

FIGHT IS ON TO SAVE OUR NHS

- **Scrap the privatising health and care bill**
- **15% NHS pay rise now**

Thousands of NHS workers, in dozens of towns and cities, protested on Saturday 3 July against the Tories' insulting 1% pay offer. Just days later, on 5 July, it was announced that workers in the NHS will be awarded the George Cross medal. Not something that will pay the bills for the thousands of nurses who are forced to visit food banks.

And then, the next day, the government presented its health and care bill in parliament, spelling out plans for further privatisation and even less democratic oversight of our NHS.

Socialist Party member Naomi Byron joined others outside parliament as the bill was presented. She has recently been elected as a member of health union Unison's national executive council and spoke in a personal capacity.

"I believe that parts of this bill are an enormous threat to our NHS, particularly its further break-up, and the extension of privatisation. I'm calling on all trade unions to support the campaign to oppose the bill. And I hope that my union will take a lead on this by calling a protest outside parliament on a day that it is debated, and by calling a national demonstration in the autumn to defend our NHS."

"On the issue of NHS pay, the Pay Review Body has reported its recommendation to the government, and the government is due to make its offer in the next couple of weeks. If they offer less than what all the health trade unions and our movement for an NHS pay rise are calling for, I believe that all health unions must immediately ballot their members on the offer, and campaign strongly for members to reject it."

"If members do reject the pay offer, we should follow this up with a strike ballot and a massive campaign for members to vote 'yes' for action. And in any action resulting from these ballots, I hope all unions in the health sector will try to coordinate, and also coordinate with workers in other sectors fighting their own insulting pay offers."

● Read more on the NHS on pages 4 and 5



PAUL MATTSOON

the Socialist

formerly **Militant**

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Editor of the Socialist
Sarah Sachs-Eldridge
socialistparty.org.uk
Judy Beishon
Circulation manager
Chris Newby

Editorial staff
Dave Carr
Scott Jones
Ian Pattison
Josh Asker

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

Batley and Spen

Another condemnation of Starmer's New Labour



WHAT WE THINK

Labour managed to narrowly hold onto Batley and Spen in the parliamentary by-election on 1 July, scraping in by 323 votes. The Labour leadership is sighing with relief. In reality, however, this result is a further condemnation of Starmer's New Labour.

An opposition worthy of the name should have been able to romp home following Hancock's resignation, which has fuelled anger at the Tories, 'one rule for us, and another for the rest of you' approach to Covid measures. This has compounded the existing simmering fury at the underfunding of the NHS and underpaying of its workforce.

Labour candidate Kim Leadbeater was a local woman, sister of the former MP for the seat Jo Cox, who was brutally murdered by a supporter of the far right five years ago. Yet Labour's vote fell by more than 9,000 from the last general election, and by a thumping 16,500 from 2017. This by-election was yet more evidence that Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity programme was a far better vote winner than Starmer's pro-capitalist policies.

'Workers' party

George Galloway, standing for the Workers party, won 8,264 votes (21%). Labour MPs have been to the fore in attacking him for running a 'divisive campaign'. Most of them ignore the fact that Labour put out a leaflet in the predominantly Muslim parts of the constituency featuring a picture of Johnson shaking hands with Modi, the right-wing Hindu nationalist prime minister of India. This was not Labour objecting to Modi's policies, but a blatant attempt to win the votes of Muslim constituents on communal grounds.

The Labour right's frenzied attacks on Galloway are an attempt to avoid the primary reasons that a sizeable section of Batley and Spen voters, mainly but not only from a Muslim background, cast a vote for Galloway. Galloway campaigned for "a new working-class politics", saying that "we fight Labour because we seek to replace it as the party of the working class. It's really not rocket science. We consider Sir Keir Starmer and Boris Johnson to be two cheeks of the same arse."

His history of opposing the imperialist wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly the memory of the way in which he fiercely stood up to US senators in 2005 over the Iraq war, has left a long-lasting impression of

a man who is prepared to fight for his principles. Galloway's record of opposing the Iraq war is in stark contrast to Starmer's Labour, where Peter Mandelson is back as an advisor - a man who was a key figure in Blair's warmongering governments.

These are not only historical issues. The nightmarish consequences of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue today. At the same time, the brutal Israeli state terror meted out against the Palestinians has, in recent months, mobilised hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets of Britain. Starmer's total failure to support the movement, limiting himself to mealy-mouthed calls for 'restraint on all sides', is combined with presiding over a major drive to remove Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters from the Labour Party.

Starmer's motivation

In reality, Starmer's motivation is to make Labour 'Blairite' - that is, a party big business can rely on to represent its interests. But, overwhelmingly, spurious accusations of anti-semitism have been used as the excuse. Socialists must, of course, oppose all anti-semitism. But the Labour right are cynically using false accusations of it to suspend or expel Corbyn supporters, often justified by the accused having criticised the brutality of the Israeli state.

It should be no surprise, therefore, that Galloway was able to win a section of voters around these issues. However, these were not the only or even the main questions which motivated Galloway's voters. Decades of cuts to services implemented by Labour Kirklees council, and the last year of devastating economic crisis, will all have fuelled support for him. Galloway's vote is an indication of the potential for a mass party of the working class.

Under Corbyn's leadership there was a possibility of transforming Labour into such a party. But following his defeat it is necessary to start building something new - a party capable of bringing together all the different struggles of the working class around a common socialist programme. The Socialist Party fights for steps towards such a party by participating in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which enables trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists from different parties and none, to stand against pro-austerity establishment politicians under a common banner and an agreed platform of core policies.

It was an important first step for the post-Corbyn era that, in the May 2021 elections, TUSC was able to stand over 300 candidates. At the same time, we argue for the trade union movement to take steps towards founding a new mass party.

Will George Galloway be able to play a role in the development of



such a party? The Socialist Party has in the past criticised Galloway for creating a too narrowly based appeal aimed specifically at Muslims, rather than the working class as a whole. While this has allowed him to make electoral breakthroughs, winning elections first in Bethnal Green and Bow and later in Bradford West, he has not consolidated a base or, eighteen years after his expulsion from Labour, built a stable organisation. The lack of a consistent class-based approach, or roots in the trade unions, or a democratic structure, have all been major obstacles to him doing so.

In Batley and Spen his official election propaganda seems to have attempted to appeal to all working-class voters rather than Muslims alone. However, some of his personal statements appear to have been trying to win votes on a reactionary and divisive basis: such as, for example, tweeting that he is a "straight white man with six children", particularly when he was standing against an LGBTQ+ woman. Or tweeting that he would not stand "for the BBC trying to teach our young children that there are 99 genders".

Galloway's has a history of these kind of divisive comments, which should be opposed. But the biggest obstacle to him playing a positive role in the formation of a mass workers' party in Britain is his record on crossing class lines and backing pro-capitalist candidates. He rightly lambasts the Labour right wing for turning Labour into a pro-capitalist party, yet just two months ago, in the Scottish parliamentary elections, the Workers party and Galloway stood as part of the 'Alliance4Unity' which recommended tactical votes for various pro-austerity politicians, including ten Tory constituency candidates. One of these, Jackson Carlaw, was leader of the Scottish Conservatives from February to July 2020. What's more, in the 2019 European elections, Galloway publicly backed Nigel Farage's Brexit Party.

One of the most burning issues for the workers' movement is the need for the working class to have its own independent voice rather than be politically disenfranchised as it is now. All kinds of debates will take place on how to achieve that, in which the role of fighting trade unionists will be critical. But what is clear is that no public figure can take that process forward by backing candidates of the capitalist Tory party, or Farage and other right-wing populists of his ilk. For George Galloway to play a positive role in the formation of a new party - which his own vote shows the potential for - he would need to adopt a different approach.

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Socialist Party

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

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NHS WORKERS' PROTESTS

Determined to build action to save the NHS

PAULA MITCHELL

SOCIALIST PARTY WORKPLACE AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER

On Saturday 3 July, in towns and cities all over the country, NHS workers were joined by their local communities on protests to defend the NHS from privatisation and for a decent pay rise, rejecting the 1% insult the Tories have proposed. We support the health workers' campaigning for a 15% rise.

In many cases, Socialist Party members helped to initiate and organise the protests. Our speakers and our leaflets laid out a clear strategy. We said that NHS workers, organised in trade unions and backed up by community campaigns, can build a mighty movement.

We demanded that the leaders of the trade unions lead - prepare for coordinated strike action on pay and to save the NHS.

The very next day the Tories delivered a second slap in the face to NHS workers with their declaration that they will proceed with their new health and care bill (see 'Fight the health and care bill' at socialistparty.org.uk).

If it is like the White Paper, it will mean an extension of privatisation in the NHS, a reduction in the already very limited democratic oversight, and further steps towards the breakup of a national service.

This is the reward for 16 months of NHS staff working themselves to

exhaustion to save lives. More juicy contracts bunged to the Tories' big business mates with even less scrutiny and transparency than before.

Disgracefully, the main health union Unison did not back the protests, and so it was left to local trade unionists and campaigners. But now, following a shift to the left on Unison's national executive council (NEC) in the recent elections, there is the chance for that to change.

At the protest in central London on Saturday, hospital worker, newly elected member of Unison's NEC, and Socialist Party member Naomi Byron, put out the call, in a personal capacity, for Unison to organise a demonstration outside Parliament when the health and care bill is discussed. She also outlined how the union should coordinate with other unions and campaigns to organise a national demonstration in the autumn against the Tory bill, and to help build the campaign on pay.

This campaign for action has to be allied to a campaign for a genuine working-class political voice. Keir Starmer's Labour has clearly demonstrated its determination to wipe out any vestige of the fighting programme on the NHS that Jeremy Corbyn stood for, and that enthused so many.

NHS workers, like workers in all other sectors, need political representation - a new mass party of working-class and young people, with a fighting socialist programme for the NHS and care, and for jobs, homes and services for all.



