

PRICES UP



PAY DOWN

FIGHT BACK



**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

VOTE TUSC

Build a socialist alternative



ADAM POWELL-DAVIES
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

The cost-of-living crisis is leaving us with the cruellest of decisions. Do we dare put the heating on? Can we visit our friends and families, knowing what the petrol, or public transport, would cost to get there? There have been stories of people rejecting rice or potatoes at food banks, because they can't afford the energy to cook them.

Forced to live through the deepest drop in living standards for many decades, more and more angry people are looking for a way to fight back. With local elections on 5 May, what can councils do to stop the rot and drastically improve people's lives?

Although the Tories have massively cut funding to local authorities, councils still control one-fifth of all public spending,

not to mention the billions of pounds they have in usable reserves.

What are council reserves for if not to help local communities at a time of emergency? Clearly, that time is now.

Councils should use their significant reserves, along with their borrowing powers, to finance policies that could lift millions out of poverty. By taking a lead on tackling the cost-of-living crisis, councillors could rally the support of local people and become figureheads of a mass campaign to win back all the money that has been robbed from communities over the past 12 years.

Councils could tackle extortionate housing costs by implementing a compulsory register of all private landlords and imposing rent controls, decided democratically by councillors, local trade unions and tenant associations. This could be accompanied by a mass building programme of thousands of eco-friendly, low-rent council homes to meet the needs of all, which could start to take tenants out of the clutches of the profiteering landlords altogether.

Councils could pay all council workers at least £15 an hour, as well as above-inflation pay rises, while launching a mass campaign encouraging all workers in their authority to join a trade union and fight against low pay in their workplaces.

In Oxford, the Labour council proudly promotes its 'living wage' of £10.50 an hour. But what kind of 'living' does this really get you in 2022 Britain? As a hospitality worker, my hourly wage comes to about £11 including tips, but the best this gets me is a small room in a multi-occupancy house, shared with four strangers.

This begs the question: if Labour is unprepared to stand up for working-class people, then who will? Socialist Party members are fighting for a socialist alternative to the cost-of-living crisis, standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) on 5 May.

Labour, and all the establishment parties, want to uphold the capitalist system that punishes the working-class majority with poverty wages, rising prices, and no prospect for a happy future. That's why we campaign for a new mass party that fights for socialism – a system where workers democratically plan the use of society's overwhelming wealth and resources to meet the needs of all.

- Read about TUSC election stand on pages 4-5, 10-11, and 16
- See what councils can do about the cost-of-living crisis on pages 8-9

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Send us reports of your workplace and community campaigns, short letters on working-class issues, or ideas for other articles.

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

Workers' anger grows as establishment parties undermined by crisis

Fight for a new mass workers' party



WHAT WE THINK

Government hypocrisy, scandal, deceit - what's new? The unprecedented firing of the top two government ministers in the partygate saga generated a new wave of outrage, but came on top of so much sleaze before, and more is no doubt to come.

Cash for questions and 'access', pandemic spending that lined the pockets of the Tories' friends, the tax avoidance of Rishi Sunak's family... it has come to the point where nothing better is expected of the Tory government. Confidence in Labour, parliament's main opposition party, is little higher; a Savanta ComRes poll earlier this month put Keir Starmer only one percentage point ahead of Boris Johnson on who would be best as prime minister.

What's new, however, is the depths to which Johnson & Co's standing has sunk. The same poll showed only 6% thinking that the Tories 'keep their promises', and just 11% thought that Labour would.

Tory MPs look on in horror as one crisis leads to another, whether it's the disgrace of the Home Office deciding to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, or their constituents crying out for help with energy bills. But they are virtually paralysed with inaction, not seeing any good options, apart from citing the Ukraine war as a weakening argument for leaving Johnson in place.

Paradoxically, like when right-wing Labour MPs wanted Labour to do badly in elections under Jeremy Corbyn, there are now Tories who in desperation are looking to their party to do badly in the May local elections and the Wakefield parliamentary by-election in order to make Johnson's position less tenable.

But who can they replace him with? They're struggling to see a suitable alternative leader, and recent events have worsened that scenario further, following the sully of Sunak and his resultant fall as a leadership contender. Such is the animosity and infighting in the Tories' upper echelons



There are now Tories who in desperation are looking to their party to do badly in the May local elections and the Wakefield parliamentary by-election in order to make Johnson's position less tenable.



PHOTO: PAUL MATTESSON

that there were clearly some who welcomed the exposure of Sunak's self-serving manoeuvres. The majority won by their party in the 2019 general election, and its record since, have done nothing to alter the long-term crisis of the party and its great instability.

If a political party representing the working class and based on the working class was in existence today, it would be able to crystallise all the anger and needs of ordinary people into a force that could sweep aside this government and assert workers' interests on the national stage.

In the meantime, there is much that the trade union leaders could and should be doing, both to prepare the path towards such a party - which will need to have a backbone based in the trade unions - and to mobilise now the potential strength of the trade unions in a mass movement to demand emergency measures against the cost-of-living crisis. This would need to include calling for above-inflation rises in pay, benefits and pensions; and the nationalisation of the energy industry under democratic workers' control and management.

Mélenchon vote in France

In France, workers and youth are facing a similar onslaught to workers in Britain, including rising prices, worsening public services, environmental degradation, and low-paid, insecure jobs - while there is super-enrichment at the top of society.

In the first round of this month's presidential election, they were able to vote for Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who put forward a left-wing manifesto that could start to answer the burning needs of ordinary people. He stood in clear distinction to the pro-capitalist politicians of all stripes who, at root, whatever their election promises, defend and promote the exploitation of people and the environment by big business.

The result was a magnificent 7.7 million votes for that left challenge, 22% of those who turned out, and just six percentage points below the vote of current president and first round leader Emmanuel Macron.

Mélenchon topped the poll in many major cities, including Toulouse, Montpellier, Lille, Le Havre and Nantes. Nationally he was the most popular candidate for 18 to 34-year-olds, winning over 32% of their votes.



Establishment politicians in disarray in Britain and France IMAGES: MARIE-LAN NGUYEN (CC), COPYLEFT (CC), PAUL MATTESSON, RWENDLAND (CC)

During the election campaign, his organisation, LFI/Union Populaire held rallies across the country, over all larger than those of the other candidates, including tens of thousands in Paris three weeks before the first voting day. The policies inspiring those turnouts included stopping fuel and food price rises, raising the minimum wage, increasing taxes on the rich, massive investment in green energy, defending public services, and lessening the financial burdens on students.



While superficially it can appear that the Tory government - and whatever pro-capitalist successors might follow it - can ride out storm after storm, that would not be taking into account the huge build-up of anger, insecurity and need from below.

Mélenchon's high vote came at the same time as an unprecedented collapse in support for the two mainstream pro-capitalist parties that dominated the French presidency and parliament for decades up until 2017. The former social-democratic 'Parti Socialiste' only achieved 1.7%, and the conservative 'Les Républicains' got 4.8%.

It was also significant that concern for the environment was not mainly expressed through illusions in France's Green Party, 'Europe Écologie Les Verts'. Rather, Mélenchon's left programme was rightly seen as the route forward for countering environmental degradation.

Mélenchon and LFI/Union Populaire narrowly missed getting through to the second round of the election, not least because of the detrimental impact of several left candidates standing. The second round became a run-off between right-wing Macron and far-right Marine Le Pen.

Le Pen put forward right-wing populist 'carrots', such as a nil income tax rate for under-30s and removing VAT on essential foods, but behind these lay her party's fundamentally pro-big business stance and its avid anti-immigrant racism. Macron has been unable to hide his pro-capitalist agenda and policies of austerity for the majority. He has had to resort to resting on the desire for stability through continuity of a mainly older layer, helped by the disruption to life during the Covid pandemic, and now alarm at the war in Ukraine.

A large layer of the population were dismayed to once again be facing a choice of him or Le Pen. It has brought home the urgency and necessity for workers in France to further build on the left pole of attraction that LFI/Union Populaire has been in this election, and crucially to build on it in a democratic, well-structured way. Genuine debate and discussion in the left can lead to focussing support in the next presidential election on one single combative left candidate with a bold socialist programme. In turn this could draw support from a section of the 26% of voters who abstained this time. The question of how best to maximise the strength of the left in June's election for the French parliament is also urgently posed.

Anger on both sides of the channel

In Britain too, disillusionment and distrust towards the main pro-capitalist parties is only increasing and the potential exists for mass opposition to be mobilised when a lead is given. The wave of support for Corbyn's left programme during his

period as Labour leader - especially among young people - has already indicated that.

The end of the Corbyn era means that there is no longer a widely seen, authoritative political vehicle through which the widespread anger and discontent can be expressed. However, the anger still exists. How can it not, with the failures and lack of solutions of the pro-capitalist politicians so clear every day?

So the task of building a new mass workers' party in Britain is becoming an ever-more urgent necessity, as too in France. Meanwhile, there is a step-up in workplace disputes and struggles; and the rottenness at the top of society, along with the capitalists' determination to make ordinary people pay for the crisis of their system, are impacting on the consciousness of workers and young people.

The authority of the pro-capitalist politicians, Tory, Labour, Lib Dem and others, becomes weaker and weaker. While superficially it can appear that the Tory government - and whatever pro-capitalist successors might follow it - can ride out storm after storm, that would not be taking into account the huge build-up of anger, insecurity and need from below. The grounds are further being laid for mass struggles to arise, and for workers to organise to put forward their own political voice - to push for real change, for socialist change, and in that process setting a firm dividing line with capitalist interests.

