings are bad for the environment.

Electricity use in high-rise office buildings is nearly two and a half times greater than low-rise.

Fossil-fuel use is 40% higher. And carbon emissions are more than double.

Why would any council, supposedly committed to action on climate change, want to add to carbon emissions with the two new blocks in Waltham Forest?

Philip Steadman had also calculated that the floor space of 'our' two tower blocks is half what the developers claim. His findings throw down a humdinger of a challenge to the council. This is only possible because we've carried on campaigning for the last six years.

Instead, an alternative plan, based on council homes to house the homeless, and those facing homelessness, could involve the whole community.

Sexism, safety and the profit system

LAYLA DOCKERTY
CARDIFF SOCIALIST STUDENTS

After over a year of nights in, 'social bubbles' and rainy outdoor seating, it's no wonder the decision to bring back nightclubs and bars has been so popular, especially among the younger generation. However, it didn't take long for the headlines to take a more negative turn. The spiking crisis has gained massive press attention in recent weeks, and caused mass anger among clubbers across the country.

The 'Girls Night In' or 'Big Night In' campaign has been broadcast across many people's social media, advocating a boycott of all nightclubs in the last week of October. Despite being very supportive of the movement, I can't help but doubt how much impact it will actually end up having.

The UK's nightlife culture is, in my opinion, male-dominated and sexist. Club reps stand out on the streets and hand out discounts. This is mainly done to encourage women into their clubs, as this will, in turn, entice men to follow.

In an old job of mine, I worked as a host on the door of such a venue, where one of my colleagues would go out onto the street and approach women-only groups and offer to let them skip the queue if they came in. Even from the beginning of the night, many clubs use women as free advertisements for male patrons, hence accepting or almost encouraging a culture that can easily lend itself to exploitation by predators.

From a worker's perspective, this isn't something that's left at the door. One of the most shocking stories

I've heard from colleagues involved an eighteen-year-old girl who was sacked from her job as a waitress for putting a jumper on over the revealing costume she'd been given to wear, as she was getting ill from working outside in the cold.

It's not uncommon for female employees to be asked to dress more revealingly than they would like, and many bars, build this into their brand.

I've been glad to see that my current employer (which thankfully is a lot more respectful of its workers than many others) has implemented stricter searches at the door, lids for cups and spike testing kits at the venue. But one club alone is powerless against the overwhelming majority.

The issue doesn't stop at spiking. It must be tackled more comprehensively, with a total shift in clubbing culture to treat women as equals, rather than a source of male entertainment and profits. This of course goes deeper than just nightlife itself, and is symptomatic of gender discrimination and sexism in society more broadly.

Having said this, the nightlife industry does seem to be reluctant to let go of the gender dynamics of the past. Women shouldn't have to be anxiously looking over their shoulders for the duration of the night. It's time for those in a position of power within the industry to take responsibility for the actions of the predatory few, and stop exploiting and endangering women in an attempt to increase profits.

• See also 'Fighting sexism and harassment, and for a safe night out' at socialistparty.org.uk



Women shouldn't have to be anxiously looking over their shoulders for the duration of the night



SOCIALISM 2021 SESSION: How can the fight to end violence against women and sexism be won?



WHAT WE THINK

We live in a system where a small minority owns the wealth; where exploiting women in low-paid, precarious jobs generates enormous profits, and the unpaid work that women do in the home saves capitalism billions of pounds every year.

Private companies which dominate and control the media, beauty, fashion, leisure and other industries reflect and promote sexist ideas about how women should look and behave and turn our bodies into commodities to make a profit.

To eliminate gender violence and abuse we need fundamental system change which takes economic and political control out of the hands of the minority that profit from gender and class inequality. That means a united struggle of all those who face discrimination, inequality and exploitation, in the workplace and in wider society, for socialist change.

- Support the protests for a safe night out
- All venues should implement more safety measures - such as 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
- More investment in public transport and street lighting to ensure that young people can get home safely from clubs and bars
- Fight for a socialist alternative to the sexism, inequality and crisis of the capitalist system



A Fighting Programme for Women's Rights and Socialism

Socialist Party pamphlet available
Email info@socialistparty.org.uk



£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1154

4-10 November 2021

formerly **Militant**

Tories 'era of optimism' means real-terms living standards cut

FIGHT FOR A REAL WAGE RISE FOR ALL FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM



BRENT KENNEDY
CARLISLE SOCIALIST PARTY

Some wages may be rising on paper, but in real terms they are falling. Analysing the budget hype, the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) reveals the truth: "High inflation, rising taxes and poor growth... will see real living standards barely rising and, for many, falling over the next year."

Rishi Sunak really put the con into Conservative with his budget spin. His headline 59p increase in the minimum wage - in six months' time - amounting to a rise of £16.52 after tax, if you can get a 35-hour week, will be wiped out by National Insurance and price rises. But those low-paid workers, and

those who can't work, have just been hit immediately by the £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit, leaving many £1,040 a year worse off than.

While the Tories give the banks billions of pounds more in tax cuts, just as they are doubling their profits, the Resolution Foundation shows that the average family will pay £3,000 a year more in taxes due to the budget. So much for 'levelling up'!

The living standards of the public sector workers who have sacrificed so much in the pandemic will fall drastically this winter as their pay is capped or frozen. Sunak has promised them 'jam tomorrow' - next April - hoping they won't fight him now. But he has set aside no additional cash for a pay rise next year, hoping they will have to fight either for

more pay or better public services. Their union leaders must fight for both, but now, and mobilise public support.

But even worse is to come. Over a decade of Tory austerity and wage squeezes - unprecedented in 200 years - has resulted in a staggering gap in living standards.

The IFS now warns that a continuation of this will leave the average worker £13,000 worse off by 2026! By then, average wages would be £30,800, compared with £43,700 had they continued their pre-2008 trend. That amounts to a loss of 42% of potential household income thanks to the Tories and the lack of Labour 'opposition'.

This harsh material reality will expose the illusion of the Tories' 'era of optimism'.

This stagnating spending power will only

hold back economic growth further. The Tory toffs talk about a high-growth, high-wage economy, but then say wage rises depend on rising productivity. But how can workers increase their productivity if their bosses are cutting investment by 2.5% this year, after no investment growth for the last seven years?

This lack of investment shows that the bosses are not 'optimistic' about their own crisis-ridden capitalist system.

To ensure the investment in decent living standards and the public services we deserve, we need to fight for an alternative socialist system that puts people and the planet before profit; one where the major industries are publicly owned, and the economy democratically planned to meet the needs of the majority, not a super-rich minority.

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