Naomi Byron, Unison NEC speaks in a personal capacity, central London CHRIS NEWBY



Len Hockey, Unite branch secretary, speaks at Whipps Cross hospital PAULA MITCHELL



Protesters in Bristol MIKE LUFF

● Waltham Forest, east London

Socialist Party members in Waltham Forest took part in the protest outside Whipps Cross Hospital. The protest was initiated and organised by Waltham Forest Trades Council after Len Hockey, a Socialist Party member and Unite branch secretary at Barts Health NHS Trust, moved a motion calling for a local protest. Unite Barts supported the protest and distributed leaflets to all its members and hospital staff.

Over 80 people gathered outside the junction to the hospital. Whipps Cross workers have a history of strikes, picket lines and victories against the effects of privatisation. Unite Barts has also been involved in a strike at the Royal London Hospital (see page 7).

The support for the NHS was felt as many car drivers tooted and raised their fists in the air. Kevin Parslow, assistant general secretary of the trades council, introduced the open mic, highlighting the important role of the trade union movement in fighting to save our NHS. Len Hockey spoke next and called for a 15% pay rise for NHS workers.

We also had Socialist Party members James Ivens and Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, outline our programme for a socialist NHS, and put forward our call for a protest on the day the new Tory health bill goes to parliament.

ISAI PRIYA

● Leeds

In Leeds, Michael Johnson, care sector worker and Socialist Party member, addressed protesters. He echoed health workers' demand for a 15% pay rise, and asked: "Where is the Pay Review Body?" Another question came from an NHS worker: "Have we given only 1% effort?" The answer: "No!"

Adrian O'Malley, Wakefield Socialist Party and Unison health service group executive member (in a personal capacity), added grit with a fighting speech, challenging the trade union bureaucracy to get off their backsides - shaming them for not uniting for a substantial pay rise. He added that if Johnson refused the NHS staff demand for a decent pay rise, it was time for strikes and solidarity.

JOHN VASEY

● UCLH, central London

Naomi Byron, outsourced hospital worker, Socialist Party member and newly elected member of Unison's national executive council (in a personal capacity), spoke to the crowd of 500 who protested outside of University College Hospital London and marched through central London.

She said: "It is clear that asking nicely, and having reasoned arguments, is not enough. The government is determined to push through an incredibly insulting pay offer for NHS staff."

"They are also planning to push through the health and care bill to increase privatisation and break up more parts of the NHS. Our response to these attacks needs to be just as determined, if not more so. Because there are a lot more of us, and if we unite and campaign together, we have much more power than the government."

● Manchester

150 attended the NHS support rally in Manchester demanding patient safety, decent pay and a reversal of privatisation. People gathered to voice their demands and to celebrate our NHS. Worker after worker spoke about their passion for the service, their need for decent pay, and their fears for the future of the NHS under a Tory government. All described a chronic lack of staff and the erosion of services.

SALLY GRIFFITHS

● Newcastle

A small but lively protest marched from Newcastle's RVI hospital to the Monument. As we assembled, cars passing by tooted horns in support, and as we marched down Northumberland Street shoppers were clapping and putting their thumbs up in support of the demo.

There was a real anger against Boris Johnson and this rotten Tory government. People were angry at the hypocrisy of Matt Hancock, many mentioned Cummings too. There's one rule for them, and another for the rest of us.

People can see we're going to have to fight to save the NHS.

ELAINE BRUNSKILL



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSOON



PHOTO: GARETH BROMHALL



Socialist Party member Holly on ITV news, available to view on ITVhub

● Sheffield

In Sheffield, Socialist Party member Holly Johnson played a leading role in organising the action as part of 'NHS Workers Say No', backed up by 25 other Socialist Party members on the protest. Holly was interviewed by ITV news and her message was broadcast to the Yorkshire region: "NHS workers are getting more and more angry, more and more fed-up. Over the last decade there has been no right time for a pay rise for the NHS, and the average staff nurse is down by 20% in real terms."

● Nottingham

150 people marched from the Old Market Square in Nottingham to Forest Recreation Ground as part of a protest called by two local NHS Unison branches. Jean Thorpe, chair of Notts and Mansfield Trades Union Council and a Socialist Party member, spoke at the rally. She explained the need for a 15% pay rise, and the importance of defending and reinstating the NHS.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

● York

Protesters gathered outside York Minster in support of NHS workers. They were headed by Socialist Party members in the National Shop Stewards Network, and joined by York and Scarborough Defend Our NHS. Protesters made their voices heard, and added to the crescendo of rallies across the country.

Model trade union motion

Can you get this motion passed in your trade union branch or trades council, to assist the campaign to save our NHS?

This [TU branch/organisation] gives its full support to the fight to save the NHS and to NHS workers.

We condemn the derisory pay offer from the Tory government to NHS staff and agree to support any campaign from NHS unions for a substantial increase in pay within the NHS. We support the demand of many health workers for a 15% raise.

This should apply to all NHS workers, including outsourced staff, who should be brought in-house to work directly for the health service on NHS pay, pensions,

terms and conditions.

We condemn the Tory government's public sector pay freeze and the employers' 'fire and rehire' strategy.

We also oppose the Tories' bill on the NHS and care which seeks to extend privatisation and threatens the break up of the NHS.

We call upon our national union to work with other unions to call a protest outside parliament when the bill is debated, and call a national demonstration in the autumn to properly fund the NHS and end privatisation.

We call on all relevant unions to campaign in preparation for national coordinated strike action to end the pay freeze and the attempt to lower wages.

Manchester death rate caused by deprivation

ZAKK BROWN

MANCHESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

The Covid-19 death rate is 25% higher in Greater Manchester than in the rest of England. Average life expectancy has fallen by 1.6 years for men and 1.2 for women, an even bigger fall than the average fall for the rest of England - 1.3 years for men and 0.9 for women over the last 13 months.

The big question is why? What makes the material conditions of Greater Manchester's inhabitants so poor to the point of a staggering increase in tragic deaths?

The Institute of Health Equity (IHE) released a report in June analysing

the potential causes, and found that deprivation was key.

The 112-page document states that in Greater Manchester, 20% of its 680,000 population "live in the 10% of most disadvantaged areas nationally". The result is a series of outcomes that can lead to the high Covid-19 death rate. For example, many people in these deprived areas work in the gig economy, or on zero-hour contracts, or on other contracts drawn up by parasitic bosses, which means if they don't go to work, they won't get paid.

Another factor is poor housing and environment. Widespread air pollution, as well as homes with mould owned by exploitative landlords, may

contribute to poor lung capacity and, as a result, sufferers are unable to fight off infection.

The IHE argues for changes such as for Greater Manchester to enter into the 'good landlord scheme', and a lowering of debt. However, this does not go far enough.

We call for safe, affordable homes for all, an increase in the minimum wage to at least £12 an hour, and for full pay when workers need to self-isolate or take time off sick. By making the super-rich pay, we can lift the weight of the pandemic off the backs of the working class and onto the capitalists, whose drive for profits causes these conditions.



PHOTO: ELORAJI MARTINEZ/CC

Fund the measures needed to stop the Covid spread in schools

JANE NELLIST

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY AND NEU

The increasing number of Covid cases among pupils, and the need for school 'bubbles' to isolate, means that over 370,000 pupils are in isolation and having to learn at home. An increasing number of educators are also being infected, risking their health.

But the Department for Education is suggesting that the requirement to isolate for students who have come into contact with a positive case in school could be scrapped in the autumn.

Schools have been totally let down during the pandemic, leaving staff exhausted and children

missing out on lessons. Parents who have to juggle work and childcare responsibilities when children are isolating are frustrated, and rightfully so. The lack of financial support for those isolating or forced to stay at home to look after their children has a detrimental impact on the whole family.

What is more, there has been little

or no investment in making schools safer. With excessive class sizes and inadequate space and ventilation in many schools, it is no wonder the virus spreads.

Mask wearing, a proven method of mitigating the risks of transmitting the virus, has been relaxed by the government in schools, although many schools have been forced to

reinstitute it after huge rises in the numbers of cases.

Trade union health and safety reps have pushed schools to adopt safer work practices. If the government relaxes its expectations on mitigations in schools, and allows pupils in close proximity to a positive case to remain in school, the spread of the virus will again take hold, as we are already starting to see. The reliance on inaccurate lateral flow tests is not going to solve the problem.

This government is playing 'gung ho' with our health in a drive to protect profits. But if more reliable and effective mitigations were

implemented and funded, Covid cases could be reduced significantly.

We demand an immediate investment in schools to ensure:

- Reduced class sizes to maintain social distancing. Keep 'bubbles' as small as possible to reduce disruption
- Ensure good ventilation. Provide CO2 monitors to all classrooms. Utilise outdoor teaching spaces
- Mandatory wearing of masks. Schools should be funded to provide appropriate masks for all secondary, and older primary, pupils
- Urgently improve track, trace and isolate. Full pay for those isolating or providing childcare

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Striking Brush workers continue to protest 'fire and rehire'

Brush engineering workers, on strike for six weeks so far against 'fire and rehire', had negotiations with management on 6 July, but they are refusing to budge. All workers were offered was training and other steps to 'improve morale', but the strikers are standing firm and say: "Stop fire and rehire, that will improve our morale!"

On 1 July, supporters and workers protested outside the old Brush factory in Loughborough. Called by their union Unite, it was supported by Unite Community members, Leicester and District Trades Council, Socialist Party members and Loughborough Labour Party.

This was the date that workers were meant to be sacked if they failed to sign new contracts, but that deadline has now been postponed.

Brush in the past was a key employer in the town. The protest included retired Brush workers and family members.

Send messages of support to the strike, search Unite Brush Electrical Machinery on Facebook.

STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY



STEVE SCORE

Striking Ealing parking attendants rally outside council

An Ealing parking attendants' strike rally on 30 June was lively and angry. The picket lines take place outside the council offices, in an effort to put pressure on the Labour council to intervene and stop the attacks. The outsourcing of the service has been a disaster. It was the council which agreed to Serco taking on the contract. Now it should stand up for

the striking staff and take the service back in-house.