The Socialist Party is standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the local elections on 5 May. By providing a banner for trade unionists and socialist activists to stand on a no-cuts platform, and with socialist policies, TUSC is doing important pioneering work in pushing forward the process towards a new mass workers' party (See more on pages 4,5,8,9 and 11).



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

Our demands include...

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
• No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
• Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
• Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
• Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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WE'RE STANDING FOR TUSC TO GIVE WORKERS A VOICE

Merton, south London

Housing – don't trust Labour or Clarion

Clarion housing association boasts it's Britain's largest landlord. It's probably also the worst.

Viewers of the ITV News investigation might have been horrified by the condition of Clarion properties. Residents weren't surprised.

Merton Council privatised its housing in 2010 with full support from Labour councillors. Rather than organising an efficient repairs service, they hoped someone else would take the blame and councillors could avoid responsibility – a shameful abdication of responsibility.

Within months of privatisation, Clarion reneged on its agreement with the council by raising rents from affordable social housing levels to near market heights. But Labour councillors failed to use their powers to stop this.

Overcrowding

Clarion shares responsibility with the Labour council for some of the worst overcrowding in the country. Labour councillors will happily put a couple with a small child in a one-bedroom flat.

There aren't any social-rented properties at the flagship Plough Lane development. Labour's idea of affordable housing is shared ownership with purchase prices of up to £645,000.

Labour councillors could use council land, reserves, and borrowing to build thousands of energy-efficient properties at low rents. This would start to tackle the 11,000 households on Merton's waiting list, and the backlog of households who haven't even made it onto the waiting list. The council is still dealing with applications from 2021!

Tenants, leaseholders and private tenants should have a democratic vote to decide whether they want to:

- Stay with Clarion (highly unlikely)
- Return to the council with a democratic housing committee elected by residents and housing workers
- Replace Clarion with another housing association
- Establish a democratically run local housing association

There is no place for managers



Acton, west London



Plymouth

on sky-high salaries, like Clarion chief exec Claire Miller who 'earned' £343,375, a bonus of £38,964 – for what? – and a car allowance of £10,000 in 2019-20.

Labour councillors could have used their powers to reverse this

year's rent increase. They could also help tackle the cost-of-living crisis with breakfast clubs and free school meals all year round.

Youth clubs, experienced youth workers and affordable leisure are also needed. But Labour councillors

are the problem. Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillors would stand up to Clarion.

● TUSC is standing April Ashley in Figg's Marsh and Alex Forbes in Cricket Green

Swindon – austerity has ripped my brother's future

My childhood and teenage years were greatly enriched by the local services and amenities on offer in the town at the time, especially the council-run youth arts programmes. My brother has severe disabilities, and he benefited from local services growing up.

He was able to attend a special education school, with additional funding for his 16-19 education, and enjoy summer activity programmes for disabled children. Swindon used to enjoy an excellent reputation for its services for disabled people.

My brother and I were lucky. But those who came after us are not.

As austerity has swept the country, the council services that made my brother's and my upbringing so rich have been stripped away, privatised or abandoned altogether, year on year.

My parents have increasingly had to battle the council to secure provision for my now-adult brother, including actually taking the council to court.

This is one family, my own. We can only imagine these circumstances multiplied across hundreds of thousands of others.

Elsewhere, we see other consequences of austerity. Swindon town centre has continued to decline in the era of austerity, and now sits nearly half-empty.

The local libraries that I knew growing up have largely been shut down. The council expects everyone to journey to the town centre library, with no thought to those who can't. The libraries that remain open are largely staffed by volunteers.

Neither Westminster nor the council have done anything to relieve the tens of thousands of people devastated by the closure of Swindon businesses – especially the Honda plant.

I have been moved to stand to present an alternative to this deadly tide of cuts and closures. People in Swindon deserve a councillor that will fight for them.

SCOTT HUNTER

TUSC CANDIDATE IN COVINGHAM & DORCAN

Southwark – The rich are buying up London

As a final year student nurse, I see firsthand how the cuts hit the NHS hard. I see continuous staff shortages and burnout – understaffing and a



Waltham Forest JAMES IVENS

lack of resources push overburdened health workers out.

I have witnessed the rush of staff to get enough done for their patients and the struggle to provide a high standard of family-centered care amid the lack of funding and support. For working people, this has meant surgery delays and a significantly lower quality of care than they deserve.

I see the impact that rising prices and stagnating wages have on working-class people, with many struggling to just afford basic essentials. In Southwark, there is a large council house waiting list and not enough homes, all while the wealthy buy up more and more property in London as 'investment'.

This division has gone on long enough. The time is now for working people to stand up. We can make a real impact.

I may not be an experienced politician, but I am experienced in the struggle of ordinary people, and I have a passion to end austerity.

CHARLIE KENNEDY

TUSC CANDIDATE IN BOROUGH & BANKSIDE

Cardiff – youth have something to fight for

The services that young people access have been cut by the Labour council. This will continue if we do not change it.

Student safety is incredibly important – harassment, violence and uncomfortable behaviour are constantly reported. But before the pandemic, Cardiff University and Cardiff Council cut the night bus running from town to residences a few miles away. We demand this be reinstated, and that the council provide night buses to all parts of the city throughout the night, so everyone can get home safely.

Young people are exploited in work, on low wages and zero-hour contracts, without benefits they are entitled to. The vast majority of students undertake a placement year unpaid, doing the same jobs and hours as their paid colleagues. Through the universities and the council there is the budget to pay all students on placement year a fair wage.

Rent is constantly increasing. Paired with the cost-of-living crisis,

students and young people face huge uncertainty in their living situation. The council must introduce rent control, and affordable, safe housing should be available for all who need it.

Students and young people are not important to the council. The heavily student-populated area of Cathays is often ignored. Rubbish is not collected on time, people cannot park outside their homes, shops are closing down – all under the watch of Labour councillors.

These council elections offer a real chance for young people to make their voices heard and enact real change where they live.

GEORGE PHILLIPS

TUSC CANDIDATE IN CATHAYS

Camden centre closures hurt community

Cuts are making life more difficult. The Caraf community centre has been open for 40 years, a lifeline, especially for local black children. It had also provided essential nursery care. It is now closing – workers will lose their jobs, and local people will lose this vital service.

The West Euston project was also forced to shut after 30 years, due to a £80,000 funding shortfall. This was another centre popular with young people seeking advice on finding work and training.

One Labour local councillor was honest enough to recognise that this was another example of "where the voluntary sector has been expected to do more in the face of local government cuts." But what she and all of the other main austerity parties fail to mention is that these closures are not necessary.

The two TUSC candidates in Kentish Town – Farhana Manzoor and Hannah Power – stand out in condemning these closures, and have called on the council to reverse these appalling decisions by offering to continue to finance the centres.

They are the lifeblood of the local community. They are our jobs, they are our services, and as socialists we have no choice other than to defend them.

NICK AUVACHE

CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Tories' barbaric Rwanda policy

• Take wealth off rich • Jobs and homes for all



JOSH ASKER

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Images of the horrors of war are etched into our memories from weeks of television coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. While thousands of British households have volunteered to offer homes to Ukrainians fleeing the war, Tory Home Secretary Priti Patel has been finalising plans to deport refugees to Rwanda.

As Boris Johnson's Tories reel from 'Partygate' and try to fend off growing anger about the profit-driven cost-of-living crisis, they announce a £1.4 billion scheme to inflict more misery on some of the most vulnerable people.

The plans would see refugees flown 4,000 miles away to wait months to be 'processed'. Just last year the UK government raised concerns at the UN about "extrajudicial killings, deaths

in custody, enforced disappearances and torture" in Rwanda. Now it says the country is "safe and secure... with a track record of supporting asylum seekers". What of the 12 refugees shot dead by police at a protest over food subsidies in 2018?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has said that the principle of the scheme would not stand up to the judgement of god! And even some Tories can see the Rwanda policy is idiotic. Former Tory government minister Andrew Mitchell has suggested the scheme could cost up to £2 million per asylum seeker, making the point that it would be cheaper to put people up in the Ritz. Australia's equivalent scheme is said to have cost as much as £1.7 million each.

The scheme's stated aim is to deter migrants from making the perilous journey over the English Channel in

boats. But it won't work, as the Australian scheme hasn't, and as a since-wound-up agreement between Israel and Rwanda didn't.

The government probably hopes that the announcement will succeed in apportioning some of the blame for the hardship we all face onto a small number of refugees, rather than the bosses getting rich at our expense. Just as they have tried to blame the cost-of-living crisis on the war in Ukraine.

The Tories can't be trusted to offer a safe and prosperous future for anyone except super-rich big-business bosses. We fight for a real right to asylum for all those fleeing war and dictatorship. Fully achieving this is linked to the struggle for socialism, taking the wealth off the super-rich to provide well-paid jobs, homes and services for all.

Visas – special treatment for super-rich

In haste, a week before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Home Secretary Priti Patel closed the 'tier 1 investor visa scheme'. Fears had been growing about Russian oligarchs' money laundering.

The scheme had been opened by the Labour government in 2008 in order to try to attract foreign investment. It gave foreign people residency and a route to British citizenship in return for at least £2

million investment. In other words, New Labour introduced an utterly discriminatory immigration policy favouring the super-rich, whilst refugees fleeing war and devastation, including those from Iraq and Afghanistan, continued to be denied a legal right of access and appropriate resettlement.

There have been 13,214 tier 1 visas issued (2,581 to Russians) and assuming each visa acquired the

minimum investment of £2 million then over 14 years that amounts to £26 billion. It is more likely to have been in excess of £50 billion.

