

# JOHNSON WOUNDED, NOW LET'S GET ALL THE TORIES OUT!



**148** Tory MPs have finally moved against Johnson. It is not growing poverty, soaring energy bills, or Boris Johnson's endless parties and lies that have pushed them to act: they are only desperate to try and save their own skins at the next election.

When the prime minister gets booed at Jubilee events the writing is on the wall. While Johnson has survived this first challenge, he is badly wounded, and it is clear that it has acted as the starting gun on the

fight over his successor.

Despite the Tory rules currently stating that another leadership contest cannot be held for 12 months, he is likely to be forced out sooner. Theresa May lasted just six months after a more 'decisive' victory in a vote of confidence. As we know, Tory MPs have no compunction about changing the rules when it suits them!

For a brief period after the 2019 general election Johnson's success at the ballot box appeared to paper over the deep splits in the Tory Party. Now they are once again openly at each other's throats. Ditching Johnson would not solve this; the lack of a clear successor reflects the huge differences between the various Tory factions. While they agree that it's their job to defend the capitalist system, and that it should be working-class people who pay for that system's many crises, they are divided on pretty much everything else.

Ultimately this crisis, in what was once among the most successful political parties

in the world, reflects the growing unpopularity of the rotten profit-driven capitalist system the Tory party defends. It is a system that is working for a few at the top but for no one else. While the wealth of the 250 richest people in Britain is now worth as much as the richest 1,000 had back in 2017, the rest of us are suffering the steepest fall in living standards since 1956.

Many working-class people will conclude, correctly, that it makes no major difference which of the Tory gang of crooks is prime minister. That's true, but splits at the top are an indication of weakness. They should give the workers' movement confidence that we can build a movement capable of kicking them all out of office. The trade union demonstration on 18 June should be a launchpad for coordinated strike action to fight for RPI inflation-proofed pay rises for all and to get the Tories out.

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**March together - for a mass TUC demonstration on 18 June**

- Strike together for a pay rise
- For a £15 minimum wage now and inflation-proof pay rises for all
- Starmer's Labour doesn't fight for us - build a new workers' party

The Socialist Party will be joining thousands of trade unionists and workers marching against the cost-of-living crisis on 18 June in London, join us!

- Saturday 18 June
- Assemble from 10.30am at Portland Place near Oxford Street, London
- March departs 12pm
- Rally 1pm at Parliament Square
- Visit [tuc.org.uk/DemandBetter](http://tuc.org.uk/DemandBetter) to book transport from your area
- Text 'TUC demo' to 07958032071 with your name and postcode

**Solidarity with the RMT in historic action ▶▶▶ p3**



# Build a working-class alternative to the bosses, the Tories and Starmer's Labour



MARY FINCH

## SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

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for 'beergate'. However, there is no prospect of his removal reversing the consolidation of Labour as an out-and-out capitalist party.

The rule changes which Starmer pushed through the 2021 Labour Party conference - scrapping the £3 'registered supporters' category that propelled Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership in 2015; lengthening the membership qualifying period to vote in a leadership election to six months; and raising the threshold for MPs support to 20% of the parliamentary party before a candidate can even get onto the ballot paper - means that there would be no left candidate in a new leadership contest.

### Even more pro-capitalist

On the contrary, the candidates to the fore so far are even more crudely pro-capitalist than Starmer, like Wes Streeting who, as shadow health minister, has extolled the supposed virtues of private companies profiteering in the NHS.

Therefore, while kicking out the Tories would be rightly cheered by millions, replacing them with a Blair 2.0 New Labour government would not offer a solution for the working class.

As we face the biggest cuts to living standards in over 50 years it is very clear that we need to urgently build a fightback, mobilising the 6.6 million currently in the trade unions and beyond, in coordinated strike action to

demand inflation-proofed pay rises for all and a £15-an-hour minimum wage.

At the same time, any attempt to introduce new anti-trade union laws, or to use the existing ones against trade unions taking action, must be met with a determined collective response by the whole workers' movement. If the right-wing national trade union leaders fail to act, we need a 'coalition of the willing', left-led, unions to show what is needed.

However, an industrial struggle needs to be combined with beginning to build a political voice for the workers' movement.

Working-class people need our own party which will fight for our interests in parliament and in the council chambers. A party whose political representatives take only the wage of the workers they represent, rather than the bloated salaries of the Westminster elite.

The Socialist Party fights for every step towards such a party. We call on all the trade unions currently looking for an alternative to the left of Labour to take steps to found such a party.

At the same time, we put the case that, for any workers' party to fully stand in the interests of our class, it will need to fight for a socialist society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the capitalist elite and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few.

## Socialist Party

### WHAT WE THINK

▶▶ CONTINUED FROM FRONT

**B**uilding a movement to kick the Tories out also poses the need for an alternative. Of course many, desperate to punish the Tories, will inevitably vote for Labour.

For example, the Sunday Times published opinion polling for the Wakefield by-election - triggered when the sitting Tory MP was jailed

for sexually assaulting a teenage boy - which gave Labour a gigantic 20-point lead. However, voting Labour as the 'lesser evil' does not represent enthusiasm for what Keir Starmer's Labour has to offer.

Starmer's overwhelming motivation is to prove to the capitalist elite that, unlike Jeremy Corbyn, he would be a more reliable representative of their interests than Johnson's Tories. That may be true, but the interests of the elite are diametrically opposed to those of the working-class and middle-class majority.

Starmer has systematically ripped up Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto pledges. Nationalisation of the energy companies, abolishing anti-trade union laws, mass council house-building - none of those demands feature in Starmer's programme.