On top of the victimisation of a rep, workers are striking against attacks on the sickness absence policy and compassionate leave. Both are being attacked in the middle of a pandemic, despite the fact that Serco is making record profits, including from Covid-related contracts.

The strikers were visited by local Labour MPs who spoke at the rally. Though it wasn't lost on the strikers that this dispute has been running for a nearly a year, and the Labour council has still not clearly come out in support of the strikers or against Serco's attacks.

HELEN PATTISON
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Derby academies closed by strikes against brutal cuts and changes

IAN HUNTER
DERBY SOCIALIST PARTY

Teachers, members of the National Education Union (NEU) at two Derby schools - Lees Brook Academy and Merrill Academy - were out on strike for a full day on 1 July. Both schools became part of Nottingham-based Archway Learning Trust in February 2021.

Archway Trust has embarked upon plans for a brutal 'reorganisation' at both schools, which will involve job cuts, replacement of qualified teachers with less qualified staff, increases in class sizes, and changes to curriculum that will mean a reduction in student choice in modern languages, arts, music, PE, drama and humanities. In addition, pastoral care and counselling provision will be severely curtailed.

NEU officers, reps and staff say



Lees Brook picket line CHARLIE TAYLOR

they have been "ignored and frozen out by a distant trust." Archway Trust refuses to budge and negotiate further and has not acknowledged the dispute. Even so, management at both schools announced closure for the day.

I was welcomed on the picket line at Lees Brook School, where around 30 staff carried placards and banners, and distributed leaflets. There was a general mood of enthusiasm and

determination for their fight. Two further strikes have been planned for 13-14 July.

This is undoubtedly an important and necessary fight. Education trusts are cutting costs and jobs, and attacking employment conditions throughout the country in order to increase profits, pay large salaries to executives, and bully staff into submission at the expense of employees, pupils and the local community.

Safety campaign in DWP: What has happened to our ballot?

CRAIG WORSWICK
DWP GEC MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Months after a ballot on safety in Jobcentres was launched by the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, members are left wondering whatever happened to the campaign to keep them safe.

Supported by Socialist Party members, the group executive committee of the union in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) launched a ballot over the attempts by the government to reopen Jobcentres to the public - putting staff and claimants at risk - and to reinstitute the sanctions regime for benefits claimants.

The ballot was launched very late, with the result only likely to arrive after most Jobcentres in England had already reopened, and was then extended by two weeks. It was also only a consultative ballot, so would not have given members the legal right to strike, to stop the government from putting them, their claimants and their families at risk.

In June, having delayed publication of the ballot result for unknown reasons, the union published a bulletin telling branches that the ballot had achieved a 74% 'yes' vote, reflecting a high degree of anger among members and a willingness to fight.

No information was provided to branches about the percentage of members who voted, and so union reps and members have been left to guess about that. Since then there has been no communication about the ballot. The leadership of the union delayed even meeting to discuss the result for three weeks from when the result was known.

On 24 June, Socialist Party members elected to the union's DWP group executive committee (GEC), which leads the union in DWP, attended the first meeting of the newly

elected GEC. All of our proposals on how to advance this campaign were rejected.

We argued strongly that no forced return to the workplace was ground that the union could not concede without a serious fight. We also raised issues around how we are being micromanaged in Jobcentres, with 'ghost diaries' and other practices designed never to allow a free minute, and seeking to cram as many people into Jobcentres as possible.

Alongside independent socialists from the Broad Left Network, in which the Socialist Party participates, we argued that the GEC needed to immediately pivot to a strategy of mass engagement with branches and members across the UK, to make the case for action and to prepare for an immediate statutory ballot.

This would have allowed branches to band together where there was a mood for action. It would have solidified the confidence of a whole layer of reps and members who are angry but are not sure about going it alone in a fight which is clearly a national battle.

Our views were completely ignored, and silence continues to reign when it comes to the DWP group executive committee telling people what the strategy is. In reality, they have abandoned the campaign.

It was for precisely this reason that, as part of the Broad Left Network, Socialist Party members stood against the increasingly rightward drifting PCS 'Left Unity' leadership of the union, who have abandoned members and aren't even pretending to give any direction to branches and union's reps when it comes to protecting our workplaces.

We encourage all PCS members and reps who want to rebuild a fighting, democratic trade union to get in touch.



Morrisons private equity takeover proposals - Usdaw needs to move to a war footing

IAN DALTON
USDAW BROAD LEFT CHAIR (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

A bidding war is underway by various private equity firms and their partners for supermarket Morrisons.

The current bidders are led by Fortress private equity fund, including the billionaire Koch family. Its bid is higher than that from rival private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice. A further private equity firm, Apollo, has also appointed advisors ahead of submitting a bid.

On the back of these bids the share price has increased 50% in recent weeks. These developments reinforce the arguments we have made about the strengthened position of the big supermarket companies coming out of the pandemic.

The recently approved takeover of Asda by the Issa brothers, whose first major move since taking over is organising the sale and lease-back of around 25 distribution centres, estimated to raise around £1.2 billion, is an indication of what will be in store for Morrisons workers if any of these possible deals go through.

But there's nothing holding any other bid, or a future bid by the same consortium, to commitments like retaining the pay rise to £10 an hour. And under capitalism, the main driving force of any business to bring investment returns, profits, to their owners and shareholders. Their attitude towards the interests of their workers and customers are secondary to these considerations.

As the company with the second largest number of Usdaw members after Tesco, with almost 45,000 members at the end of 2020, it is vital that the union shifts onto a war footing in relation to these announcements.

Rather than simply asking for a meeting, the union should set out the red lines of opposing attacks on our members' pay, terms and conditions, as well as the company retaining control of its infrastructure and assets.

Branches of the union covering Morrisons workers should be discussing developments, and emergency mass meetings of Morrisons workers should be held if it becomes clear any attacks on the union's red lines are taking place. Approaches to Unite, which organises a minority of Morrisons workers, should be made for joint campaigning.

But fundamentally, the profit motive of the employers means squeezing retail, distribution and food manufacturing workers' wages, terms and conditions is an inevitability under capitalism. That's why the only real security for decent well-paid jobs in the sector is if the profit motive is removed from the equation.

But why should the supply of something so essential as food be a source of such speculation? We believe that as well as defending our members pay and conditions, and job security, Usdaw should be calling for Morrisons, along with the other major supermarkets, to be brought into public ownership, under democratic workers' control.

Alongside the other key parts of the economy being brought into public ownership, this would create the basis to organise a socialist plan of production and distribution, to meet the needs of all, with pay and conditions that reflect the vital role played in our society by workers in retail, distribution and food manufacturing.



REPTON/CC

Royal London Hospital strike win - Serco backs down and offers major concessions



Strike action at the Royal London hospital in Whitechapel, involving back-of-house catering staff, has been suspended after outsourcing company Serco capitulated to most of the workers' demands.

The workers took five days of strike last month to stop the new, unworkable roster system and also challenge bullying. Workers had been trying to resolve the issues for a year before walking out.

Following talks at the conciliation service Acas, Serco has now agreed to adopt a workable roster system, and the manager accused of bullying will be moved from the department and provided with training.

As a consequence, Unite has suspended the latest five-day strike, which was due to start on 5 July. A further five days of strike action are scheduled for Monday 12 July, but Unite will call off this action once the deal is finalised.

Unite regional officer Ruth Hydon said: "This is a tremendous victory for our members who have stood together and faced down Serco."

Socialist Party members, including the workers' union branch secretary Len Hockey, visited the picket lines every day.

Throughout the pandemic, these essential workers worked continuously helping the sickest and most vulnerable. Many of them

contracted Covid, which put in danger not only themselves, but also their families and loved ones. Some of them paid for their dedication with their lives.

It was not the first time that outsourced Barts Serco workers have had to go on strike. In September 2017, after 24 days of strike action across four London hospitals, the ancillary workers managed to bring Serco to the negotiating table. Like now, the pickets were alive with chanting, singing, dancing, and speeches, and took part in joint action with other strikes in London.

The same determination to fight has seen the catering workers win this dispute too.

Oaks Park strikers rally

Staff at Oaks Park High School - a large community school in Redbridge, east London - who have been striking over the victimisation of a trade union rep, and against a wider culture of bullying, lobbied Redbridge Town Hall in Ilford on 5 July.

The strike action has already secured jobs and maternity pay for several bullied workers. Strikers are preparing for a final push next term to get justice for their unfairly sacked rep Keiran Mahon. At the rally workers asked: Why isn't the Labour council intervening to end this bullying at a school which it runs? The lively rally was attended by Socialist Party members and other supporters. Legal restrictions mean the next round of strikes will be in September.



PAUL MATTESSON

REVIEWED BY ALEC THRAVES

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Yes, at long last! Those four words will be on the lips of Socialist Party members, supporters and our international collaborators in the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), as they welcome the news that Peter Taaffe's third volume of the history of Militant/Socialist Party is ready for publication.

Peter Taaffe was a past editor of Militant, until recently longstanding general secretary of the Socialist Party and is presently the party's political secretary.

'The Struggle for World Socialism' is an incisive Marxist analysis of the key events both in Britain and internationally, following on from his second volume, which concluded in 2007.

And it won't be just our own members who will be captivated by our Marxist approach to these events. There is a whole new young audience of fresh and determined fighters searching for a socialist alternative to the bankruptcy of this corrupt and diseased capitalist system.

Out of almost every page of this inspiring book leap political gems of Marxist theory, tactics and strategy: necessary to give a concrete socialist way forward for the working class in confronting an ever-increasing brutal capitalist system that continues to make ordinary people pay for the billionaires' economic crisis through austerity, mass redundancies, youth unemployment, public sector cuts and pay restraint.

This book deserves to be read by the widest possible audience.