We say, nationalise that wealth. Seize the assets of the oligarchs and the super-rich. Under the democratic control of the working class, it could be used to provide the homes and services we need.

JOHN MERRELL

LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Exclusive: Security worker who refused to remove sacked P&O workers speaks to the Socialist

The brutal mass sacking of 800 P&O staff shocked the whole working class on 17 March. As well as destroying livelihoods with no warning or recourse, profiteering ferry bosses hired private security to forcibly remove workers. The Socialist spoke with a security contractor hired for a job he didn't expect - and who refused to carry it out.

YOU WORK IN SECURITY. YOU GOT A JOB AND DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS. WHAT HAPPENED? I got the job through, we had limited information. We had to go to a particular town. We were going to get some training before. We were provided with a hotel room.

On the way up, we were kind of thinking it might be something to do with arms to Ukraine maybe, because it was around a port. We were then greeted by a couple of team leaders. They still said to us, we're not going to tell you anything. Which, at that point, I felt quite uncomfortable to be honest. I've never really had that on the job.

When we woke up in the morning, they said, right, you're going to go do a course on how to 'handle people' directly - a 'conflict management' course. So they brought in another company. We went to a training establishment - another hotel.

But still they couldn't tell us what it was. This is where I said, if I don't agree, I want to go home. So they then - later on in the afternoon - said it's something to do with a big company, and it's basically changing staff. Best case, you'll probably just sit in the car park, and that will be it.

At this stage, several of us were issued handcuffs. This team was called something like the 'sweep team' and

if anyone got too heavy-handed, we would go in and handcuff them.

At this point we'd come to the conclusion that the company was P&O. We didn't really get the gist of why they were removing staff. That still wasn't told to us. But a few of us guessed they might be replacing staff because of new contracts.

WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS?

The night before we still weren't told anything. Just meet in the car park at 6am to get on the minibus.

We pulled into the port and saw the big P&O ferry. We found out they were replacing workers with these other guys who didn't really know why they were replacing them. So they were confused as well.

And they were sort of sheepish because they were thinking, have we done something wrong here? Everyone's going to hate us.

HOW DID YOU RESPOND TO BEING TOLD YOU'D BE REMOVING SACKED WORKERS?

At this point, some of us decided that we didn't want to be part of this. We said to the team leader, we're not happy, and we're going. There's the equipment, we're going back, we won't have anything further to do with it.

We took a massive pay hit from that. But I still think it was the right thing to do. The whole situation was just so wrong.

When I saw the protest at the port, I just felt so gutted to be sitting in that van. I wanted to be on the side of the unions. I left shortly after that.

A lot of people had an attitude like, 'here comes the placard brigade'. But they had to admit they had a point.

IT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF SECURITY WORKERS FELT CONFLICTED?

Yeah I would say definitely. It was a tough year for the security industry. No events because of Covid. I lost a lot by walking away but a lot of them



P&O workers, trade unionists and supporters continue to march and protest against the sackings in Dover on 19 April, demanding the seizure of the ships to save the jobs. Socialist Party member and National Shop Stewards Network chair Rob Williams spoke at the rally (right). The Socialist Party says that only public ownership under democratic workers' control and management can lay the basis for the protection of jobs, pay, working conditions, safety and reliable services. PHOTOS: RMT DOVER

couldn't take that step. We were told if we do it in one day, we get paid for seven. So that's a lot of money.

It takes a lot to walk away from that. And a lot of them couldn't because it's been so difficult financially for them.

But everybody I spoke to, in the area where I was sent, was against it. Every person. There was no one going, 'yes, can't wait!' Everyone had their head down. You could see the body language. They didn't want to do it.

Everybody involved in that situation, from the P&O staff, to the replacement staff, to the security as well - what I witnessed anyway - didn't want to.

There should be a massive investigation into how everybody was treated. Especially those poor P&O workers.

On the day, when they finally told us what the job was, we were told there were great packages for them, that they'd be all right. It was almost like the story was that they were going to live on a nice little island to see out their days. It was that kind of propaganda.

It was very, very peculiar. The guys that organised it - I had never seen them. There was a lot of ex-police involved, put it that way. That's all I'm going to say.

I will never ever do a job like that again. First and last time.

DID YOU GET TO SPEAK TO ANY OF THE SACKED WORKERS?

I stayed there one more night. We actually met some of the people who had been taken off there.

We met them in the hotel. Me and my friend, we said 'we're so sorry, we didn't know why we were here.'

They were so polite, so nice to us. They said it's not your fault. You're doing your job, we were doing our job. And they totally understood.

But they were just left there by

P&O. They had no way of getting to the airport. Bearing in mind we were at the other end of the country to where their flights were. They were given nothing.

They nearly didn't have a room, until the staff at the hotel sorted something out. I believe the staff just gave them a room.

They said to us, are any of you going in the direction of the airport, can any of you give us a lift? But me and my mate were going to another job.

One of them had worked there 14 years, the other one ten. And they were just gutted.

They said they might reapply and go for the lower wage. They shouldn't even be put in that situation, they should be getting more money. They were forced into that position, told to reapply and they would possibly get their job back.

DO YOU THINK THIS SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT THE NEED FOR WORKERS' ORGANISATION IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY?

Massively. I've been saying this for a couple of years. We need a union in security.

I won't go into the whole details of what I've witnessed in other jobs, hours like 24-hour shifts. It's horrendous. Breaks every law.

Obviously we sign the waivers in a lot of contracts. You have to be willing to work over 48 hours in the week. But it's horrendous what they do.

What baffled me is this was the same group of people - the working class - fighting each other. Bear in mind that security didn't even know until that morning. P&O staff and replacements didn't know either. So we're in a situation where we're fighting each other, when really all of us knew it was wrong.

One side's doing their job, and the other side's trying to do their job. The capitalist class are just making us fight against each other.



We said 'we're going back, we won't have anything to do with it'



One side's doing their job, and the other side's trying to do their job. The capitalist class are just making us fight against each other



In Hull, the crew of the Pride of Hull lifted the gangway of their vessel, preventing security guards and police from boarding, before later leaving the ship of their own accord. KEES TORIN/CC

Unison service group executive elections We need action to fight the cost-of-living crisis!

Unison must take the lead - build a cross-union campaign for a pay rise and to stop cuts and privatisation

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN UNISON

Bills are skyrocketing, council tax and national insurance are going up, and yet the rich are getting richer! After ten years of austerity, with the previous Unison leadership failing to defend jobs, pay and services, in last year's national executive (NEC) elections members voted for change. The new left leadership must prepare urgently to mobilise the membership to fight the cost-of-living crisis, and put forward a serious strategy to fight for the NHS and council services - including supporting 'no-cuts' councillors.

Local government

Unison members rightly fear a continued threat to jobs and pay, as well as the services provided, despite having given so much during the pandemic. That is why it is key to organise to defend any attack on members' jobs, wages and conditions.

Unison must demand that Labour authorities refuse to implement more cuts and instead, set budgets to meet the needs of the people they are elected to serve. Council reserves have incredibly gone up from £19 billion in 2019 to £29 billion in 2021! So councils can definitely refuse to implement the predicted £3 billion shortfall.

And if Labour councils won't stand up for us then members will rightly ask why are we handing them £3 million a year of members' money? We need councillors willing to fight the Tories not act like them, and if they

won't fight, the union should change its rules to allow us to back anti-cuts candidates who will.

Health

Covid exposed the crisis in the NHS that has been present since the start of austerity in 2010.

On pay, with inflation heading towards double figures, the Tories' paltry 3% NHS pay offer 2021 and 2022 is a massive pay cut after a decade of wage restraint. Members of health unions including Unison voted to reject last year's pay award and were prepared to take action. Unison members voted 77% in favour of sustained industrial action and the union must now move to a formal industrial action ballot if there is not a significant pay rise for all staff in the NHS.

The union must also fight against privatisation and Tory attacks on the NHS. We need a fully funded, democratically run NHS and care system!

Vote for:

HEALTH SEATS

- **Adrian O'Malley (Yorkshire)**
- **John Malcolm (Northern region)**
- **Brian Loader (East Midlands)**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEATS

- **Angie Waller (Yorkshire)**

- **Steve Bell (South East Health), Mark Evans (Wales Local Government) and Helen Couchman (South East Community) have all been elected unopposed**

LAST CHANCE TO PLACE A MAY DAY GREETING IN the Socialist



● Show solidarity and fund the socialist press with a 2022 greeting - send them in by 10am 25 April. Visit socialistparty.org.uk/mayday for prices and more details

Coventry bin strike stands firm and inspires other workers

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

The Coventry bin drivers' strike continues to stand firm each morning as it enters its 11th week of all-out strike action. Each day that goes on, the stronger and more determined the pickets and mood becomes.

It's also clear that the determination of the Coventry strikers is inspiring workers across the country, as more

and more refuse workers take up the fight for better pay. Last week a Coventry striker and Socialist Party member addressed a mass meeting of bin workers in Rugby, also in Unite, who then voted to begin industrial action. The council had recently responded to a petition asking for better pay and conditions from the workers with an offer of advice on benefits, budgeting and employee loans!

National Education Union conference delegates walk out during Labour minister's speech



SHEILA CAFFREY
NEU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

You'd be forgiven for not knowing who the current shadow education minister is, but Labour's Bridget Phillipson certainly is unlikely to forget the reaction to her policies. At the annual conference of the National Education Union (NEU) on 12 April, she trotted out a variety of platitudes, before announcing that schools inspectorate Ofsted just needed some tweaks.