Starmer hasn't said one word in support of trade unions currently involved in or preparing for national industrial action - like the RMT and the CWU. Nor has he opposed Tory threats of even more anti-trade union legislation - introducing minimum service levels, in order to try to undermine effective strike action.

Meanwhile numerous Labour councils have attacked their workforce's pay and conditions, leaving workers with no choice but to strike. Coventry Labour council has spent more than £3 million on an attempted strike-breaking operation against the Unite refuse workers' strike, many times more than it would have cost to meet their demands.

It is possible that Starmer, like Johnson, could be forced out, in his case resigning if he receives a fine

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## National rail and London tube – 50,000 prepare to strike

JOHN REID  
RETIRED RMT MEMBER, FORMER NEC MEMBER

The RMT delivered its largest ever ballot result on Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies. Up against lies and intimidation by management, 71% of the members balloted voted yes by a margin of almost 90%. Now 40,000 RMT rail workers are preparing for national strike action.

This, together with over 10,000 RMT members in the live dispute on London Underground, puts 50,000 key workers in the battlefield to defend our jobs, conditions, pensions, and our right to strike. We are fighting not just for our members but for all workers.

We work long unsocial shifts. Yet we are expected to take cuts in our living standards, jobs and pensions while the parasitic, vampire-like billionaire and millionaire capitalist class prosper and feed off the blood, sweat and tears of workers' labour.

On the London Underground, 600 station jobs are under threat. These are the workers who worked through Covid to get hospital staff and other key workers to their workplaces.

It is estimated by economists that every strike day costs between £50 and £300 million to the capital's businesses. Even on the lowest estimate, every shift of every London Underground worker contributes £4,000 to the London economy.

Our campaign must demand full renationalisation of the transport network into a fully funded, integrated public network, under democratic working-class control.

# RMT LEADS THE FIGHTBACK

## STOP PRESS

The RMT has announced three national strike dates across Network Rail and 13 train operating companies. This historic strike will take place on 21, 23 and 25 June. The next tube strike will include all grades and will coincide with the national action on 21 June. The RMT demands an assurance of no attacks on pensions, job cuts or changes to working conditions.

In recent days thousands of RMT members have been on strike. 4,000 station staff on London Underground struck on 6 June, and others were on strike on the night tube. Cleaners employed by Churchill in London and Atalia Servest in Wolverhampton have taken strike action, as have RMT members on the TransPennine Express.

The whole trade union movement must give its solidarity to the RMT, especially as the Tories threaten new anti-trade union measures.

This strike announcement could transform the 18 June TUC demo.

Now is the time for the trade union leaders to come together to draw up a battle plan: drive to make the TUC demo as big as possible and plan the next step – to all strike together.

## RMT tube strike: working class power on display

On Monday 6 June station staff across London Underground, members of the transport union RMT, took strike action. This was follow-up action to the massive all-grades strike in March.

Socialist Party members report from across London.

Another great show of working-class power! The tube network is effectively shut by station staff alone.

Reps at Kings Cross told **James Ivens** that managers were only running trains where there's no tunnels – so basically, there's no underground on the underground! Even above ground a lot of stations were closed.

Unite Housing workers went to Finsbury Park to show solidarity. **Nick Auvache** says: "All the entrances are closed. The strike is a complete success at Finsbury Park".

**Nancy Taaffe** reported "Walthamstow closed. Large crowd forming and being told there's a strike on". Similarly, Socialist Party member **Tim** reports simply: "Leyton closed".

Strikers at Arnos Grove pointed out to **Paul Kershaw** how significant this dispute is. "All terms and conditions are up for grabs."

A picket at Kings Cross explained the importance of their fight for the public: "If they get rid of us then that's that, there's no one. The Underground is terrible for disabled people already. I was with an electric wheelchair user the other day who couldn't get a space on a train. He'd waited half an hour. His battery had run out and he was trying to push it. I was this close to getting him a taxi myself. But anyone can need help. A woman turned her ankle on the platform the other day and I had to help her out of the station."

Several different strikers at Brixton discussed with **Berkay Kartav** the importance of coordinating the action with other groups of striking workers.

A striker at Oxford Circus said: "We need longer actions if we're going to hit all the bosses. When we go out for several days, when they see their bank balances dropping, that's when they take notice."

One rep at Hainault said to Socialist Party members: "I can't tell you how much it means to have you standing with us here and all over London".

The 24-hour station staff strike caused significant disruption, with hundreds of stations closed and a severely limited service.

Train lines were suspended and where a service was running it was only on the outlying stations. The strike has shown the government, the London Mayor and Transport for London that we are in this fight for the long term.

Further action, including all grades, is inevitable unless all attacks are taken off the table.

Solidarity with station staff!

**GARY HARBORD**  
DRIVER, PICCADILLY LINE



London Bridge tube strike

RMT members in London have been fighting this year on different fronts. Wider action by the union is a big boost to all these members.



Hainault night tube strike

### Night tube

RMT members on the Central and Victoria underground lines have been on strike every Friday and Saturday night since January in a fight to defend the work-life balance of drivers. Socialist Party members have supported their campaign for family-friendly working practices all the way through. They have just rebaloted and overwhelmingly voted to continue the action.

### Churchill Cleaners

Cleaners working on Churchill contracts on Govia Thameslink (GTR), Eurostar, Southeastern trains, and HS1 are continuing their action for £15 an hour. Despite Churchill making £39 million profit in 2020, they pay cleaners as little as £8.91 an hour. The workers should be paid - and the work should be brought back in-house, out of the hands of greedy profiteers!