The opening chapters obviously deal with the 2007-8 'Great Recession', its impact on the capitalist world economy and, more importantly, the devastation it has wreaked on the working class in Britain and internationally: a theme that runs through the book and has consequences up to the present day.

Unlike most economic academics and capitalist and 'socialist' commentators who were taken by surprise by the economic collapse, the Socialist Party had previously argued that such a crisis was inevitable given the organic, diseased nature of the capitalist system. The economic crisis for Marxists was never about 'if' there would be a crisis but 'when'.

On the frontline

This book is a 'must read' for trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigners because, as Peter confirms, since the 2007-8 economic crisis it has been Socialist Party members who have been on the front line, challenging local Labour councils which have implemented Tory-LibDem cuts, advocating and fighting for 'no-cuts' budgets in contrast to those Labour 'cuts councillors' who have pathetically whinged that 'there is nothing we can do' to stop the cuts!

That campaign continues to the present day in Socialist Party-led Unison branches like Carmarthenshire County Unison and elsewhere, in an attempt to defend existing jobs and services, and to win back the hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs that have been lost and the council services that have been destroyed. As well as fighting to restore the 20% cut in living standards which has given rise to the rank-and-file initiated NHS movement to demand a justifiable 15% pay increase.

THE STRUGGLE FOR WORLD SOCIALISM

When the hated Tony Blair resigned in 2007, he was replaced as prime minister by the big business lackey Gordon Brown, who dutifully handed over £500 billion of tax payers' money to rescue his rich banker friends after the financial crisis. This was just a reaffirmation of the pro-big business position of New Labour.

It's not surprising nor a coincidence that Brown has recently been wheeled out, alongside Lord Peter Mandelson and other arch-Blairites to assist in trying to mould Starmer's Labour Party back into its past disastrous neoliberal image.

A new mass workers' party

The Socialist Party stood firm against those class traitors, and Peter highlights our collaboration with Bob Crow, militant general secretary of the RMT transport union, in co-founding the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in 2010 as an electoral step towards a new mass workers' party to replace the moribund pro-market Labour Party.

Since its formation TUSC has played a key role in offering a genuine, electoral socialist alternative in hundreds of national, local and mayoral elections.

Peter notes that after the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in 2015, TUSC later took the tactical decision to throw its weight behind the growing Corbynista movement and to not contest elections against Corbyn-supporting candidates.

However, in 2020, after the defeat of Corbyn, now suspended from the Labour Party, TUSC was relaunched to provide a socialist challenge to Starmer's renewed 'New Labour' project.

Peter's book explains the tactical flexibility of Marxists in the struggle to promote the interests of the working class. When we called for the affiliation of the Socialist Party and other socialist and campaigning organisations to Corbyn's Labour Party to assist in advancing and defending his popular left-wing programme from right-wing attacks, we also explained that if Labour was to become a genuine workers' party, the right-wing dominated Parliamentary Labour Party would have to be purged of its Blairite saboteurs through the mandatory reselection of MPs.

Unfortunately, this necessary and comradely tactical advice was ignored by Corbyn and the pernicious, middle-class leadership in Momentum, with the resulting defeat of the Corbynista movement and a big setback for the working class and the thousands of young, enthusiastic and aspiring socialists attracted to Corbyn's radical manifesto.

For a revolutionary party whose central and consistent orientation is towards the working class, particularly the organised working class and its trade unions, a clear, socialist leadership is vital for success.

Marxist theory is the essential bedrock for gauging the consciousness of workers and developing a programme and set of demands to counteract the complicity of right-wing and

sometimes even so-called 'left-wing' trade union leaders with the employers and government.

In the 12-year period covered by the book, Peter gives numerous examples of passivity and betrayal, but also some significant victories in the unions.

Trade union struggle

Passivity and betrayal were rife amongst public sector trade union leaders in 2011. Peter points out that the 750,000-strong Trades Union Congress demo against austerity was followed by a huge strike wave across the UK over planned pension changes. However, that magnificent action was allowed to just wither away, especially by the right-wing dominated leadership in Unison.

Those self-interested union bureaucrats have had an almost pathological hatred of our intransigent Socialist Party members in Unison. This was exemplified by their five-year long undemocratic, expensive and damaging witch-hunt against four of our members on trumped-up charges of racism.

The 'Defend the 4' campaign was immediately launched to counteract these blatant slurs, and was ultimately successful in exposing this disgraceful attack, resulting in an embarrassing defeat and slap in the face for right-wing general secretary Dave Prentis and his team of inept officials.

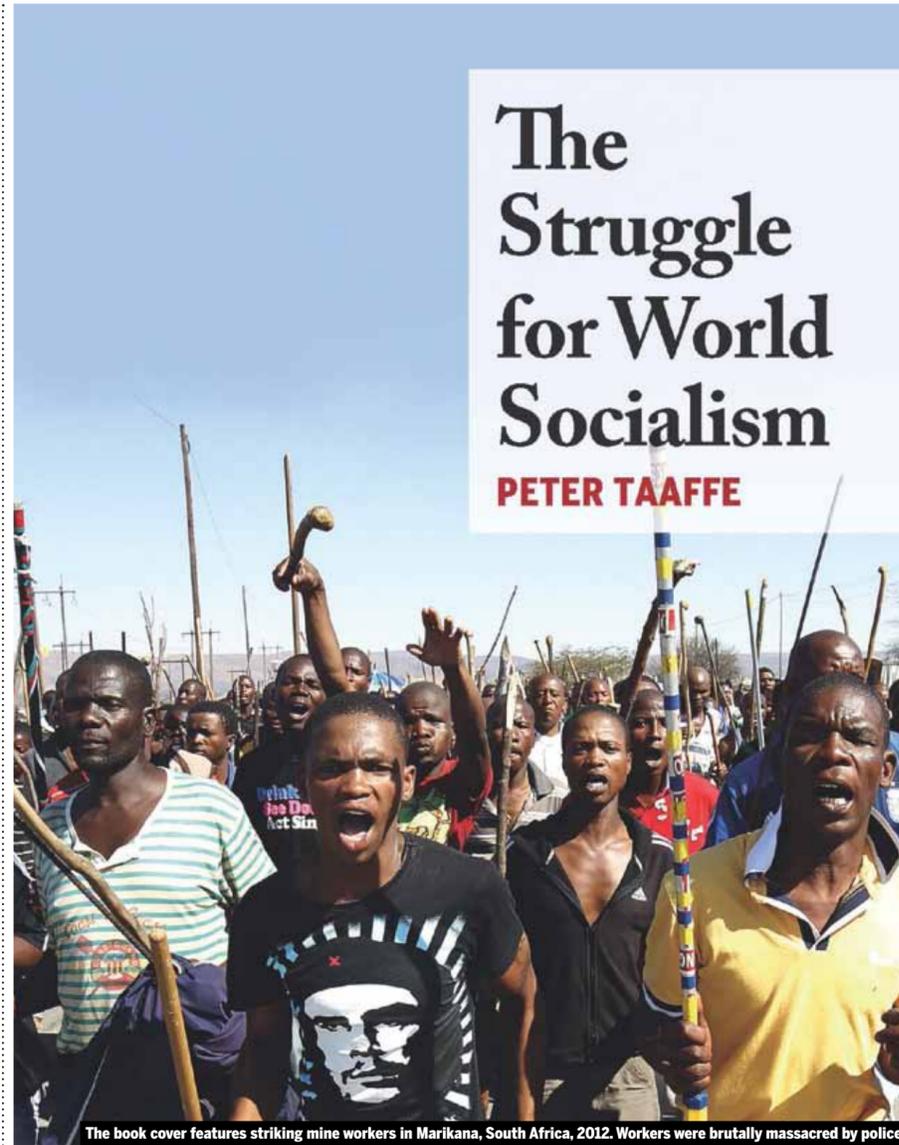
Peter's book also highlights important victories, where trade union militancy, led on many occasions by Socialist Party shop stewards and reps, points the way forward for future battles.

One such example was the magnificent Lindsey oil refinery strike victory in Humberside which broke out in 2009, with undertones of British nationalism against Italian migrant workers. With the intervention of Socialist Party members and collaboration with our Italian comrades, it became a model of how to unite workers of all nationalities around class demands. This has big lessons for future struggles as the Tories will try to divide working-class people in the face of mass youth unemployment, pay cuts and attacks on terms and conditions.

An important tool in promoting class unity and solidarity in the workplace, and also overcoming the potential obstacles of right-wing trade union bureaucrats, has been the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), formed in 2006 on the initiative of Bob Crow.

The NSSN's influence has had an important impact among the most combative trade unionists. With a strong Socialist Party leadership, it continues to provide a platform for militant rank-and-file leaders to meet, organise and encourage much-appreciated solidarity and guidance to trade unionists in struggle.

Young people reading this book will devour the lessons of the past 12 years, when radical students, young workers and campaigners have protested, marched and demonstrated against climate change, youth



The book cover features striking mine workers in Marikana, South Africa, 2012. Workers were brutally massacred by police.

unemployment, along with witnessing the beginnings of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2014 and the students revolt against the 'Fib Dems' - so-called by students after Nick Clegg, leader of the LibDems, voted for a tripling of tuition fees, selling out his 'principles' in order to join the 2010 Con-Dem coalition government.

This book will be read by housing campaigners, sometimes facing a David and Goliath battle against multinational housing corporations and complicit Labour councils. Nevertheless, with clear leadership, spectacular victories can be won, like the Butterfields housing campaign in Walthamstow, London.

Led, organised and assisted by local Socialist Party members and supporters, that hard-won victory inspired housing campaigners who recognise

the lack of social and affordable housing is now a monster problem for the working class, not just in London but across the country.

The Butterfields campaign was living proof that a 'socialist David' can bring down a 'capitalist Goliath'!

National question

The ebbs and flow of the national question has also been to the fore over the past 12 years, particularly in Scotland, with the spectacular collapse of the Scottish Labour Party and the total disarray and confusion of the 'left' in advocating a 'no' vote during the 2014 independence referendum.