Ofsted: the accountability attack-dog regime, used to bully staff to do more work for less pay; to force local authority schools into academies to drive education workers out of schools due to stress and pressure.

Some light heckling was given, which began to echo around the conference centre. This could have been a time for the NEU leaders to

show some backbone and stand up to these policies. Instead, it was suggested that if people didn't like what Phillipson was saying, they should leave. Now, most teachers know not to deliver a threat like that to a class, as you know what might happen... and it did! Over 100 education workers across the hall stood up and walked out, before creating an impromptu lobby outside chanting and suggesting an alternative to Labour policy.

Compare this speech to the last in-person NEU conference when there was a standing ovation for Jeremy Corbyn's policies to scrap Ofsted, changing the exam factory mentality, as well as creating an education service that would change education workers' pay and burnout.

So, was Phillipson's speech a deliberate provocation? Was it stupidity? Or was it just disdain for workers? It wasn't clear. However, what's now

stark is that Keir Starmer's Labour has burnt bridges with NEU members and lost votes in the next election from education workers.

It also shows that workers can't wait for Labour to solve their problems. The NEU, along with other unions, needs to stand up and fight for pay and conditions now.

Although the leaderships of some unions like to sow illusions in Labour being the answer, this Tory-lite speech made it clear which side they're on. The rank-and-file in the unions need to put the pressure on the union leaders to call ballots and fight.

In the NEU, the Socialist Party has five national executive members, who have continued to press for action, and are building an alternative to the current leadership with clear demands to transform the education system to one that students and staff need.

National Shop Stewards Network conference 2022

Workers fight the cost of living squeeze - trade union lead never more needed!

- **Speakers include: Sharon Graham, Unite general secretary, with more to be confirmed**
- **Saturday 2 July**
- **11am - 4.30pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL**
- **Register on the day or email the NSSN at info@shopstewards.net**
- **Attendance fee £6**



NSSN bulletin:
shopstewards.net

A new brazier donated by Socialist Party to the Coventry bin drivers' strike has become particularly handy for the recent spell of barbecue weather!



PHOTO: COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), an anti-austerity electoral alliance including the RMT transport union.

TUSC will be standing hundreds of candidates in the May local elections as an alternative to the establishment parties, whose cuts to jobs and services are attempting to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism.

Below, **Jane Nellist** explains how we can start to challenge the system that is attacking our communities - by refusing to implement cuts, utilising the huge resources that councils have, and building a movement to win more resources we need to tackle the crisis.

It's very hard to believe that we live in the fifth-richest country in the world when you witness daily the absolute, abject poverty that millions are forced to endure. And it's getting worse!

Even the capitalist media is full of stories of how our communities are suffering. Life is a huge struggle for an increasing number of families and vulnerable members of our society. People are running out of options to be able to house, feed and heat themselves and their families adequately. Many of these people are in work, with some holding down more than one job.

Inequality

The biggest problem that is driving this epidemic of misery is that we live in a country with a huge imbalance of wealth. Inequalities permeate throughout society. And while the rich are getting richer, it's at the expense of the poor and, increasingly, the middle class, who are being ground down with more cuts and hardship.

The gap between the richest in society and the rest of us has widened over a 10-year period according to the Office for National Statistics. The wealthiest 10% of households held 43% of all the wealth in Britain in the latest period; in comparison, the bottom 50% just 9%.

After 12 years of austerity, the cost of living crisis - forced on us by this Tory government and with the lack of any real opposition or alternative from Starmer's Labour Party - is sucking away our dignity.

All of this comes on the back of a pandemic that has had - and is still having - a brutal impact on our communities and services, especially our National Health Service (NHS).

The leadership of the Tory party, who partied while we stuck to the rules and mourned those who died from Covid, have shown they just don't care about the lives of the majority.

But we need to nail the lie that there is no money to tackle the crisis. The country's overall wealth has grown in value by 84% (or £3.8 trillion) over the last decade, while property has increased in value by £2.1 trillion (61%).

But at the same time, millions of people are having to make choices about heating or eating, or even the type of food to buy which doesn't require lengthy cooking times, because they can't afford the huge hike in energy costs.

What a disgrace that we have more food banks than branches of McDonald's! Yet, food banks are increasingly turning people away because they cannot keep up with the massive increase in demand. Recent figures suggest that 9% of the population will be forced to turn to foodbanks. This, at a time when there are a growing number of millionaires and billionaires.

The steep rise in the cost of food, energy and fuel is creating conditions the likes of which we have not witnessed for decades (see page 12). Rampant inflation, coupled with the cuts to the NHS, council service cuts, social care and benefit cuts, will leave many of us without any safety net at all.

On 1 April this year, tax credits and benefits, including pensions, went up by just 3% - well short of inflation, now running at 8% (and rising). However, food, transport, and childcare are areas of household spending that greater impact those on low wages or benefits. For example, it is estimated that average food costs could rise by 15% this year. No amount of household budgeting is going to solve this crisis!

This is why we urgently need to build a political alternative capable of providing what our communities need now.

We need to demand that local councils start to mitigate the huge cost-of-living crisis, by utilising all the resources and means they have to protect our communities.



The biggest problem that is driving this epidemic of misery is that we live in a country with a huge imbalance of wealth

So how can we do this? For a start, councils are not powerless. What is lacking are elected representatives who are prepared to fight and organise. TUSC candidates are prepared more than ever for that fight because it is our communities who are being hit hard.

Labour councillors however, instead of fighting for the class they are supposed to represent, the working class, have abdicated their responsibility while shedding 'crocodile tears'.

Indeed, they have willingly carried out Tory government cuts, with little or no resistance. We say: 'Enough is enough!' TUSC candidates have pledged to fight back against cuts and inequality, and I am one of them.

Local councils are still responsible for over one-fifth of all public spending. Despite huge, decades-long, cuts in central government funding, which councils have disgracefully accepted unchallenged, councils still hold billions of pounds in usable reserves. The amount held in local authority reserves in England has increased to £29 billion this year from £19 billion in 2019-20.

A FIGHTING PROGRAMME FOR 5 MAY ELECTIONS



Socialist Party members, along with other activists, are campaigning in May's local elections for socialist policies to end capitalist cuts and to tackle the cost-of-living crisis

Those reserves could immediately be used to invest in services that our communities need now.

Borrowing powers

Councils also have borrowing capacities which they could utilise to start plugging the holes in our service provision.

For example, the trade unions have been urging Labour councillors in Coventry to mount a city-wide campaign to win back resources that have been stolen from our city over the years. But it has fallen on deaf ears, and these councillors have continued to just manage the decline and impose cuts on the services for our most vulnerable communities.

What is shocking is that, as our services have been cut, Coventry council has invested millions of pounds of our money, buying businesses such as a waste company and one of the most expensive hotels in the Midlands for millions of pounds. This

waste company is now being used to undermine the council's own workforce - especially Coventry refuse drivers who are striking to achieve the proper pay rate for the job. This union struggle is being replicated across the country.

TUSC members across the country have also been organising campaigns to adopt a 'People's Budget'. This entails identifying areas of spending that could immediately be implemented, and which would begin to relieve the pressure on our communities, while organising and building a national fightback against the Tory government.

TUSC has produced comprehensive briefing lists of some of the ways this could be carried out by councils now, using their reserves and borrowing powers to temporarily finance them, while launching a mass campaign locally and nationally - building the pressure - for extra funding from central government.

Real 'levelling-up'

Councils have enormous powers and influence - they need to use that to force the government into acting now to bring about the changes that will fundamentally provide the means for the relief of years of devastating austerity and cuts.

The Tories 'Levelling Up' strategy is a sham! It is unclear, underfunded and too centralised. It will, as we have seen with many Tory government plans, put public investment into the hands of private profiteers and ultimately will not address the real problems we face.

The Socialist Party and TUSC candidates want to go further and faster to defend our communities and ensure that a genuine 'levelling up' is achieved.

TUSC is declaring 'war' on poverty and is challenging those who get in the way.

see tusc.org.uk

Climate Emergency

- Local authorities have powers to intervene in the provision of public transport and ensure that it is improved so that it is more affordable and meets the needs of local people, taking more polluting cars off the road. They could also introduce free public transport
- Councils need to urgently ensure there is a fully-funded home insulation energy efficiency programme
- They could call in all development projects in order to review the environmental impacts, especially the provision of good quality social housing
- Councils could draw up a detailed local risk assessment and plan to combat flooding risks, as well as drawing up a local Climate Emergency plan. Working to ensure that targets are identified based on the carbon footprint, not just of council-run services but capturing total emissions for the local area, giving a real picture of what needs to be done to tackle the climate crisis

Here are some ways that councils could begin to make a difference to our communities.