Churchill strike



Rickmansworth



Hainault

# Unite Arriva Yorkshire strike solid

## Bus drivers and other key workers deserve inflation-busting pay rises

JOHN VASEY, PAUL THOMAS, BERNARD DAVIES AND IAIN DALTON  
SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN WEST AND NORTH YORKSHIRE

Around 650 members of Unite, drivers, engineers and other workers for Arriva Yorkshire, started indefinite strike action on Monday 6 June over pay, after a 96% vote for strike action.

Strikes took place in Wakefield, Dewsbury, Castleford, Selby and Heckmondwike in West and North Yorkshire. With some pickets there from 2am on the first day, joined by more workers as the morning went on, there was a determined mood.

In the run up to the strike, Arriva Yorkshire management had waged a propaganda war against the workers, alleging the strikes are 'unjustified' as the company offered a 'significant increase' to drivers – a paltry 4.1% initially, when RPI inflation is 11.1%.

After dragging talks out for around eight months, they are only offering to backdate half of this rise. As several drivers explained, with many having worked overtime to keep



Wakefield depot IAIN DALTON

buses running, then not being paid properly for those hours can mean a substantial loss of money.

Members are rejecting Arriva's offer of their feet.

Over 200 joined the picket in Wakefield, the largest depot, at the height of the morning. Over 60 in

Heckmondwike enjoyed a BBQ on the picket line.

In Selby workers picketed from the early morning. The impact of the strike was seen at the bus station in the town, which was locked up with no sign of any buses running. When Socialist Party members visited

depots it was clear no buses were moving.

Moreover, there was significant support from the public.

Bus drivers with Stagecoach, who took three and a half weeks' strike action in South Yorkshire, tooted support. One driver shouted out of the

bus when passing: "Give them a good fight".

Taxi drivers were tooting support when passing. They have also been on strike in Wakefield earlier this year. The Wakefield Drivers Association that led these strikes put out a statement of their total support for the bus strike. It said: "With the cost of living at an all-time high, out-of-control energy costs, soaring food prices and many drivers being affected by food poverty, it is only right that bus operators pay a fair deal for its employees/bus drivers."

If Arriva try to ride out the strikes without making an offer that meets the workers' demands, then such support will be crucial.

Bus drivers, like many other key workers, were lauded as heroes as they worked through the lockdowns to keep society going.

Yet employers are doing everything they can to resist giving workers a pay rise that keeps up with the soaring cost of living, let alone makes up for years of austerity pay squeezes.

It's in the interest of all workers that Unite members at Arriva beat their employers' bully-boy tactics.

# Savage London bus cuts demand serious fightback

LONDON UNITE MEMBERS

Transport for London has announced its savage plans for London's bus services, jobs and pay. Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan has shown yet again that he is incapable of standing up to Tory cuts to the TfL budget.

Inner London bus services will be cut by at least four per cent, including around 16 routes. Unite the Union has warned that jobs of bus workers, including engineers, cleaning and catering staff, will be put at risk.

Also cuts to overtime and rest-day working would mean low-paid workers, already facing the cost of living squeeze, who rely on these to survive, will be hit even harder.

This month sees the ten-year anniversary of the first all-London bus strike since the privatisation of the mid-1990s. That action, across 17 bus companies, took 85% of the fleet off the roads. The strike, and other strikes three years later, again on a London-wide scale, showed the power of bus workers when they take action together. This is needed again now.

It is essential that Unite demands the renationalisation of the London bus companies, under democratic control, as part of a publicly owned transport network in the capital.

Workers demand pay parity across London - on the best of the different rates of pay currently paid by the different companies. Similarly, the best pensions and terms and conditions.

It is vital that Unite joins with the other transport unions, particularly the RMT, whose members have already shut down the tubes this year in action against attacks on pensions and jobs.



# Can't trust bosses to end sweatshop conditions in Leicester



FAB-L event LEICESTER SP

HEATHER RAWLING  
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Many, mainly Asian, families in Leicester attended an event organised by Fashion Workers Advice Bureau (FAB-L), a new workers' rights organisation. FAB-L is jointly funded by the unions, but also by some fashion labels.

During the pandemic, Leicester's garment industry made headlines for slave wages and appalling conditions in the sweatshops. Many factories pay workers £4 to £4.50 an hour.

Many employees also rent overcrowded accommodation from their employers, giving bosses power over nearly all aspects of their lives. Most workers are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME), or from eastern Europe.

Boohoo fashion company accounts for 75-80% of Leicester garment production. Boohoo shares fell by 23% in July last year after conditions in its factories were exposed during the pandemic. But Boohoo was at the FAB-L event, advertising jobs in its factory!

Any organisation that receives funds from big business is limited in what it can do. FAB-L can advise, but can it organise?

Since its launch in January this year, FAB-L has helped 50-60 workers recover wages. That's about ten workers per month. At that rate, it would take over 80 years to help all the 10,000 workers in Leicester's garment industry.

Neelam Verma from Unite urged people to join a union. But how would the companies sponsoring

FAB-L feel if the whole industry organised and fought for a living wage that kept pace with inflation? Would they still fund it?

Wouldn't it be better for the unions to independently launch a joint campaign to unionise the industry and organise to fight for better wages and conditions?

It won't be easy. Garment workers fear intimidation if they are seen talking to unions.

But it can be done by tactics such as leafleting in the community and confidential telephone lines. Once unionised, workers would have a sense of their own strength as an organised workforce and develop confidence to take on the bosses.