The clear, class position of our CWI section, Socialist Party Scotland, won many of the predominantly young, pro-independence supporters over to a socialist 'yes' position by exposing

the inadequacies and limitations of a capitalist independent Scotland.

Our call for a voluntary, socialist confederation of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland will be echoed even more loudly as Scotland prepares for the prospect of a second referendum in the near future.

Struggles around the national question in Scotland inevitably impact on Wales and Ireland, and this remains a running sore for the capitalist class internationally, having exploded once again in Catalonia, Sri Lanka and continuing to fester in Israel-Palestine and elsewhere.

A Marxist analysis and programme when dealing with the complexities of the national question, wherever it may raise its head, is fundamental, and is forensically taken up by Peter in his book.

Despite being a history of Militant/

Socialist Party, as Marxists our outlook is always first and foremost international, so Peter also comments on the momentous working-class movements that occurred around the world in the period the book covers, and the interventions of our CWI sections. These have been well reported in more detail on our CWI website and in our other publications, including the Socialist.

Always close to the hearts of all international socialists, and especially to the CWI, Peter vividly comments on the incredible struggles of the South African workers, particularly the infamous Marikana massacre of 2012, after which Peter once again visited South Africa to address and assist our heroic comrades in their struggle.

The continuous interventions of our members in Nigeria, persistently struggling to build a solid foundation for Marxism in a country ravaged by corruption and gross inequality, gives a remarkable insight into the determination and resoluteness necessary to build a revolutionary party in such difficult conditions.

The 'Arab spring' of the early 2010s shook the seemingly unmovable dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya. But the failure of the protesting masses to overthrow capitalism resulted in new capitalist dictators re-emerging in what became an 'Arab winter'. This is a massive lesson for future generations of the vital need to build revolutionary parties with a socialist programme to complete the struggle by finishing off these brutal, capitalist regimes.

New left parties

New left parties have sprung up in Europe throughout the past decade as the old social democratic parties have been all but wiped out by frustrated and disillusioned workers.

Peter gives examples of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. These parties grew exponentially in a short space of time on left-wing populist manifestos, but ended up capitulating to the pressures of the Troika and big business.

Such defeats helped give an impetus to the growth of right-wing forces and governments, not just in Europe



The experience in action that flows from this book decisively re-confirms our correct working-class orientation

but across the globe, with the election of Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Modi in India, and others. But these have also been counteracted by mass protests and demonstrations of millions of working-class people who have refused to be cowed and are fighting back.

The CWI has become politically strengthened in recent years after the battle against the poisonous and divisive influence of identity politics, which unfortunately crept into our ranks. But the experience in action that flows from this book decisively re-confirms our correct working-class orientation and our Marxist perspectives.

Peter recounts the history of the last 12 years chronologically but it is a book that can be read from cover to cover all at once, or in separate sections or topics, depending on your preference.

This third volume is the culmination of almost 60 years of our history and, as Peter himself has stressed, it has been the collective participation and action of thousands of our members and supporters across England and Wales, alongside our CWI comrades, that has ensured that his latest book on the history of Militant/Socialist Party is such a riveting account of the self-sacrifice, determination and tireless efforts that are necessary to build a successful revolutionary party.

Historical foundations

At almost 700 pages this is a weighty and inspiring Marxist analysis, written by a key figure of modern-day Trotskyism who has led, developed and translated Marxist theory into practice. In the process, the foundations have been laid down for the building of mass revolutionary parties across the globe that will eradicate capitalism once and for all, and ensure that future generations can reap all the rewards from a genuine, democratic, socialist society.

Finally, our opponents will undoubtedly comment that this account of our history is biased: they are correct!

Marxism has never been neutral in its methods or practice and will always portray, reflect and champion the interests of the working class first and foremost.

This latest volume and the two volumes preceding it represent almost 60 years of our history, and is a tremendous legacy to pass on to a new generation of young, enthusiastic socialists who have the responsibility on their shoulders to continue the fight; because our best history is yet to come!

Online launch
15 July 19:30
on Socialist Party
Facebook and
Youtube

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We're using the opportunity of easing Covid restrictions to organise safe, socially distanced Socialist Party meetings. Find socialist in-person and Zoom meetings near you at socialistparty.org.uk/whatson.

● Birmingham and Black Country

Since the end of May, we have been enjoying the chance to meet together in person again, as well as a return 'home' to the working-class suburbs, where we have a long record of campaigning.

Socialist Party members - who have previously only seen each other from opposite ends of a webcam, because they joined during lockdown - have been able to get to know each other that bit better. With discussions on everything from the Russian Revolution 1917 to the latest round of Tory corruption scandals, these meetings have given us motivation to go out and spread the ideas of the Socialist Party, and make sure we have even more new faces at meetings to come.

NICK HART

● Swansea

Eleven attended in person the first physical meeting, with ten on Zoom. Our community centre meeting room is well ventilated and large enough for two-metre social distancing, which more than satisfies any concerns members have, some of whom nevertheless continue to wear a mask during meetings.

Everyone agrees that it is great to get back to our in-person meetings, where comrades can exchange ideas much more easily, have a bit of banter, and an informal drink and catch-up after. Our political discussions are much more fruitful in person, and our weekly activities a lot easier to plan and organise.

We all feel more of what we actually are - an activist party, rather than

Come to a Socialist Party in-person meeting "It's great to be back"



Birmingham NICK HART

Zoom 'cyberspacers'. And that is reflected in more of our members coming out on Socialist Party campaign stalls, and going down to support the growing number of picket lines.

The handful of members who still feel uncomfortable about attending in person, because of health reasons or just waiting for their second jab, are, however, still catered for on our Zoom link. But they are desperate to return too.

They will hopefully start joining us over the summer, as the in-person attendance grows, and the Zoom participants get even smaller. "It's great to be back", was the unanimous response of members as we wiped down the tables and chairs and headed home, via the pub, for even more discussion.

LINDA THRAVES

● Southampton

We sat socially distanced around the kitchen table. The other half of the membership was on Zoom. One member brought a sound amplifier, so everyone could clearly hear the call.

One member provided us with a riveting introduction to the life of Fred Hampton. Very few of us had heard about this amazing Black Panther.

CATHERINE CLARKE

● Sheffield

Our first hybrid 'in-person and Zoom' meeting was around the anniversary of the Battle for Orgreave.

I spoke about the great miners' strike 1984-85 - 'a civil war without guns'. 24 attended altogether, including many new young members not even born in 1984.

ALISTAIR TICE

● Staines

We sat in our garden, with more people joining on Zoom. All our May council candidates were there, and we discussed standing again in a by-election.

It was a real breath of fresh air (literally) to see comrades again in the flesh, and discuss without having to stare constantly at a screen.

PAUL COUCHMAN

● East London

Even those on Zoom were also excited to see us in the room.

Those who can pledged to come when they can, and others who can't offered to help pay for the room.

SCOTT JONES



ALEX LIVER/CC

Stop environmental destruction in Barnsley

ANGIE WALLER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Barnsley Council has approved three 'master plans' for the Hoyland area. Consultation and information has been virtually non-existent, apart from notices on telegraph poles or snippets in the local paper.

A new Hermes distribution centre, the largest in Europe, will be built next to existing homes, schools and a care home.

The recreation ground will also be built over. This was originally given to the miners, but the council ended the covenant without consultation.

There are plans to build 2,000 expensive houses, and more storage units and warehouses, while footpaths and rights of way will be closed.

Lots of campaigning has been taking place over the last few weeks to highlight environmental destruction in Hoyland. 50 people attended the first public meeting for the Reach

(rebuilding environment and community in Hoyland) campaign.

Due to Covid restrictions, 30 people were inside the venue and 20 people waited outside. Speakers first addressed the meeting inside, and then again outside.

The meeting was opened out to ask what they wanted Reach to focus on, and what they wanted for the future of our community. There was a lot of anger and frustration. People felt uninformed and ignored by the council and councillors, giving more reason that we need a community voice in the future.

All suggestions and comments were noted to form our plan of action and build Reach. More meetings are planned when restrictions are lifted and we can meet in larger numbers.

Across Barnsley there are further 'master plans'. Campaigners there also attended this meeting, with the result that we are going to unite the campaigns.

Road closures: Hackney residents have not been consulted

400 people took part in an anti-road closure demo in Hackney, east London, on 26 June. The protesters we spoke to recognised that something had to be done about the pollution, but felt that the way the council had implemented the plans was not done with proper consultation with the local community. This was a mainly working-class demo. People generally felt that the Labour

council did not represent them. We handed out Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) leaflets and Socialist Party leaflets explaining that there needs to be the biggest possible number of anti-austerity candidates at next year's council elections. And those that we spoke to generally thought that this was a good idea.

CHRIS NEWBY
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY



EMILIO LABRADOR/CC

Why did I choose the Socialist Party? I don't think we should just toil, pay up and die

JAY COWARD
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

When I was 12, I realised how much time I had spent watching my mum stress and sort her finances. Anything from bills to birthdays would be a matter of writing it out, and sorting it methodically.

She never made me feel like a burden, but I couldn't get over this gut-wrenching feeling that I was one anyway. So I went across the street, and asked the hairdresser if he had any work for me to do the weekends when I wasn't at school.

If I could make enough, then she wouldn't have to worry about me in those lists and bills and maybe, just maybe, I could even help her out directly myself one day.

Then it hit me one weekend. Eight hours is a really long time.

Every day

People do this every day? No sensation of sunlight on your skin? Just one break? My feet hurt already! How am I so tired?

I kept thinking: "How do people do this?" Once you're dropped in the blender, you don't get back out until you're already shredded.

Years pass, and it never stops bothering me. It really didn't matter where I worked, I would come home bone tired and find myself furious

How are people doing this? What am I missing? When can I relax?