Children and young people

- Childcare costs have risen 42% since 2008, twice the rate of inflation. Many workers would like to work more hours to enable them to earn more, but high childcare costs deny them that opportunity
- We could ensure universal free childcare for all that need it
- Parents need fully funded wraparound childcare for school-age children so that they have access to a quality service, through extended schools
- Increase the support and number of children's centres in our communities. The Surestart services, cut by the Tories, should be restored and extended, to provide much needed support for families.
- We could ensure that no child goes hungry, with free breakfast and lunches around the year for all those who need it
- Introduce local replacements for the Education Maintenance Allowance for all 16-18 year-olds who stay on in education

Older people

- 10,000 deaths a year are linked to living in a cold home. With pensions not keeping up with the cost of living, more of our vulnerable older community are at risk
- Councils could put in place foundations of a fully funded, publicly owned, health and care service
- Ensure that emergency payments are issued to enable them to heat their homes and cook their food
- We could increase ring-and-ride services so that they have access to public transport more easily and enable people to visit friends and family or go out socially. This is especially important in more rural areas, where current public transport provision is dire

Housing and homelessness

- More than 274,000 people are officially homeless in England - with a rising tide of evictions leaving many families facing a desperately uncertain time
- Nearly 3,000 people are sleeping rough. 15,000 single people are living in hostels, and nearly 250,000 people are living in temporary, unsuitable accommodation - most of whom are families
- Walk down any high street and you see an increasing number of homeless people huddled in doorways. It is evidence of our failed system. Many have been crushed by a system that is failing to provide for their basic needs
- More resources could be provided for alcohol and drug dependency, with well-supported suitable accommodation
- With Covid protections now gone, thousands more will become homeless
- Freeze council house rents, and compulsorily register all landlords to combat rising rents and overcrowded conditions in privately rented accommodation
- Many homes are energy guzzling due to poor insulation - they need to be bought up to proper standards. Too many families are living in damp, cold homes causing many health problems. Councils could start to invest in repairs and upgrading work, thereby saving families huge energy bills.
- Repossess empty properties and make them habitable to immediately end homelessness
- Use resources to give families emergency payments to help with crisis needs so they can avoid becoming homeless
- Councils could use their borrowing powers to begin the task of building good quality council housing to meet the needs of all

Council workers - pay and jobs

- End immediately the use of zero-hour contracts
- Councils could begin to provide real opportunities for good quality jobs in-house, with proper training, providing the services that our communities need
- Councils should ensure that they pay at least £15 an hour, as a minimum, and ensure future inflation-proof pay
- Introduce high-quality apprenticeship schemes, with trade union rates of pay, quality training, and a guaranteed job at the end. Outside contracts should comply with these terms

Leisure

- So many sports facilities have been sold off or left unfunded. By bringing them back into public control, and investing in free-to-use sports and recreation centres, it would help to reduce the huge health inequalities in our communities
- Ensure that every community has access to green spaces and playing fields. Too many green areas, especially in city centres, are sold off to developers to build high rise flats for private landlords or offices

Youth services

- Young people are often seen as a 'problem', but they are our future and deserve a good start in life and a great deal more support than they are getting now
- Research by the YMCA reveals the true extent of cuts to youth services funding by local authorities in England and Wales since 2010, with an allocation of just under £429 million in 2018-19, compared to £1.4 billion in 2010-11 - a real terms decline of 70%
- Councils could create the foundations of a national youth service
- Work with schools to open up facilities in the evening, weekends and in school holidays to provide safe hubs for young people to gather. These could provide sports, arts and other groups



PHOTO: PISOELS.COM/CC

Nationalise now to end profit-driven transport chaos

RAILWAY WORKER
BIRMINGHAM NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Be it a cancelled train on your morning commute or your bus home being delayed, increased congestion on the roads or finding out that the workers on your holiday flights or ferries have recently been sacked...

While our transport system remains tied to private profiteering, and not long-term democratic public planning, the downward spiral of transport chaos will continue.

That's why the Socialist Party fights for the immediate nationalisation of our transport systems with compensation only on the basis of proven need. As the saying goes: 'You can't control what you don't own.' Owned and run democratically by the working class, public transport could be expanded and provided for free.

For many of us, a massive part of the sky-rocketing cost of living, is how much we are forced to fork out for day-to-day transport. The Tories' so-called 'Great British Rail Sale', for some limited off-peak rail fares, won't help those of us who pay through the nose to get to work. The average rail commuter has to pay £136 a week.

Every year without fail, rail ticket prices go up to fill the back pockets of CEOs and shareholders, while ordinary railway workers have their pay,

pensions and working conditions under attack. The transport bosses' ruthless profit-seeking was demonstrated by P&O Ferries bosses sacking over 800 seafarers on the spot to be replaced by hyper-exploited foreign labour on poverty wages. Whilst on your holiday flights or ferries have recently been sacked... it'll continue to be transport misery for the masses.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, public transport workers worked throughout the lockdowns and were hailed as 'heroes' by the Tory government and Blairite councils. Now it is our jobs, pay and conditions that are under attack.

Some transport workers however, have been able to win pay rises. HGV drivers, due partly to their scarcity, but also being organised in trade unions with collective bargaining, have been able to force employers to increase pay and conditions.

This shows why we needed co-ordinated action led by the trade unions to fight against the privatisation and franchising of our transport. This should be linked with the demand for a new mass workers' party that stands for nationalisation of our public transport services under democratic workers' control and management, run in the interests of the millions, not the profits of the millionaires.

Film review: Boiling Point

Excellent portrayal of pressure on customer-facing workers



Boiling Point is available to view on Netflix

KATIE SIMPSON
NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Boiling Point shines a light on the dark side of the restaurant industry. The film follows head chef Andy Jones, played by Stephen Graham, as he navigates the pressure of maintaining a business on the busiest night of the year, while battling his own demons.

The film shows Andy faced with an unexpected food hygiene inspection, overwhelmed staff, demanding customers, and an ex-business partner trying to pressure him into collaboration to pay off business debt.

We are starkly introduced to the characters who make up Andy's kitchen. They are good, honest workers who are - or at least were once - passionate about their role in maintaining a high-quality restaurant. They are berated at times,

encouraged at others, but always under pressure.

While much of that pressure comes from Andy, he is responding to the manager, food critics, influencers, debt collectors and ever-demanding customers. Andy reflects on his own behaviour at intervals, and swigs on what appears to be a bottle of water throughout the night.

As pressure mounts, serious mishaps culminate in catastrophe, causing staff members to lash out at Andy, who breaks under the pressure. The film nakedly tackles mental health and addiction that are under the surface of a customer-focused industry. There are no scene cuts at any time in the film, which perfectly illustrates the evening's pace and pressure.

Boiling Point will be appreciated by people who have worked in this or similar industries. Anyone working in a customer-facing role at a busy

time of the year will relate. The film empathises the audience with the characters by highlighting the reality of their plight.

As a drug and alcohol recovery worker, and someone who has always worked in customer-facing roles, I see the film as an important lesson. Prestige and profits are always placed above staff wellbeing in these workplaces under a capitalist society. I imagined how Andy and his staff would have coped if they were cooking good, nutritional meals for members of their own class, without fear of critics, businessmen and bankruptcy.

It was a reminder that passion and talent do not thrive under capitalism, but are destroyed by always needing to meet the needs of the capitalist market. In a socialist society, where the needs of all are met by all, none of the pressures we are met with in this film would even exist.

Onshore wind: Democratic ownership and planning needed

Dave Carr's article makes some very good points (see 'Johnson's energy plans - strategically flawed' at socialistparty.org.uk). I just would like to add to the mention of onshore wind farms.

I live in a rural area in a shire county. Many rural poor and working-class people live in these areas. They have a lot more to worry about than the view from their windows, if indeed they do have a view!

My objection about wind farms is not that they spoil the view, but that they are privately owned on private land. There is no local or national democratic planning on where wind farms should be sited, no public

ownership, and therefore no public control.

I have no problem with individual house owners saving on energy costs by installing solar panels. However, private landowners have hugely benefited in the past from government subsidies paid for by the taxpayer. These subsidies were cut by the Tory government in 2015, which meant landowners were less inclined to invest in renewable energy. The

government now plans to make £10 million available to developers of onshore wind and solar farms.

We need to nationalise the energy companies under democratic workers' and community control. Then the production of energy could be planned and coordinated across the country in an environmentally sustainable, energy efficient and affordable way.

HEATHER RAWLING, IN RURAL LEICESTERSHIRE

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

• editors@socialistparty.org.uk
or, if you're not online, write to the Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



SAM CARTWRIGHT
WREXHAM

On 6 March 2022, 86-year-old Ian Stevenson was walking to his home in Johnstown, Wrexham, when he was struck by a passing car. According to the family, the first call to the emergency services was made at 19:31. The ambulance did not arrive for another four hours, leaving Mr Stevenson on the ground in the cold and rain. Unfortunately, Mr Stevenson passed away shortly after the ambulance arrived.

The Welsh Ambulance Service has said that at the time of the call all its vehicles were already committed to other patients. The family has said that the ambulance had come all the way from Dolgellau (over an hour's drive from the incident). When it did arrive, however, the driver was the only staff member on board.

Tragic Wrexham death a consequence of NHS cuts

Fortunately, two off-duty paramedics had been passing by and tried to help Mr Stevenson by performing CPR in the back of the ambulance, but to no avail. This man's death rests in the hands of every politician that has signed off on cuts. And this is not an isolated incident. The BBC reports that the Wales A&E and ambulance services are at their worst-ever level, with figures from October 2021 showing that fewer than 65% of patients in A&E took less than four hours to be seen.

Further figures show that 9,484 people had to wait more than 12 hours in urgent care departments in October, the highest number recorded, and up from 8,485 the month before. Statistics also show that there are 668,801 people waiting for planned treatment as of September 2021 - 21% of the total Welsh population. This is beyond unacceptable. How many of those patients will not get seen in time? How many more avoidable tragedies?

It is time that politicians were held to account for these heinous cuts. Britain is the fifth largest economy in the world, and the Tories want you to believe that there is no money to support our beloved NHS, and they need the funds of private investors to keep it afloat.