See 'End the scandal of sweatshop labour in Leicester' at socialistparty.org.uk

**2022 National Shop Stewards Network Conference**  
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www.shopstewards.net

Speakers include:  
Sharon Graham, Unite general secretary  
Steve Gillan, POA general secretary  
Sarah Woolley, BFAWU general secretary  
Unite Coventry bin striker

# Rugby: Another big pay victory for striking bin workers



Pete Randle from the Coventry bin strike addresses Rugby strikers LEN SHAAL

ADAM HARMSWORTH  
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Rugby's bin workers and street cleaners, members of Unite, have returned to work with a big win.

After a month of all-out strike action, they have won pay rises of up to 12% and are returning to work with a far larger union membership.

The workers opposed a measly 1.75% pay rise, which would be negligible against soaring inflation. Rugby's strike was the latest in a series of vital struggles by bin workers, among other public sector workers, to keep their heads above water.

**Shameless**

After shameless offers of debt advice and loans failed to persuade the workers not to ballot, Rugby's Tory council published a statement on the strike, insisting they just couldn't pay more.

The workers disagreed and they went on strike. They gained the confidence of more workers, and recruited them to the union.

On the first strike day, the council could barely staff any bin lorries - not that it mattered because the picket blocked the vehicles from leaving.

The strike had frequent visits from Coventry's striking bin workers. They shared tactics, political perspectives, and food from the occasional picket line barbecue!

The confidence and unity of the strike was admirable, and was demonstrated as they rejected one pay offer because the loaders' pay rise was still inadequate. The Tory council leader responded saying he wouldn't agree to 'frivolous' spending!

**What's possible**

Local authorities run by all the main parties are willing to see their

workers go into poverty as they follow the government austerity line.

This strike's success shows that when bosses tell you your demands aren't possible, that's not true and you can win them.

Hopefully, the victorious workers in Rugby and elsewhere will take that message down to the TUC demo on 18 June. Their victory will inspire more workers to fight, and help build towards the mass co-ordinated strike action we need to take on the Tory government.

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# Bakers' union conference fringe meetings NSSN success and young workers fighting back

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS AT THE CONFERENCE REPORT

It was standing room only at a packed National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) meeting at the bakers' union BFAWU conference. Conference delegates crowded in to hear Coventry bin striker Pete Randle, and Rob Williams, national chair of the NSSN.

Pete announced to the meeting that the bin workers have just renewed their strike mandate. Their re-ballot saw a 100% turnout and a massive 'yes' vote to continue the action!

He argued that now is the time for trade unions to fight together, and to build a political alternative to Starmer's New Labour. This approach was a major factor in him deciding to join the Socialist Party, he said.

**18 June demo**

In encouraging everyone in the meeting to mobilise all they can for the 18 June national trade union demo, Rob said that if it were just down to the anger of working-class people, the demo would be massive.

There is still time to build it, and the NSSN will help to both build the

demo and argue that the trade union leaders must pull out all the stops.

He pointed to the number of significant strikes in preparation and upcoming ballots, including on the railways and in Royal Mail and British Telecom. Each of us in our own unions must demand that the trade union leaders come together to coordinate ballots and action.

**Youth Fight for Jobs**

At the same time as the NSSN meeting, a joint meeting took place between the Zero Hours Justice campaign and Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ). Theo Sharrief spoke from YFJ.

He explained the long relationship between the bakers' union and YFJ, from leading the fight for £10 an hour minimum wage in 2015, to the Fast Food Rights campaign, and more.

The meeting agreed that it is vital to now campaign for £15 an hour. Theo emphasised the potential of the trade union movement to organise young workers and to tackle casualisation. Fighting for £15 would make a big difference to recruiting and mobilising young people.

As we go to press, nearly 30 copies of the Socialist have been sold at the conference.



Unison is the biggest union for public sector workers, with over a million members across local government, health, education and much more. The first in-person conference since 2019 is therefore an important event for the working class in Britain. Here we reproduce material from the bulletin produced by Socialist Party members for the conference.

HUGO PIERRE  
UNISON NEC MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Unison conference 2022 takes place in the midst of a cost-of-living nightmare. Millionaire Tory chancellor Rishi Sunak has been forced into finding some extra cash but it's nowhere near enough.

Following years of austerity with no fightback from the previous right-wing Unison leadership, members voted for change in the national executive elections in 2021. This is the first in-person national conference since then and members will want to know: will the new left-led national executive (NEC) lead a fight?

At last, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has called a national demo on 18 June. The rail union RMT is preparing for historic national strike action on the railways as well as London Underground. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) is also campaigning in preparation for national action in Royal Mail and British Telecom. The National Education Union (NEU) and civil service union PCS are both preparing to ballot in the autumn, and national disputes are continuing in higher education. Bin workers and other council workers, mainly in Unite and GMB, are striking in various places around the country. The potential is building for coordinated action on pay.

Unison members in local government and the NHS – the largest public sector union – will be demanding to join in!

In March 2011, 750,000 marched on the anti-austerity TUC demo. That led directly to the two million-strong walkout by 29 unions to defend our pensions – effectively a public sector general strike.

The right-wing Unison leadership of then general secretary Dave Prentis, with the likes of current general secretary Christina McAnea, then a national officer, led the retreat from the struggle that could have defeated the Tory-Lib-Dem coalition. It only emboldened the government and council employers, including many Labour councils.