Some nights I'd think this in anger. Some nights I'd think this in tears. Most of the time I'd wish I could just black out the commute and shift from my memory, and just fast forward to being at home and feeling human again.

When I asked my mum how she dealt with it, I remember her saying: "It is what it is." Bullshit. This isn't normal.

Every one of these jobs so far had been part-time. I had it easy compared to people slaving away for 50 hours a week, and I'd be walking home at 4am feeling like a shell.

Bullshit that that's just life. Bullshit no one has a problem with that.

I've now got a slightly dodgy ankle entering my 20s. Not from a single injury, but from continuous strain from carrying dinners up and down stairs at a restaurant.

Working service for eight years had started off an injury capable of being permanent, and taken countless precious moments and ugly amounts of peace from my life. And still I'd not found a reassurance that it ends anytime soon.

I couldn't see a future in sight where my mum could stop worrying about bills. Hell, I now had my own bills to worry about! Is there not a word for people who don't

think we should just toil, pay up and die?

I'd probably heard words like 'communist' or 'socialist' in cartoon stereotypes. It wasn't until I'd left school that I started digging.

During 2020, and the growing political consciousness that took place after the global Black Lives Matter protests, I realised all I want is to not worry about my groceries, or the roof over my head, and to not live with the knowledge that my mum's still struggling back home.

I met the Socialist Party in Nottingham briefly. When I was back in London, I wanted to know more, do more and help more. So I sought out the Socialist Party in east London.

We outnumber them

I immediately got a sense that this lot saw what I saw. Not a helpless population at the mercy of the state, but a simple fact. We outnumber them. The banks, parliament, capitalists, there are simply more angry poor folks than there are people oppressing them.

The Socialist Party sees this, and has endeavoured for people to see the same. We always have been stronger together, and stronger organised.

So I swallowed my anger and my scepticism to a pleasant surprise - these guys don't think it is what it is, they know it has to change. So do I.



Rising against a rigged and rotten system

SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE
SOCIALISM 2021 ORGANISER

Everywhere you look there is proof of the inability of capitalism to solve the huge problems faced by humanity. Capitalism condemns us to things getting worse.

Covid showed us we can't trust the big business bosses with our lives or livelihoods. The pre-existing inequalities inherent to capitalism have meant that the poorest and most oppressed have suffered more during the pandemic.

Anger is growing, and all across the world workers and young people are rising against all the symptoms of this rotten capitalist system. The need for mass struggle poses the question of how to organise.

At Socialism 2021, we will look at the political situation facing the working class today - in which Keir Starmer's Labour, and the scale of job losses and attacks, makes the building of a new working-class political voice and fighting trade unions necessary.

Socialism 2021 will include discussion on how a socialist society would

be able, through democratic planning of the economy by the working class, to provide decent jobs, homes, services, a future for everyone, and protect the environment.

Get tickets now - before prices may have to go up

The Socialist Party is organising Socialism 2021, because there is more need for discussion on socialist ideas to change the world than ever. We will make it happen in the best way that the situation allows. So until we know more about venue availability and cost, you can buy tickets at the 2020 rates!

If and when we can book venues, we may have to increase the prices. But those who have already bought tickets will not be required to pay more - unless we are able to also offer an overnight event with accommodation, for which we will charge a supplement.

● Tickets and info: www.socialism2021.net

We need funds to fight Tory NHS attacks

A big thanks to all our members and supporters who have made sure that we smashed through our fighting fund target and raised £29,959. Much of the money raised has been from our campaign stalls, and a lot of this has been from campaigning on the NHS.

The results of the fundraising - our Socialist Party placards and posters - were clearly visible on many of the

NHS protests on 3 July (see pages 4 and 5). Our leaflets went down really well, giving a clear strategy on how to fight for a 15% pay rise for all health and care workers. But all of this costs money to produce.

There is a lot of anger about the way NHS workers are being treated, particularly the derisory pay offer. There are likely to be more protests over the next few months, both on

NHS pay and the latest Tory attack, the health and care bill.

It is vital that we have the finances to produce more Socialist Party leaflets, placards and posters, to get our socialist message out to as many people as possible. We urge all Socialist Party members to draw up plans now on how you are going to reach your fighting fund target.

Are there extra activities your branch can plan? How can you involve as many as possible in raising funds for the Socialist Party? If every area does this, we can have the same success reaching and breaking through our fighting fund target this quarter.

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2021	FINAL CHART
Northern	1,794	750		239%
South West	2,880	1,800		160%
London	6,907	4,600		150%
Wales	3,160	2,300		137%
Southern & SE	3,042	2,350		129%
East Midlands	2,326	1,850		126%
Yorkshire	3,002	2,550		118%
North West	1,193	1,150		104%
West Midlands	2,475	2,600		95%
Eastern	752	1,200	63%	
Other	2,428	3,850	63%	
TOTAL	29,959	25,000		120%

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Terry Fields MP, Prisoner DV 3695

- The jailing of 'poll tax' rebel and Militant

The late Terry Fields was Labour MP for Broadgreen in Liverpool, and a supporter of Militant, the forerunner of the Socialist Party.

On 11 July 1991, Terry was imprisoned for refusing to pay the Thatcher government's hated poll tax. He was released on 6 September, having served 58 days in Walton Jail as prisoner DV 3695.

Former Militant-supporting Labour MP **Dave Nellist** - who 'shared a windowless room in the Commons with Terry' - recounts Terry's role in the Militant-led All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Union struggle to defeat the iniquitous tax.

The battle to defeat the poll tax was the most extensive civil disobedience campaign of the 20th century in Britain.

Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wanted to shift the burden of paying for local services from the rich by making working-class families pay far more. It meant that a multi-millionaire living in a mansion would pay less than two low-paid adults living in a one-bedroomed flat.

The tax was introduced in April 1989 in Scotland and a year later in England and Wales. It was described as Margaret Thatcher's 'flagship' legislation. We turned it into her Titanic!

By November, the captain went down with the ship, as a mass non-payment movement of millions of working-class people, led by Militant, so frightened Tory MPs that they forced Margaret Thatcher to resign.

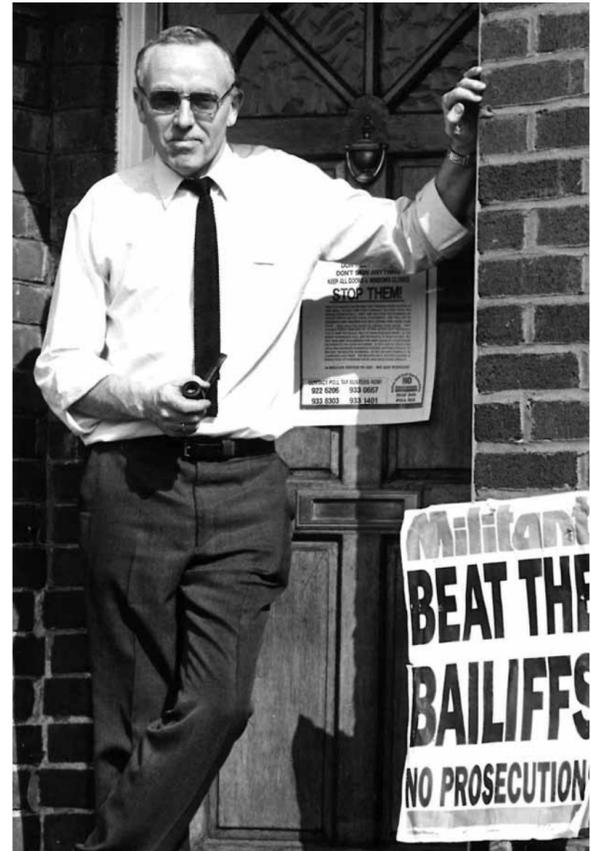
Local authorities (mainly Labour) initiated over 25 million court cases from April 1990 to September 1993 seeking punitive action against those unable or unwilling to pay the tax.

Once a magistrates' court confirmed a poll tax debt, by issuing a 'liability order', further refusal to pay led to deductions from wages or benefits, or up to three months imprisonment.

Non-payers were sent to maximum-security prisons, including many Militant supporters. Even some Militant supporters that could pay still vowed to defy the law in solidarity with those who couldn't.

Terry served 58 days in Walton jail - over eight weeks in prison for a £373 bill at a cost to jail someone in 1991 of £260 a week!

He got a great reception: "My cellmates already had a Free Nelson Mandela poster on the wall. They



Terry took a principled stand by refusing to pay the poll tax PHOTO DAVE SINCLAIR

had crossed out Mandela and written 'Free Terry Fields - pay no poll tax - vote Labour'."

Outside, Terry had his supporters too. 2,000 marched to a 'Free Terry Fields' rally outside Walton jail, where Arthur Scargill (the miners' union leader) was the main speaker.

Prison officers saw Terry as different. One said: "Management can't handle Terry... they expect him to be demanding special privileges for himself, but as each day passes, Terry blends in with the rest of the prisoners. Not one of the prisoners said a bad word about him. Quite the opposite. The prison officer in charge of Terry's wing has joked that there is no need for the usual applications for things by prisoners now because Terry will be holding a prisoners' surgery on the landing!"

Inside the prison, Terry was still the Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen. Outside the prison, views were mixed. In the Daily Mirror, Anne Robinson (now the presenter of Channel 4's Countdown) said: "I've known Terry since I was a child, and he was a fireman. He'd give you his last penny. He'd fight to the death if you thought you were a victim of injustice. I loathe everything Militant stands for, but it's difficult to condemn one of their most fervent supporters when you've only ever known him as a thoroughly decent guy."

However, Labour's leader, Neil Kinnock, was prepared to condemn those advocating mass non-payment of the poll tax. According to Kinnock, we were "toytown revolutionaries". At the September national

executive committee of the Labour Party, Roy Hattersley and Clare Short proposed Terry's and my expulsion. Neil Kinnock said: "The Labour Party does not and never will support breaking the law. Mr Fields has chosen to break the law, and he must take the consequences. He is on his own."