But we will not be fooled so easily. We must demand adequate funding from government to improve the NHS. The Welsh government should refuse to pass on any more cuts demanded by the Tories to the NHS or any other public services. Mr Stevenson's death was an avoidable tragedy, one that cannot be allowed to happen again.

That is the cost of underfunding our NHS: lives.



Campaigning in Erdington BIRMINGHAM TUSC

Backing up the Erdington by-election and building the Socialist Party

ELLA FOLEY-DOYLE
BIRMINGHAM NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

In Birmingham we are standing TUSC candidates in all seven wards that make up the Erdington constituency. Just last month Dave Nellist came third for TUSC behind Labour and the Tories in the parliamentary by-election.

Dave's election campaign showed how TUSC's socialist, anti-cuts programme was able to connect with working-class people in the constituency. Erdington has seen job losses with the planned closure of the GKN plant, potential loss of public spaces such as the Short Heath Playing Fields, and continued issues with

poor-quality housing and rogue landlords exploiting the lack of social care services.

In addition to the seven candidates standing in Erdington where I live, we have TUSC candidates standing across Birmingham. So far we have had a positive response from working-class communities that have felt the impact of Tory austerity policies, which are happily passed on by the local Blairite Labour council. Birmingham's Labour council has made cuts of over £770 million over the last decade.

Lots of working-class people that we have spoken to while canvassing have expressed their frustration at the lack of a combative political alternative offered by Labour. Many have

told us that they would not have voted at all if it was not for TUSC offering them a real anti-cuts programme to address the lack of services and opportunities.

Throughout the campaign we have seen a real interest in the activities of our local Socialist Party branch with new members joining, sympathetic supporters coming along to local meetings, and more local community members getting in touch to find out more.

Whatever the result on 5 May, we have seen that a genuine anti-cuts and socialist alternative can both win over the support of working-class people and help convince communities of the need for a new mass workers' party.

Epping Forest - there's nothing left to cut

IAN PATTISON AND BEA GARDNER
TUSC CANDIDATES WALTHAM ABBEY HONEY LANE AND WALTHAM ABBEY PATERNOSTER

Rent, bills, fuel, food, council tax and National Insurance - everything is going up. We can't afford the Tories' 4.1% council tax hike. And we can't trust the Tories to do anything for us.

In Essex, they want to cut £102 million from public services. There's nothing left to cut!

Labour wouldn't be any different. When Labour was in power locally, they just passed on Tory cuts and council tax rises. Waltham Abbey library could be next on the chopping block.

Local councils have the power to cap rents and build council homes to actually make it affordable to live somewhere decent.

Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre has put up its prices. The council is handing local services to private firm Qualis, supposedly to save money. But things are getting more expensive as Qualis make profit at our expense. It's

the same for homeowners having to fork out more to estate management companies.

Bus services in Waltham Abbey are too expensive, and the prices have just gone up! Sunday services are run by another company. Why do we have to fork out again for an unreliable service? Local councils should step in to stop this happening, or run the service themselves.

And if you drive, Rishi Sunak knocking 5p off petrol is a joke. Has he seen how much prices have increased by? And Epping Forest Tory Council has just cut £100,000 from the pothole budget.

Like many parents, we're struggling to find enough nursery hours and baby clubs for our children. This will only get worse now Epping Forest Tories have cut the voluntary budget in half.

That's why we're standing as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates. We're the only party in this election standing against Tory and Labour cuts.

Ealing - Austerity has worsened crime

MARK BENJAMIN
TUSC CANDIDATE IN NORWOOD GREEN

Residents deserve a councillor who will campaign for them. Austerity has contributed to an increase in burglaries, car theft and violence against women.

I am campaigning for the council to deliver 4,500 new and safe genuinely affordable homes, which

would combat the rise in private rents. As heating bills rise, the council should use its powers to provide each and every household with grants to better insulate our homes.

TUSC candidates are real people: your neighbours, trade union members, nurses, school teachers, bus and train drivers and civil servants.

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The 1973 oil price shock Are we headed for a new period of capitalist stagflation?

DAVE REID
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

As we head towards double-digit inflation, the Tory government is trying to offload blame for the huge price rises in fuel and gas by pointing to the price shock that has taken place this year due to the Ukraine war.

Some capitalist commentators have compared the current crisis with the big rise in inflation that occurred in the 1970s after the oil embargo that followed the Arab-Israeli war in 1973.

There are important lessons for the working class and the organised labour movement from the experience of the 1970s, but the economic condition of world capitalism today is starting from far more parlous state.

Yom Kippur war

The war between Israel and Arab states in October 1973 took place at the end of 25-year long sustained upswing in world capitalism.

In the wake of the war, often called the Yom Kippur or Ramadan war, oil-rich Arab regimes in Opec (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) retaliated against the support and arming of Israel by the main capitalist powers. The oil-producing states imposed an oil export embargo on the west. The price of oil quadrupled from \$3 a barrel to \$12.

The embargo produced a big shock to the capitalist system. The unprecedented post-World War Two capitalist upswing, beginning in 1948, came to a juddering halt. The price of petrol rocketed, making all transport more expensive.

In Britain, the Tory government of prime minister Ted Heath considered introducing petrol rationing. Across the capitalist world there began a year-long recession, the deepest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. A new word entered the economic lexicon, 'stagflation' - rising inflation cut living standards that reduced demand for goods combined with a stagnant economy.

And the capitalist economic crisis fed into political crises that questioned the existence of capitalism itself. Workers moved into action to demand pay rises that kept pace with inflation, that was cutting their real wages. A new wave of industrial militancy in Britain opened up as

the miners struck in January 1974 for a 35% wage increase, that still only maintained wage levels prior to 1972.

The Heath government, that had implemented a three-day week to conserve energy stocks, called a general election in February on the theme of 'who rules Britain?' hoping to use its mandate to defeat the miners. But instead it was narrowly defeated in the election and the miners won their pay claim from the newly-elected Wilson Labour government.

High inflation continued throughout the 1970s, reaching as high as 24% under Harold Wilson, and the class struggle intensified. The Labour Party base, still dominated by the working class, swung to the left. The then small forces of Marxism grouped around Militant (the Socialist Party's predecessor) started to win the ear of increasing numbers of workers and youth.

The oil shock did precipitate the first major economic crisis of the post-war period. But it is a mistake to see the shock as the primary cause of the end of the post-war boom. Already the signs were there that the boom was ending and new contradictions in the capitalist economy that had accumulated during the growth period were coming to a head.

End of post-WW2 boom

The unprecedented levels of growth across the capitalist world were already abating by 1970.

The working class had been able to gain increasing living standards and win significant reforms during the boom through struggle and increased trade union strength, like the welfare state and the NHS.

Against a very different world balance of forces, the capitalists had been making healthy profits and made concessions to the working class that had returned from WW2 demanding no return to the poverty and unemployment of the 1930s.

But by the end of the 1960s the period of sustained growth was already waning and the bosses were pushing back against workers' demands. The signs were especially telling in Britain, where the 'captains of industry' in its ageing industries had refused to invest at a level that allowed them to compete with their foreign rivals and, consequently, profitability had declined.



Above, people in Amsterdam, Netherlands, take to the streets on bikes and roller skates following the 1973 oil export embargo by OPEC, which targeted Western governments that had supported Israel in the 'Yom Kippur' war with Egypt



Inflation in the UK had risen from 1% in 1960 to over 9% in 1971. The oil shock added to a process that was already baked into the capitalist economies

As the sun was setting on the post-war boom, the bosses were increasingly looking to make the working class pay for the slowdown.

There was developing an increase in the class struggle. In France, in 1968, a revolutionary movement of the working class came close to overthrowing capitalism.

The number of strike days in Britain had risen from 1.8 million in 1963 to 11 million by 1970, and increasingly it was workplace shop stewards committees that were organising action rather than the old 'conservative' trade union leadership.

And inflation was already increasing. The 'Keynesian' policies of governments across the world of essentially printing money to fuel growth had helped sustain growth for a long period, but in doing so it had also fuelled an inflationary spiral.

The increase in the money supply created by governments was not matched by increases in production and so more money was chasing a relatively smaller supply of goods, causing their prices to rise. Inflation in the UK had risen from 1% in 1960 to over 9% in 1971.

The oil shock added to a process that was already baked into the capitalist economies.

Offloading the crisis

As always, the bosses were attempting to force the working class to pay for the crisis of the capitalist system. Ageing British industry was losing markets as a result of the failure to invest in capital expenditure, ie new machinery and production techniques.

The rising economies of Japan and West Germany invested 3-4 times more than the British capitalists, and were able to raise productivity and cheapen their products. But the British capitalists' response was not to invest more, but instead to try and force down real wages and intensify labour exploitation.

For the bosses, inflation was quite

useful up to a point to force down real wages. If wages rose less than inflation then the value of workers' pay fell as prices rose. But the attacks from the bosses opened up a new era of industrial class struggle that had already begun before the oil shock.

Strike wave

The Tory Heath government, elected in 1970, launched an offensive against the trade unions on behalf of British capitalism. It opened up one of the biggest strike periods in British history with miners, dockers and car workers leading a mass industrial movement that shredded Heath's anti-union laws and brought his government down.

The previous Labour government under Wilson had also attempted to rein-in the trade unions on behalf of capitalism with its notorious 'In place of strife' policy, which was subsequently ditched following a revolt by Labour's affiliated trade unions.

However, the incoming 1974 Labour government, again led by Wilson and later by James Callaghan, was elected and promised reforms.