Unison members faced a wave of attacks in the Tory austerity years. Over 500,000 jobs were lost in local government. There is a crisis in social care with over 200,000 vacancies across the whole sector. Funding cuts and privatisation have left the NHS structurally unable to meet the demands of the biggest health crisis. Wage stagnation for most members means pay levels, in real terms, 20-25% lower than they were in 2010.

Throughout this period the right-wing Prentis-led Unison leadership failed to translate the anger and willingness of members to fight into a strategy to win. The candidate of the right wing, Christina McAnea, won the general secretary election in 2020, but left-leaning candidates who stood for change took the majority of seats on the NEC in the 2022 elections. This included four Socialist Party members.

This opened up the opportunity to transform Unison into a fighting, democratic union. Unison members continue to face all and more of the issues that have seen a decline in membership and weakened workplace representation over the austerity years. The left leadership must adopt a programme that can mobilise members. The most urgent task will be to prepare members for action on pay.

### Pay

The cost-of-living crisis, which in reality is a further transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich through inflation, will hit public sector workers among the hardest. The current RPI inflation rate of 11.1% massively outstrips last year's pay rise for local government workers of 1.75%. Figures recently



**Public sector workers will again see a crash in real wages if public sector unions and Unison in particular do not mount a substantial and sustained serious campaign on pay**



Unison members at Sandwell Leisure Centre strike in December 2021. BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

released show that average earnings had risen by 8.2% in the first three months of this year. However this was mainly due to bonuses in the finance sector. Public sector pay growth was only 1.6%!

Public sector workers will again see a crash in real wages if public sector unions and Unison in particular do not mount a substantial and sustained serious campaign on pay. It is vital that any pay claim demands wage rises above the RPI inflation figure.

But lessons from previous pay campaigns must be learnt. Last year, Unison conducted a ballot of the entire local government membership in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately, the ballot was eight months after the claim should have been settled, with a very lacklustre campaign. This resulted in an overwhelming vote for strike action but with a very low turnout of 14.5%, well below the threshold for action

imposed by the undemocratic Tory anti-trade union laws.

Unfortunately, the lessons do not appear to be learned. The local government pay claim date was 1 April, yet incredibly, in the last couple of weeks, council employers in the Local Government Association had complained that they haven't yet received the unions' pay claim! Only in the last week has it been submitted. As the largest public sector union, Unison must take the lead in co-ordinating claims, ballots and strike action.

All unions face major challenges in winning national ballots, but the first job is to enthuse and develop the activist base with a strategy to win, so that they can actively campaign for a successful ballot. The RMT has shown this can be done.

### NHS

The cost-of-living crisis will force members to ask questions of their

executive. The left leadership of Unison will be tested on this and other matters.

Unison in the NHS should have been leading the campaign on pay. Members' life-and-death work during Covid highlighted the enormous popular support for the role they play. Grassroots campaigns sprung up for a 15% pay rise involving a substantial number of health workers, which could have been built upon.

Unlike the local government service group, which has a left majority on its executive, the health group leadership is still in the hands of the right wing. They squandered the opportunity to build a pay campaign. They ran a consultation without much of a campaign behind it in the summer of 2021, and then meekly accepted the pay review body's below-inflation offer.

This is despite the campaigns members in some regions have organised for better terms and conditions,

including full sick pay, as happened with Homerton Hospital's privatised catering workers. In the North West, there were a number of strikes of privatised hospital workers on numerous issues.

There is a real warning to Unison that a failure to fight could weaken organisation in the sector. The successful action in Barts Health Trust for privatised staff to be brought back in-house and onto Agenda for Change conditions was organised by Unite. This was in an NHS Trust that was formerly well organised by Unison, where the union is now a shell.

### Democratic changes

Some steps have been taken in the right direction. The left-led NEC has agreed to increase the basic rate of strike pay, and has agreed recently to support the identified groups of members balloting for action over national pay in Scotland with an even

higher rate.

However, unfortunately, the left-led NEC has spent a considerable proportion of their time on structural changes, and dealing with disciplinary cases concerning Unison president Paul Holmes – involving the union and his employer.

There is no doubt that the union machine, which predominantly backs the right-wing general secretary Christina McAnea, has at every turn tried to block, delay and fillibuster any attempts at positive change. The union's communications have even been misused to attack decisions made by the NEC. The left-led NEC has to get its message to members and activists 'over the heads' of the unelected officials. This includes bringing reports and motions through branches and regional bodies.

We need no lectures on 'democracy' from the right-wing, who have dirt on their hands having presided over decades of vicious witch-hunts, suspending and shutting down branches, and expelling militant activists in order to stay in control.

However, it is a serious mistake of the left majority NEC to not properly investigate bullying complaints made by reps and branch staff in Kirklees, who have a proud fighting record. This only opens the door to the hypocritical right-wing.

### Cuts and a political voice

Organisational changes are important, but what will transform the union are the campaigns that involve members and transform their pay, conditions at work and their job security. Key to this in local government is the fight against budget cuts.

Unison members fought 'fire & re-hire' attacks by a Labour Mayor in Tower Hamlets, at the start of Kier Starmer's New Labour leadership. Starmer refused to intervene on behalf of the strikers, demonstrating that his stated "under new management" means Labour attacking workers and backing its right-wing councillors determined to cut services. This approach is further laid bare by the Unite Coventry bin strike.

Unison's rules mean that only members who pay into the 'Labour Link' fund are allowed to have any say on the union's political relationship with Labour or any other party.

Unison's link with Labour does not serve members' interests in providing political representation. Instead, members' money is being handed to a party that sacks them. The left-led NEC and the 'Time for Real Change' team have not even taken back control of the union's formal link with Labour.