As an editorial in Militant (forerunner of the Socialist) said: "No one expects the Labour Party leader, or any rank-and-file members, to support theft or drunk driving. Throughout its history, the working class has been forced to defy laws that blatantly served the ruling class. Four years ago, at party conference,

Kinnock presented Labour's merit award to a 102-year-old suffragette who was 'jailed for a day for breaking into the House of Lords' (applause and cheers). If those women were using the same methods to fight for their rights today, would Kinnock tell them they were on their own?"

A socialist MP
Parliament is not designed for socialists. Actually, that's not entirely true; it's intended to emasculate socialists. But Terry Fields wasn't to be bought. For a start, as with Militant supporters then and Socialist Party members now, when elected to public office, he only took from his parliamentary salary the average wage he had received in his previous job (for 26 years) as a firefighter.

He never took a drink in parliament. If the Commons finished early enough, he would go to Peckham Labour Club instead.

It was said that Terry didn't 'like' parliament. In fact, he hated it! But he took it seriously, making almost 400 interventions, speeches and questions, in his nine years.

Some of his campaigns arose from casework, such as how he successfully forced the government in 1987 to change the regulations on child-resistant packaging following the death of a child, making screw tops mandatory on household bleach. But most of his work was outside the Commons, in hundreds of meetings with working-class people, supporting strikes and campaigns.

For Terry, it was a platform, the chance to expose the workings of society and its government, and the real effect that had on working people.

As Scottish revolutionary socialist John Maclean, famously said: "Rise with your class, not out of it."



Constituents on a Broadgreen housing estate show support for their jailed MP PHOTO TOMMY CARROLL

Bristol: Police to blame for protest violence

TOM BALDWIN
2021 TUSC CANDIDATE FOR BRISTOL MAYOR

When a Bristol demonstration in March ended in clashes between protesters and police, it was splashed across the front page of every capitalist newspaper.

The media and the great and good, including Bristol's Labour mayor, made sweeping, one-sided condemnations of demonstrators.

Much less widely reported is the finding of a recent parliamentary inquiry - the police used unnecessary and excessive force.

This included 'blading', bringing riot shields down on the heads of seated protesters.

The report describes "particularly troubling" incidents of "revenge

policing" - violent assaults on two peaceful demonstrations the following week and subsequent arrests. The forcible break up of a vigil for the murdered Sarah Everard in Clapham was also criticised.

These findings will come as no surprise to those that have witnessed heavy-handed policing of protests. The police act in defence of big business, and have a long history of violent attacks against those deemed a threat to the rule of profit.

This report vindicates those of us who have blamed disorder on police provocation. But the more important question is - will it restrain them in the future?

The very police bill which the protesters were opposing increases police powers to block demonstrations,



PHOTO PAUL MATTSSON

and makes police violence against demonstrators more likely. This cannot be allowed to happen. We must

continue to oppose the bill, and push for democratic working-class control of policing and public safety.

Exhibition: What next for the statue of slave trader, Edward Colston?

No longer standing tall



The toppled statue of slaver Edward Colston, now in an exhibition

DAN SMART
BRISTOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

A current exhibition asks: "What next for the statue of slave trader, Edward Colston?" A year after the battered and graffiti-covered statue was hoisted out of the River Avon, it now lies supine - and still toppled - in a harbour-side museum.

The exhibition tells us of the major role Colston played in enslaving 84,000 African people, including 12,000 children. 19,000 of them died on their journey across the Atlantic. Colston was a high official in the Royal African Company, which had the monopoly on transatlantic traffic of enslaved Africans.

In later life Colston campaigned, as a Bristol MP, to keep the slave

trade legal. So much for his philanthropic endeavours! In fact, as is acknowledged in the exhibition, he was "reinvented as a patriarchal role model and an emblem of charity", by the elite of the city, "in response to increasing class divisions."

The battles around the fate of the Colston statue went on for decades prior to its downfall. It was eventually agreed that the plaque on the statue should be changed to more accurately reflect his role. But, after debates in 2018-2019, it could not be agreed what should be written, and no changes were made.

At the end of the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to put forward their views on what the future should be for Colston. What is certain is that he will no longer stand tall, overlooking



The battles around the fate of the Colston statue went on for decades prior to its downfall

the centre of Bristol. After years and years of handwringing, thousands of protesters put an end to that in a matter of minutes.

The 'What next for the statue of slave trader, Edward Colston?' exhibition in Mshed in Bristol until 5 September

TV - Statue wars: one summer in Bristol

CHRIS YOUNG
BRISTOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

This is a programme about the Black Lives Matter movement in Bristol. Historically, Bristol's economy has been built on exploitation, especially the blood, sweat and tears of kidnapped and enslaved people from Africa.

Bristol people took action, and dumped the statue of Colston in the harbour. This symbolic act of resistance has been copied all around the world.

In Bristol, four people are on trial for the action they took. But there is a campaign to defend them.

The programme followed the response of Bristol City Council and particularly the mayor, Labour's Marvin Rees - the first black mayor in Europe.

Marvin made some strong points on racism in the documentary, and you can see that he does care. Sadly, he hasn't taken a lead in the BLM movement in Bristol.

There have been several protests outside the council building, and not once did he come outside, address the crowd and show his support. You can see Marvin and his top team looking out of the window wondering how to deal with us. He's been sitting on the fence and diverting responsibility by putting the discussion out to academics.

The Socialist Party will be standing in the next round of elections as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). In the meantime, we'll resist local Labour and Green complacency over BLM and other issues - caused by their support for capitalist solutions - with our trade union and community activism.

• **Statue wars is available on BBC iPlayer**

Housing: Join the service charge 'strike'



MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES



I am in despair as to how to stop these atrocious companies any other way. We've experienced diabolical rip-offs, incompetence and lies.

They have damaged our lives for years and years. Many thousands of tenants across the sector experience endless failed attempts to get

their problem sorted out. We are ground down.

I honestly can't see how anything other than withholding money is going to stop them. Even when the Social Housing White Paper is made law, I don't believe that there is any other way to hold these massive, powerful corporations to account.

A SHAC MEMBER

SUZANNE MUNA
SHAC SECRETARY

Housing association tenants and residents have agreed to hold a co-ordinated service charge 'strike'. Residents are frustrated at repeated extortionate and often erroneous service charges, disrepairs, shoddy maintenance, and cladding failures.

Residents must climb a rockface when trying to resolve issues with landlords. The system of neighbourhood managers has largely been abandoned in favour of call centres, which are far less efficient and effective.

Ignored

Complaints are routinely lost, or remain unresolved for long periods. Callers must go through lengthy security questions each time they request an update.

Some associations automatically 'close' a complaint once it has been running for a set period, regardless of whether it has been resolved or not, in order to meet arbitrary internal targets.

Residents also find approaching the regulator and ombudsman largely futile. Cuts to their powers have rendered them mainly unable to offer satisfactory protection or support.

The ombudsman levied a £100 fine against a landlord with a recorded turnover of £17 million. In another case, the regulator ignored complaints about slum conditions on a rundown London estate for years. It took an ITV report before it began investigating the association. Even councillors and MPs complain to the Social Housing Action Campaign (Shac), frustrated at getting unsatisfactory responses from the landlords and housing association senior managers.

The legal system offers little protection. Legal aid is no longer available for many housing issues after it was cut by the government. The process also requires a level of commitment and capacity that is hard for those working, studying, and trying to raise families.

Court

Going to court is rarely a quick process. Even if residents achieve a ruling in their favour, there is no guarantee that the landlord will act.

At a recent Shac meeting, a housing barrister described having to go back to court repeatedly to enforce court orders. These wealthy landlords often prefer paying meagre fines to putting things right.

Tenants and residents thus increasingly conclude that withholding rent and/or service charge is the only way to get their landlord's attention and achieve some genuine engagement.

The strike network - newly formed by Shac - has helped coordination across different landlords, and provides practical resources and support. To date, 17 housing associations are affected, including some of the biggest. The strike is national, involving tenants as far afield as Southampton, London and Glasgow.

Rent and service charge strikes have been used successfully on a small-scale, periodic basis. Housing associations provided homes to three million people in Britain. If this tactic were to become widespread, it could rebalance the considerable inequality that concentrates power in the hands of housing association landlords and their institutional support.

• shaction.org or contact shac.action@gmail.com



Interview with playwright of Farewell Leicester Square

The story of Joe Clough - Britain's first black bus driver

The Socialist spoke to playwright and Socialist Party member Neil Gore about Townsend Production's latest play, Farewell Leicester Square. It's touring in Bedford, Watford and London from 1-11 July.

The Socialist: Tell us about Farewell Leicester Square

Neil Gore: It's the story of Joe Clough. He was the first black bus driver in Britain, and that is his claim to fame.

He was born in 1885 in Jamaica, and arrived in England, in London, in 1903, when he was 18.

A local surgeon in Jamaica, Dr White, got Joe to work his stables, his carriages. When Dr White came to England, Joe came with him.

Motorised buses weren't a thing until 1909-10. By 1912 they had completely taken over.

Dr White decided he needed to update himself. He bought a motorcar.

Joe had to learn to drive. When Dr White went back to Jamaica, Joe was left here. He found a job driving buses.

World War One

He drove the No. 11, which still exists from Liverpool Street to Wormwood Scrubs across north London. Before World War One, he married, and moved to St Neot's in Cambridgeshire, joining the army service corps in Bedford.

For five years he drove ambulances in the most miserable conditions on the Western Front, in the worst possible place you could be on earth - places like Ypres, the Somme and Passchendaele.

He wasn't allowed to be an active serviceman, because of the colour of his skin. Black people weren't allowed to serve in that sense or be officers.

He considered himself quite lucky to come out of that four-five year experience relatively unscathed. So much lust for life, that's what got him through.

He would say he had a smile for everybody. It's his positive outlook that people really responded to.

In Bedford, he became a local celebrity. They absolutely adored him. When he was a taxi driver in the 1950s, the people of Bedford would actively seek him out.