But, mid-term, under pressure from the ruling class, it carried out the dictates of the capitalists and the International Monetary Fund and tried to impose wage increases well below the rate of inflation - again trying to make workers pay the price for the inflationary crisis.

Another huge strike wave including the 'winter of discontent' in 1978-79 culminated in Callaghan's defeat and the coming to power of Margaret Thatcher.

Today, the huge rise in oil and gas prices has fed a new jump in inflation again. The dislocation of market supply arising from the Covid lockdowns and the war in Ukraine is forcing fuel prices up so high that 4 million households in Britain face not being able to heat their homes next winter.

While the Tory government and



Inevitably, the bosses will try and make working people pay for the inflationary crisis just as they made us pay for the 2008 financial crisis and the recession that followed

the ruling class will try and pin the blame on rising oil and gas prices, inflation is much more deeply embedded in the system itself.

New bosses' offensive

Inevitably, the bosses will try and make working people pay for the inflationary crisis just as they made us pay for the 2008 financial crisis and the recession that followed.

They will be dusting off the play books from the 1970s - claiming that workers' pay will have to be restrained to stop an inflationary spiral. Inevitably this will open up a new phase of trade union pay battles as workers fight to keep their heads above water while the bosses defend their profits.

The question will be posed, who should pay for inflation the working class or the super-rich capitalist elite?

And the world capitalist economy and especially British capitalism are in an even weaker position today than in the 1970s. Even prior to Covid the global economy was slowing down towards another possible recession.

And the living standards of working-class people across the world have already taken a battering. Across the world capitalists have forced workers to take enormous hits to living standards using austerity measures.

In Britain, nearly £250 billion a year from 1980 to today has been siphoned from the collective wealth of the working class to the capitalists.

Today, workers' pay will be hit even harder by double-digit inflation, and there will be no alternative but to struggle for higher pay just to maintain living standards.

The fear of inflation could prompt the central banks to raise interest rates and potentially trigger a new recession. Coupled with likely economic slowdowns arising from stagflation, this crisis heralds a new phase of class struggle.

As Ukraine war intensifies... a Ukrainian worker activist speaks of his experiences

CLARE DOYLE
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

It is now more than two months since the tame Russian parliament voted for Luhansk and Donbas regions in Ukraine to be recognised as 'independent republics' within Russia, and since president Putin's tanks and troops began to roll into Ukraine.

Following its failure to take Kyiv at the start of the invasion, Russian military forces have now regrouped and have launched a full-scale offensive to carve out the entire Donbas and Luhansk regions from Ukraine's territory. Humanitarian corridors for civilians attempting to flee besieged cities are repeatedly agreed, then blocked.

Putin seems intent on having a major success in what he calls Russia's 'Special Military Operation' that he can announce on 9 May - the national holiday that commemorates victory over Hitler's fascism in 1945.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky stated on 16 April that 3,000 Ukrainian soldiers had died, while more than 19,000 invading troops had perished. 11 million Ukrainians have become refugees - 4.5 million of them fleeing abroad.



We feel it is obviously not fascism in our country, but it is capitalism with a very wild face!

Georgi is one of them. He is a socialist and trade unionist from Kyiv. He had previously told the CWI how, as a medical worker, he was conscripted early on and quite badly wounded at the frontline. He had then set about getting his wife and two children - one of whom is severely disabled - out of danger.

They had made a long and perilous journey to Lviv - a city near the border with Poland - now being bombed by Russian forces.

Since the Russian invasion began, Ukrainian men between 18 and 60 years have not been allowed to leave the country. They must stay and

Pakistan: New crisis erupts in country as Imran Khan ousted

Pakistan is the latest south Asian country to be thrown into political, social, and economic turmoil.

After a desperate attempt to cling to power, the coalition of opposition parties in parliament carried a vote of no confidence in the prime minister Imran Khan.

Khan's government, headed by his Tehreek-e-Insaf party, came to power in 2017, promising to end corruption and the decades-long rule of the two-party dynasty, of the PML-N and PPP.



Weeks of bombing by Putin's invasion forces has devastated Ukraine's residential areas and infrastructure

fight. But as Georgi was no longer able to serve in the army in any capacity, he was allowed to accompany his family onwards, through Poland to Germany.

After being held in a refugee camp for some days, they were sent to a small town near Frankfurt and allocated accommodation with a friendly and welcoming family.

Work

Recently, we were finally able to speak for some time on the phone. Georgi and his wife have been consumed with numerous formalities, getting the children into schools, filling in forms for assistance, and applying for jobs.

Until his medical qualifications are confirmed by the authorities, he is working 12 hours a day in a restaurant washing dishes. There is a camera in the rest room to check no one takes more than the allotted 15 minutes break!

He is grateful to have any income at all to help pay his way as the amount anyone can take out of their savings in Ukraine is minimal. The rest goes to the army by decree of the Supreme Council.

Georgi has to learn German fast. But he should be getting his papers from Ukraine soon, and is looking forward to doing the work he has been trained for. His wife has

Ukrainian qualifications as a hairdresser, but only gets a pittance in Germany at the moment.

War

Georgi believes this war will drag on. "Putin must have victory. It will not stop until he dies or is overthrown."

"There have been three weeks of Russian bombing and gas attacks at Mariupol where I have relatives. Mariupol is a key area for Putin to secure the famous 'land corridor' between North and South. They have been using phosgene in the area - a lethal gas used in World War One.

"My cousins - twins as it happens - were evacuated on a bus to Krasnodar in Russia. One of them was sent back to Kyiv. The other was to be housed in a camp in Russia and await a further transfer. Luckily, he was able to use his mobile to contact friends in Krasnodar who met him off the bus and took them to their home."

Ukraine

We discussed Ukraine's domestic politics.

"As happens in a war, Zelensky has become a kind of military dictator himself. He is presiding over a militarised society with what we call 'black colonels' [an old Soviet derogatory term referring to a military junta]. A military censor operates.

"Zelensky has decreed a general mobilisation, but his own party doesn't support it. He is talking of 'war democracy', but the trade unions, as far as they are still able to operate, believe there is no such thing. Workers will fight but are not able to appeal to Russians attacking them to come over [to our side]."

"I have discussed with one or two political friends in Ukraine. We feel it is obviously not fascism in our country, but it is capitalism with a very wild face! Thieves and oligarchs - a kleptocracy - lies behind a corrupted government and a hatred of other nations."

Georgi talks of his fears of wider economic and political crises developing because of this war, as well as severe food shortages.

"There will be a huge deficit of staples in Europe - no wheat flour or sunflower oil from Ukraine. We can see an economic crisis coming, in Germany especially, but all across Europe. Tensions are heightened on a world scale, making the building of socialist movements more urgent by the day."

● See also: 'The war in Ukraine - a commentary on Paul Mason's middle' by Tony Saunois on socialistworld.net



● Read the article in full on socialistworld.net

PCS ELECTIONS: SUPPORT THE BROAD LEFT NETWORK FOR A DEMOCRATIC, FIGHTING UNION LEADERSHIP

The ballot for PCS president and the union's national executive committee opens on 21 April and closes 12 May. PCS is the union for government workers in the civil service, public sector and outsourced contracts.

The PCS socialist rank-and-file group, the Broad Left Network, is standing Socialist Party member **Marion Lloyd** for president, and candidates for vice-presidents and the national executive committee.

Our coverage of this important election

Vote Marion Lloyd for PCS president

Why are you standing for president?

We need change at the top of the union. We desperately need a leadership that is serious about tackling the very destructive attacks that PCS members are facing, and will continue to face, if our employers have their way.

For example, I and others, supported by the Broad Left Network, called for a collective response if the employer failed to take the necessary measures to keep us safe during the pandemic, rather than put members in the untenable position of having to decide whether they were prepared to take individual action or not.

It became very clear to us right at the beginning of the pandemic that the current leadership was too cautious, and was not prepared to organise a serious campaign to keep members as safe as possible.

It was very much left to us at local level to put the management under

pressure, to put in place the necessary arrangements such as whole-sale working from home, to make sure we kept members safe. Only months later, in the face of a serious outbreak at the DVLA in Swansea, did the current leadership finally act. Despite the inadequate response of the union's leadership, members fought bravely.

This cautious approach became even more apparent when, out of the blue, the general secretary Mark Serwotka, supported by current president Fran Heathcote, informed the employer that the leadership had 'parked' the union's 2020 national pay claim. I can't interpret this as anything but bowing down to the idea that we should all pull together during a crisis - 'national unity' with the Tories.

But what this has done is strengthened the employer, who have not stopped their attacks against workers, including PCS members. It has meant that the leadership also gave the green light to the employer that there would be no united response to their continued attacks against us, and in fact signalled that they were prepared to sell conditions for pay, rather than fight the Tory pay restrictions.

The national executive committee majority slavishly went along with all this - we need a leadership prepared to stand up to the employer and prepared to confront the very serious challenges we face.

In our privatised areas, many members barely scrape the minimum wage. This is scandalous. We need an almighty campaign for proper pay rates in these areas so that people can make ends meet.

The insistence of our current leadership to have a campaign only on pay and, as an afterthought, pensions is wrong. Surely the most sensible thing to do is to link everything together and include issues such as jobs, a safe working environment, office closures and shorter working week.

That's why I'm standing - to work with members and reps to build a campaign which inspires confidence and gets members involved.

increased this year, while those for her opponents have gone down. Marion is currently BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) group president and is in the strongest position to challenge the incumbent national president, Fran Heathcote.

Marion spoke to the Socialist and explained why she believes PCS members should vote for her and the other Broad Left Network candidates in these elections (see below)

What issues are of the greatest concern?