But most importantly, under Kier Starmer's leadership of the Labour Party, with Corbyn and his anti-austerity stance driven out of the party, the undemocratic structures mean the trade unions have little influence.

Under the right-wing leadership, Unison members were not allowed to debate the role councillors could play in opposing cuts, by setting no-cuts, needs-based budgets, and building a mass campaign for more money from the Tories. Motions were ruled out of order. But this is now official Unite policy, after a motion initiated by Socialist Party members was passed at its national conference last autumn.

Unison taking this position would give confidence to members fighting attacks, would add to the pressure on Labour councillors, and give a boost to community campaigners and to candidates standing on an anti-cuts platform in local elections. Under the new left NEC, members must be allowed to debate how this, and the need for national industrial action against cuts, can be organised.

Unite the union has started to take a different path. Under the new left general secretary, Sharon Graham, they are using their 'War Chest' to fund industrial action where members are determined to take on the employers. As a result of the Coventry bin strike, Unite has withdrawn funding from Labour councillors attacking its members, and suspended Coventry councillors from the union. There is now a serious discussion beginning in the union as to whether Unite should be part of establishing new political representation for its members alongside other trade unions outside of Labour.

The battle to transform Unison into a fighting democratic trade union has begun. Socialist Party members will campaign to place a fighting programme at the head of this union, essential to organising members for the battles ahead.

## Paul Holmes

In 2019, 14 activists and staff in Kirklees Unison, 12 of them women, made complaints of bullying against their branch secretary, Paul Holmes.

Disgracefully, the then right-wing leadership of Unison did not take these complaints seriously. They did not carry out a full investigation, and wrongly left it in the hands of the employer, a right-wing led Labour council, to investigate and take action.

Subsequently, Paul Holmes was re-elected to the NEC and is now Unison president. The left leadership have dismissed the complaints against him, without any explanation or reasons given. This was despite Unison's own investigation officer stating that there was 'a case to answer' and that an internal Unison disciplinary hearing

should take place.

The right-wing are now, cynically and outrageously, using this issue to try to rebuild support for their discredited leadership. Meanwhile, Paul Holmes has been sacked by Kirklees council and is appealing his case at an employment tribunal.

Unison must take all complaints of bullying and intimidatory behaviour seriously. It must carry out its own investigations and draw its own conclusions about what should be done, independent of employers.

The NEC should re-open the investigation, to give the opportunity both to the complainants to make their case and to Paul Holmes to defend his position, and for both sides to be given full access to its results.



Unison conference votes in 2016. PAUL MATTESSON

the Socialist formerly Militant

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

Tories attack trans pupils

NICKY DOWNES NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION EXECUTIVE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

My union, the NEU, has issued a press release reminding the Tory attorney general that "discrimination against trans students is illegal." Suel-la Braverman had said that schools did not need to accommodate pupils who wished to change gender, were under no legal obligation to address them by a different pronoun, or allow them to change uniform.

Tory education secretary Nadhim Zawahri stated that schools should



inform parents if their child comes out as trans or non-binary in school, despite the huge safeguarding issues this poses. The NEU has demanded that he withdraw this call.

I have a non-binary stepchild. They came out to their parents after a long period of concern regarding their mental health.

Their parents and school have been supportive by adopting their chosen pronouns and providing

guidance where needed. But it could have been different.

Many schools are not welcoming places. A large number of trans and non-binary students are now taught in alternative provision.

Trans and non-binary young people are far more likely than their peers to self-harm. They need access to mental health support, which is underfunded, in demand, and often extremely difficult to get.

We can't trust the Tories with schools and young people's futures. The Socialist Party stands for schools under the democratic control of local education authorities, staff, parents and student organisations.

That would help create an education system where staff aren't over-worked, and support services are fully funded. Those are the conditions for pupils to get the support they need.

The elite get to swim. Why can't we?

NANCY TAAFFE WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

The wealthy owners of central London properties in Kensington and Chelsea or Westminster, have been building megabasements. Many have been turned into private swimming pools.

Who could blame the elites?! With rising temperatures, London can now push 30 degrees during hot summers. Who doesn't want to jump into cool refreshing water?

In 2021, Sky Pool was opened at Embassy Gardens, part of a £1 billion development. This 25-metre long private pool, suspended 115 feet in the air, links two luxury blocks together. If you can afford one of these luxury flats, you get to swim between penthouses, while the rest of us watch you from sweltering streets.

Meanwhile, public swimming pools around the country are at risk from closing down because of rising

energy costs. 85% of local authorities and public pool providers expect to reduce services.

Half of the country's 4,000 public swimming pools were already at risk before the pandemic. Now, with the energy hike, 1,800 could close by 2030.

I'm a working-class child of inner London. I remember four public lidos and a choice of swimming pools within walking distance of my inner-London home - all of them affordable.

The working class has fought for access to leisure. Out of the tumultuous and revolutionary events after World War Two, we secured huge gains, particularly in cities. Public provision - parks, libraries and swimming pools - were a product of these movements.

Today we face hotter cities and rising energy bills. The right to swim is a basic human right, like the right to walk in the countryside. It should be available to all of us.

Fuel price daylight robbery



TONY BLYTH PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

The rising cost of living has hit all aspects of working-class life. Many, unable to rely on an underfunded, privatised public transport system, have to drive.

My local petrol stands at £1.80 a litre, and diesel at just under £2. It's increasingly unaffordable to commute. I work three jobs, unable to afford the basics on just one or two salaries. One of my jobs is for a pizza delivery company.