He's a trailblazer for the people that came in the late 1940s and 1950s with the Windrush migration. Joe had paved the way for them, and to find work in similar circumstances - running the transport system in particular.

That's why we're doing the show, we want to celebrate the pioneering spirit of Joe Clough. It's an ordinary life, but an extraordinary life. And of course race comes into it.

He was a black man. Not necessarily that unusual in 1905. But he was still the victim of a certain amount of abuse.

He reckons he faced direct racial abuse maybe five times in his life. I imagine he was subjected to a lot of lazy racial slurs throughout his life.

There were a couple of American GIs stationed in Bedford - to see a black man on the streets of Bedford being treated as an equal was too much for them, and they gave him

a heck of an amount of abuse. It ended up in a fight between GIs and British soldiers: "Don't talk to him like that".

A supporter of fascist Oswald Mosley drove a taxi, and gave Joe terrible abuse. But all the taxi drivers backed Joe.

Other drivers

The community would defend him when he faced abuse. When he worked in London as a bus driver, he was fired for speeding. But it turned out the guy who accused him was being racist.

All the other drivers backed him. And he got reinstated.

When he'd just come out of the army, he went to a celebratory dinner at the barracks in Bedford.

He got thrown out by a captain, who said: "We don't want any black people here, get out."

Letters were written, and he got a regimental apology and freedom of the barracks for life.

The community was very supportive, and protective, of Joe. He's very well respected.

They want a statue of him in Bedford. Who knows, the play might kickstart a campaign for him to be properly remembered.

We're associated with Bedford, and the theatre there. So we wanted to do a play that had a local interest for those audiences.

It goes beyond Joe, it's the social history of that area - Bucks, Herts and Beds - especially connected to wartime. Working-class history for the people who live there.

Israel: Hospital ancillary workers strike over pay parity and workload

AMNON COHEN

Ancillary staff at government hospitals in Israel are taking strike action, starting on 13 July, after three years of negotiations with the ministry of finance.

An agreement was not reached over the question of workload. The finance ministry totally ignored the demands of the workers leading the negotiations into a dead end.

The issues in dispute are unsustainable workload, which is crushing the ancillary staff, extra payments for dealing with Covid, and refusal of the finance ministry to implement the decisions of its own committee which recommended pay parity with the workforce of the Kupat Holim (health fund) Clalit hospitals. Israelis are obliged to become members of one of four health funds, of which Clalit is the largest.

Workers' demands

CWI* supporter Eli Yossef, a trade union steward at Assaf Harofeh hospital in central Israel, where the ancillary workers committee organises 1,200 staff, said: "The staff in the Clalit hospitals earn 12% more than staff in the government hospitals. The Padeh committee ruled that government health workers should get parity.

"But years later the recommendation has not been implemented. Meanwhile, the workload is unsustainable. Urgent tests are delayed for months because of a lack of staff. We will be holding a mass meeting on Sunday to discuss our action."

Eli Badash, the strike leader, also spoke to us:

"The government set up a committee 20 years ago to look at the pay differentials between the wages in the health fund hospitals and in the government hospitals, which ruled that the government must award a pay



Strike leader Eli Badash addressing a national meeting of reps from 30 hospitals to prepare for the strike

rise to give workers in government hospitals pay parity. But this decision was never implemented.

"The 13,000 workers in the government hospitals decided to take strike action three years ago, but the employers took out an injunction against the strike, demanding that the two sides settle their differences by negotiations.

"The negotiations got nowhere and the union took management to the National Labour Court, which ruled that management was not negotiating in good faith and cancelled the strike ban injunction.

"That was four months ago, but we did not take strike action as it was in the height of the Covid pandemic.

"There will be a strike meeting of



The Padeh committee ruled that we should get parity. But years later the recommendation has not been implemented

representatives of 30 hospitals, representing 13,000 ancillary workers, that will plan the details of the strike, which will take place on 13 July.

"The workers have already had support from all the other workers' committees in the hospitals, including the nurses' union which took successful strike action last year".

• Messages of solidarity can be sent to Eli Badash at Eli@sm.health.gov.il
Please send copies to cwiisrael@gmail.com

*The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to.

• See also: **Israel/Palestine national question - Can the Israeli working class play a progressive role?** on socialistparty.org.uk

Socialist change to halt climate change

▶▶ CONTINUED FROM P16

Socialist Party Scotland participated in the 2019 climate strikes of mainly young people, but the Covid pandemic has caused the movement to retreat, with leading figure Greta Thunberg stating she will not attend COP26 because it is unsafe.

Other social movements, like Black Lives Matter, while encouraging wearing face masks and observing social distancing, have correctly defied anti-democratic Covid legislation to protest the oppression suffered by millions under capitalism.

COP26 is a huge opportunity to rally the working class and young people bearing the brunt of climate change, and hold a discussion on the way forward.

Mass walkouts from schools and colleges should be organised to coincide with the Glasgow COP summit to demand real action to tackle the climate crisis.

We also campaign for a mass workers' party to be built, which can organise a movement to resist the attempts of the state and private capital to make us pay for their system failures.

In private hands, any transition to a 'green' future will put wages, jobs and living conditions at risk. Only a democratically agreed plan of production based on public ownership and socialist planning can prevent environmental collapse without impoverishing the world working class.

We call for the retraining of oil, gas and coal workers and their redeployment in renewable energy sectors with a guarantee of no job losses.

We demand a publicly owned, democratically controlled public transport system; and we call for the nationalisation of the big polluting companies and of the land in Scotland, to construct renewable energy infrastructure and create new carbon sinks under democratic control.

Capitalism is destroying the planet. We need to fight for socialist change to end climate change.

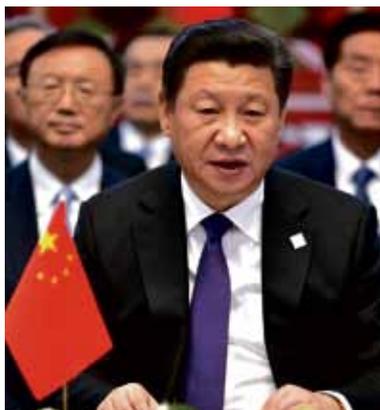
New articles from the CWI on socialistworld.net

Centenary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party

Large images of Xi Jinping, President of China and the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), have been adorning buildings in cities throughout China as the CCP celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Today, the party has nothing to do with the ideas of those who founded the original CCP as a part of an internationalist movement to overthrow capitalism.

While China is becoming a world economic power, domestic



Xi Jinping PHOTO KREMLIN.RU/CC

inequalities have grown, as have workers' and youth discontent and social tensions.

• Read this and related articles on [China at socialistworld.net](http://China.at.socialistworld.net)

South Africa: Former president Zuma found guilty of contempt of court

On 29 June the South African Constitutional Court found former president Jacob Zuma guilty of contempt of court.

Zuma's presidency was a disaster for the working class. Millions of working-class people will have watched the judgment against him and thought: 'It serves him right!'

Wedded to capitalist policies his government was completely incapable of addressing unemployment, poverty or inequality. All of these



Jacob Zuma
PHOTO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY JAKARTA/CC

became worse under Zuma. But while the working class and poor were suffering, Zuma and his clique spent their time looting public funds, to enjoy lives of luxury.

• Full article and background articles see socialistworld.net



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COP26: SOCIALIST CHANGE TO END THE CLIMATE CRISIS



An unprecedented heatwave in Canada and the US Pacific north west has left hundreds dead and caused destructive wildfires. Extreme weather events like this are consistent with global heating producing climate change. However, 'big energy', along with many large transport, manufacturing and agri-businesses, continue to deny a causal link between rising greenhouse gas emissions from these profit-driven capitalist industries and destructive climate change.

Authoritarian rulers like Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro and Russia's Vladimir Putin deny or even welcome climate change. Other capitalist politicians like Joe Biden or Boris Johnson talk loudly about instigating action on climate change but continue to defend the profit system that is destroying the global environment.

In anticipation of the United Nations COP26 climate change summit meeting in Glasgow this November, **Oisín Duncan**, Glasgow Young Socialists, exposes the rotten role of capitalism, and instead calls for a socialist plan of action.

At the last COP conference in Madrid in 2019, speeches from OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) and GECF (Gas Exporting Countries' Forum) demanded their own stake in climate solutions, without reducing their share of profits.

The current United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change proposals, in particular carbon capture, are largely untested and thus the effectiveness is unknown. Previous UN 'solutions', such as the carbon trading market, have failed, as emissions increased by 13,000 kilotons between 1996 and 2016.

The failure of capitalist solutions to the climate crisis has become clear; just 100 companies are responsible for 71% of carbon emissions since 1970, and just 20 firms produce 55% of the world's plastic

pollution. We therefore need a socialist response.

Socialists cannot promote 'green' capitalism as part of any solution to the impending many-faced environmental disaster.

Amazon boss Jeff Bezos' Green Investment Fund is a cynical attempt to control the development of renewable energy; it is also a hedged bet for his company, which supplies statistical analysis vital to the development of fracking and exploiting new oil and gas deposits.

Devolved governments

While we cannot ignore the role of the Tory government in supporting pollution-driven profiteering, (as it is currently discussing construction of a privately-owned nuclear power station in England), devolved governments also play a role.

To improve their image ahead of the next COP summit, the SNP-led Scottish government is entering official negotiations with the Greens to support them in Holyrood, in a de-facto coalition.

Despite declaring a 'climate emergency' in 2018 under pressure from the climate movement, the SNP remains cosy with North Sea fossil fuel companies, even setting up a £62 million fund of taxpayers' money to pay for private corporations to reduce emissions.

The Scottish Greens are turning their backs on the young people who voted them in. Young people understandably see green parties as the most environmentally friendly option. Yet they still uphold capitalism, and therefore defend the very system against which many youth have rebelled.

▶▶▶ CONTINUED ON P15

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