Where do I start? There are so many.

Covid has not gone away. In some areas cases are yet again creeping up, and the union must organise collectively to respond to any forced working in unsafe offices.

The government has now announced a further clampdown on pay. The more realistic inflation rate of RPI is soaring to 9%. Other unions like Unite use this definition but the PCS leadership wrongly quote the CPI figure used by the Tories, but even that is running at 7%. We must now build on the work that has been started, but with a serious campaign to help us win - not just on pay, but on all the other issues we are facing day in and day out.

Faced with record inflation and energy bills going through the roof, members feel isolated and left to fight alone. Poverty pay levels within our membership are appalling. 10% of civil servants earn below the living wage.

The latest stage of the so-called PCS national campaign was a consultative ballot. Members were asked whether they supported the national claim for a 10% pay rise and a demand for the return of overpaid pension contributions.

The turnout was 45.2%, some 70,000 PCS members, with 97.3% supporting the pay claim and 80.7% willing to take industrial action to achieve it. This is a strong result against the background of a lacklustre, top-down campaign and leadership inaction over the last two years.

Most importantly, it is the basis for a broad campaign on pay and other issues, leading to a statutory ballot for action which will be necessary to take on and defeat government attacks. We are not alone, other public sector workers are in the same boat. We need a coalition of the willing to act together.

Jobs, work pressures, and office closures are shared concerns across the government departments our members work in. For example, in the DWP, management has announced 48 office closures, a large number of fixed-term workers face



the sack, and work pressures are growing. Broad Left Network supporters are leading the fight on all these issues and heading up a rank-and-file campaign to put pressure on the group leadership to act.

The environment must now also be central to our concerns. The school students led the way and I would want to see our union placing climate change and the steps needed to avoid a catastrophe at the heart of our bargaining agenda.

Similarly with equality. There is no place in our union for discrimination of any sort. Unity is what makes us strong.

We must develop a campaign around all these issues that everyone can get behind and have confidence in. I would build that, working with reps and members and go out to the heart of our membership.

What's your position on the forthcoming local elections?

Like many of our members I want to see people elected who stand on a programme to reverse pay decline and job cuts. I have no faith in the Labour Party under Keir Starmer to do that.

It leaves a particularly nasty taste in my mouth to see so many Labour councils implementing cuts, leading to outrageous attacks on their workers, such as in the current Coventry workers dispute and previously Tower Hamlets council's use of fire-and-rehire against its workforce.

I will vote for any candidate that stands against austerity and opposes all cuts. In my area that means the Trade Unionist and Socialist



"Under our opponents the union has lost hundreds of reps. They have betrayed thousands of fixed-term staff in DWP. We stand for a union that will fight for all members all of the time. Solidarity is not just for election time."

David Semple, DWP vice-president candidate



"Broad Left Network candidates stand on a solid programme for action, with concrete plans for developing the union's industrial strength. The current leadership have been unable to deliver for members. Instead they dress up unsuccessful ballots as victories and cheerfully encourage members to vote for pay deals that eviscerate their terms and conditions. Members notice their lighter wallets and longer hours - it's time to actually do something about it." **Fiona Brittle, Scot Gov vice-president candidate**

Coalition (TUSC), which is standing in many areas across Britain.

I oppose affiliation to the Labour Party. Keir Starmer has driven out every scrap of Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto and even Corbyn himself. The Labour Party is back to what it was under Blair and Brown. They did us no favours: we remember the Blair and Brown governments that cut 100,000 civil service jobs, privatised jobs, and gave our members away to rotten companies which ruthlessly attacked our members' jobs, pay and conditions.

Many of the MPs who supported these policies and moved against Jeremy Corbyn are still around - why would we support them? We are a trade union - not an extension to the Labour Party - and both my opponents in this election would do well to remember that.

PCS should only support candidates that support us - in both national and local elections. And PCS should discuss how to build working-class political representation with

other unions such as Unite, the bakers' union BFAWU (which has recently disaffiliated from the Labour Party) and the RMT (which is represented on the steering committee of TUSC).

What one change would you make?

There are loads of changes I would want to make but getting rid of the Tory anti-union laws would be high on my list. In a capitalist system the dice are heavily loaded against workers. Being able to join together and take action, to inflict damage on an employer, evens things up a bit. The Tory laws severely limit the ability of workers to take action.

Right-wing commentators and the bosses support these laws, they say the unions are too powerful. Well tell that to the sacked P&O workers! Solidarity with these workers, abolish the Tory anti-union laws, and let's make the Trades Union Congress demonstration on 18 June a massive event - a show of the strength of organised labour.

Broad Left Network slate

PCS Socialist Party members support the Broad Left Network and call upon union activists and members to vote for these candidates in the ballot 21 April - 12 May.

PRESIDENT

- Lloyd, Marion (BEIS)

VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Brittle, Fiona (Scot Gov)
- Brown, Sarah (Met Police)
- Rosser, Jon-Paul (HMRC)
- Semple, Dave (DWP)

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- Bartlett, Dave (MOJ)
- Bridges, Andi (HMRC)
- Brittle, Fiona (Scottish Government)
- Brown, Alex (NHS Digital)
- Brown, Sarah (Met Police)
- Davies, Jaime (HMRC)
- Denman, Kevin (Met Police)
- Dennis, Alan (DSG)
- Doyle, Nick (HMRC)
- Exley, Matt (Culture Sector)
- Foxton, Gill (DfE)
- Francis, Sue (UKSBS)
- Heemskerck, Rachel (DWP)
- Lloyd, Marion (BEIS)
- McDougall, Rachelle (Crown Office)
- Parker, Nick (ACAS)
- Rees, Dave (DWP)
- Ritchie, Rob (Met Police)
- Rosser, Jon-Paul (HMRC)
- Semple, Dave (DWP)
- Suter, Paul (DWP)
- Tweedale, Saorsa-Amatheia (DWP)
- Williams, Katrine (DWP)
- Worswick, Craig (DWP)
- Young, Colin (DfE)
- Young, Bobby (HMRC)

Broad Left Network programme

The Broad Left Network is a PCS rank-and-file members group formed by socialists to challenge and replace the current failed union leadership.

The key issues the Broad Left Network is standing candidates on include:

- **100,000 new civil service jobs to ease pressure and workloads in all departments and agencies**
- **A 10% pay rise, minimum, to reverse the fall in wages due to rising prices since 2010**
- **Civil Service offices to stay open - maintain jobs and investment in local communities**
- **Renew our fight on pensions, 68 is still too late, we pay too much and get too little**
- **Return of all outsourced work - no more privatisation**
- **No discrimination - equality proof all HR policies and pay systems**
- **Safety paramount - union agreement on home/hybrid working**
- **A strong political voice - PCS should back candidates who back us**

The Broad Left Network calls for an integrated national campaign on all the major issues of concern to members across all government departments. A campaign leading to a statutory ballot on the action needed to defend members from continuous Tory government attacks on pay, pensions, jobs and office closures. The Broad Left Network calls for PCS to actively seek unity in action with other public sector unions.

● For more information about the BLN go to pcsbln.wordpress.com



"We need a PCS leadership that's capable of engaging with members, of organising with branches and groups to deliver a national campaign that will win for members. I'm standing to be part of that change for action, not just words."

Jon-Paul Rosser, HMRC vice-president candidate



Marion Lloyd

£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

SAVE OUR

NHS

Vote for a socialist candidate prepared to fight

Vote TUSC on 5 May



RICHARD GINGELL
BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Whether rich or poor, one thing is certain - eventually you're going to get ill or injured. 2 million patients are currently on NHS waiting lists and if you are poor, you won't be able to fork out to go private.

We've all witnessed the ruination of the NHS in some way. Ambulances being turned away, a lack of availability for mental health support, and months of waiting for even the simplest of referrals.

My own experiences with the NHS in the past few years reflect this reality. Recently my elderly mother-in-law had a fall after a suspected stroke. After an hour waiting for an

ambulance we received a call back advising us it would be another four, and that we might want to make our own arrangements.

No problem, she seemed better so we took her into A&E for a better look. After a four-hour wait she finally received a CT scan that confirmed there was no stroke, but her blood pressure was low, she was still dizzy and may have been suffering a concussion. The doctor wanted further tests but, after another exhausting eight hours wait with no food in a crowded waiting-room, we decided to take her home to rest instead.

The Socialist Party campaigns about the NHS a lot, usually against its chronic underfunding and privatisation at the hands of the Tory government.

But of those 2 million on waiting lists, how

many of us are supposedly 'represented' by Labour politicians in Parliament and in their councils? Far from taking the fight to the Tories to defend health and care services, Labour politicians have been carrying out cuts and privatisation too!

When voters go to the polls on 5 May to vote in the local elections, we deserve the option to vote for a candidate who is willing to stand up for the working class and do all they can to help defend the NHS. That's why the Socialist Party is standing candidates as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Fighting socialist councillors would use their elected position to help build campaigns to demand the funding our health services need. Councils must use all their

powers to give working-class communities a say in NHS decision making, this includes initiating referendums, and retaining and referring decisions to prevent service closures and privatisation.

With enormous financial reserves and borrowing powers, a council willing to take on the government for the money in the long-term could introduce policies now in the interests of our health. It could fund free access to leisure facilities, offer healthy free school meals to all children, and provide high-quality health and social care services for the elderly, disabled, and all those who need them, with care workers on decent pay.

Use your vote on 5 May to vote for a councillor who fights for the NHS. Vote TUSC and join the fightback.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p3