It's one of the few capitalist chains

that actually pays for petrol, however, not in the way you think. For every delivery I make, £1 is added to my pay, on top of the too-low hourly rate. In 2021, that helped with fuel and maintaining the cars we use to deliver. With the price hike, every time we make a delivery, we are making a loss.

Workers in my job are earning 40% less every two weeks, due to putting more money in the tank. Many are leaving, unable to sustain the cost. It's vital workers get organised to demand an increase - like the JustEat workers in the IWGB union (see 'The gig economy and casualisation' at socialistparty.org.uk).

Even as I write, the price is still rising! Within the space of 18 hours, petrol has increased by 3p per litre. The government is doing nothing to stop bosses hiking prices.

Shell made £14.2 billion profit in 2021, and £4.7 billion in the last quarter alone. While the oil companies and fuel retailers are run for profit, greedy bosses will continue to keep prices high.

This is why the Socialist Party campaigns for nationalisation of the oil companies, fuel retailers and public transport under democratic workers' control and management. Only then can prices be set unpolluted by the desire to maximise profits.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW? editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Thank privatisation for latest airport chaos



AIRPORT WORKER

The problems of the airline industry predate the pandemic, and stretch back to privatisation in the 1980s. In the post-war period, governments invested billions in the creation of a worldwide airline industry.

This investment was vertical. Governments supported airplane manufacture, and invested in airports, air traffic control, aircraft maintenance, and training facilities for pilots, engineers and cabin crew. Money was also put into aircraft fuelling, catering and numerous other support functions.

In the 1980s, catering and cleaning staff would still be airline employees, as well as tens of thousands of front-line and back-office occupations. With privatisation under Margaret Thatcher, the Tory government sold state assets at a discount, resulting in the jobs being outsourced.

International companies began to amalgamate functions. Airports became owned by huge conglomerates, who wished to make them as profitable as possible.

Few airlines would have workers at other airports beyond their home base, so they have to buy in all these other functions, like catering, from third-party companies all around the world. At the same time, British Airways' main engineering base was relocated from Heathrow to south Wales.

All this activity has been designed to divide the workforce, creating different terms and conditions. There have been few opportunities, within this constant deregulation, to improve pay and other benefits. But the last 30 years has seen a

constant struggle by workers within the industry attempting to defend the gains of the past.

Prior to the pandemic, a succession of these outsourced companies would fall into administration as the outsourced owners would sign contracts on the basis of them forcing down the wages and conditions of their employees. British Airways ended up owning one of these collapsed companies at Gatwick Airport, because it could get no one else to sign a contract that would require workers' rights to be forced down to illegal levels.

Job cuts

IAG airline multinational promised to reduce costs by amalgamating back-office functions, and then outsourcing them to different countries, cutting thousands of jobs. When the pandemic hit, airlines saw the opportunity to further drive down workers' living standards.

British Airways in spring 2020 called on the government to give no financial assistance to the airline industry. The big airlines hoped to be the 'last companies standing' once the pandemic was over.

British Airways introduced 'fire and rehire', driving down wages by 10%, and shedding half its workforce. BA's most experienced workers - therefore with better pay and conditions - were made redundant. They are now trying to recruit new staff on new contracts with significantly lower wages.

A job in the airline industry is no longer the well-paid and secure employment of the past. Now almost any other job is better paid. Even the pilots' union leadership has agreed continuing pay cuts until

2025. However, this is likely to be rejected by its members.

The latest airport chaos which passengers have experienced is a consequence of the greed of the industry. Due to the relentless cost cutting, the chaos could continue for some time.

Workers in the industry will wish to regain their pay levels as the cost of living bites. Therefore, they could well take strike action throughout the summer.

The madness of capitalism reduces a complex process of moving millions of people into a myriad of profit centres, resulting in threadbare infrastructure. Transport needs to be renationalised, so a coherent national plan can meet the needs of passengers and climate change.

British Airways workers begin voting on strike action

Nadine Houghton, GMB union national officer, said: "British Airways' staff shortages and IT failures nearly brought Heathrow airport to a standstill. On top of that, BA workers had their pay slashed during the company's callous fire-and-rehire policy.

"Now they want that money back. Bosses have had their pre-Covid pay rates reinstated. Heathrow ground and check-in staff want to know why they haven't had it too.

"Unrest is now starting to spread like wildfire to other groups of BA workers, with many more now considering a vote to walk out."

Hundreds of BA workers at Heathrow airport are balloting for strike action from 7 to 23 June.

Socialist Party WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle for an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £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!

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# Eyewitness: Champions League final

## Lying Uefa, politicians and brutal police to blame for chaos

NEILL DUNNE  
LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT SOCIALIST PARTY

**W**hat should have been a great moment in any football fan's life became a horror story of fear and pain, beatings and tear gas, for both sets of fans at the Champions League final in Paris on 28 May.

I went to Paris without a ticket with the intention to find friends, sing our club's songs, and watch the match together in the fan park or a bar. Some of my friends went to the stadium after seeing Liverpool play home and away all season, managing to get some of the few tickets Uefa made available to Liverpool fans.

All day Liverpool fans had a fantastic rapport with Parisians and police alike, everybody in a jovial mood. "Bonjour, ca va", asked many Liverpool fans, with fair and pleasant responses from the police. But on match day, when the sun went down, it appeared that the police expected hooliganism and violence from Liverpool fans and treated us in a despicable way.

The journey to the stadium for thousands of fans was turned into a bottleneck by the countless number of police riot vans. Many people, having experienced this sort of thing before and seeing the lack of organisation from Uefa, waited patiently.

However, at the Stade de France, many turnstiles and entrance gates remained locked. Even those with tickets found the gates closed, causing fans to search for help at other understaffed gates - only to find chaos. Tickets bought at official club sites were pronounced 'fake', simply because the scanning devices didn't work on the first attempt.

And when they asked for help, nearby police officers would spray tear gas into their faces. This created the opportunity for a small number of local gang members to attack both sets of fans, rob tickets and phones with digital tickets on them, and handbags. Men, women and children, including fans in wheelchairs, were attacked. But this was used to justify the police brutality to all and to put the blame on both fans and local youth generally.

Uefa postponed the game by 30 minutes when it became clear there were problems.

But the facts were clear, with evidence in abundance, but French interior minister Gérald Darmanin and sports minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra blamed Liverpool fans arriving late, and fans with fake tickets or none at all. This is not true.

Liverpool fans remember the same lies being said following the Hillsborough disaster in 1989, when the police and government colluded to take blame away from where it lies, the police and the FA, and then place the



Gate Y closed at the Stade de France as Liverpool fans attempt to enter  
TIA/CC

blame upon the Liverpool fans who had been injured or perished in the crush. Like Hillsborough, if the lies get out there early enough, and if the blame gets put on the fans, they hope the authorities responsible for safety would be absolved of any blame.

Liverpool fans arrived very early having learned at finals many times, and after failures by Uefa and local authorities in the past.

Real Madrid fans had the exact same issues with closed gates that were supposed to be open. They also arrived early, were also orderly and patient, and were also attacked.

After the game, the very few entrance gates that fans struggled to get through were closed, while riot police arrived in huge numbers despite zero provocation from Liverpool fans, zero trouble between Liverpool and Real Madrid fans. Fans just wanting to get back to their coach or hotel, or even find friends, were forced to wait at gates. Disabled fans were left stranded, while many younger fans managed to climb out while police watched and laughed.

While trying to cross a bridge to exit Saint Denis by bus or Metro service, a wall of riot police blocked the exit and allowed some local criminal elements to attack and mug with impunity. Some terrified fans ended up with knife wounds, some attacked with iron bars, razor blades, and

hammers. Real Madrid fans were hospitalised, kids of both sets of fans traumatised.

In the days following the final, French ministers have continued to blame Liverpool fans only, even though they have been proven to be false allegations.

Unsurprisingly, a pro-capitalist Macron government in France has imitated Margaret Thatcher's policing policies, including 'iron policing', with new crowd control measures like kettling. This is setting a dangerous precedent for future matches, with attitudes echoing the animal-like treatment of fans at football in the 1970s and 80s.

What we are witnessing is the potential cover up of a poorly run operation where it was lucky that no one was killed. The top adviser to France's sport minister has resigned amid the fallout. The treatment of fans in Paris should never be repeated in future.

Uefa has now come out and apologised for what fans have "seen and been witness to", which is a long way off from an apology for lying and the poor organisation which led to problems. The feeling among Liverpool and other football fans is that this needs to stay in the public minds and focus, to see action taken against those responsible and ensure it does not take place again.

## Incidents at Stade de France: An example of Macron's rule

VIRGINIE PRÉGNY  
GAUCHE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE (CWI FRANCE)

The nightmare that football supporters suffered at the Stade de France is not just the result of a series of unlucky events. It demonstrated how the French government treats workers and youth.

Gérald Darmanin, the interior minister, was quick to blame Liverpool supporters for the organisational failure. Videos of the scene quickly proved he was lying. But he nevertheless kept on denying the lack of organisation and the brutality of police forces.

That reaction did not come as a surprise to most people, and especially those who have been demonstrating against Macron's brutal policies. The 'Yellow Vest' movement and all workers' movements have paid a heavy price due to police brutality in the last five years - ordered and backed by the Paris prefect, who is directly under the authority of Darmanin, and in charge of the police and domestic security. The massive use of tear gas for no reason, as used against football supporters, some of them children, has been a constant aspect of police intervention in gatherings.

As well as insulting supporters, Darmanin put the blame on the area's deprived youth. This racist reaction is also a heavy trend in the government's way of dealing with problems. It is aimed at diverting attention from their own responsibility and scapegoating the deprived youth of the Paris 'banlieues' (poor suburbs). It has opened up the way for all the racists of the political field, such as far-right Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour and their like who are only too happy to find their ideas publicised in the media, thus giving them more weight (especially in the parliamentary election period).

Despite being forced to recognise some mistakes, Darmanin will keep, once more, Macron's confidence, as he represents the right wing of his government and helps attract a conservative voter base.

The coming parliamentary election is a great opportunity to defeat this government, whose only interests lie in safeguarding the interests of the richest. With the new left coalition, led by Jean Luc Mélenchon, there is a real possibility to have a new majority in parliament. Its programme, against cuts in public services, for wage rises for all, and against Macron's plan to slash our pension system, is a real step forward for workers and youth. If such a programme had a majority in parliament it would boost morale and confidence among workers to struggle in support of it. Such a victory would also put on the agenda the need to build a mass workers' party, and actually start building it.

Gauche Révolutionnaire has contributed in building the forces of France Insoumise (Jean Luc Mélenchon's movement) and is standing candidates along these lines.

# How did Marcos Junior, son of an infamous dictator, win the Philippines election?

YUVA BALAN  
CWI MALAYSIA

In a landslide victory, Ferdinand Marcos Junior, better known as Bongbong Marcos, is to become the new president of the Philippines. The son and namesake of the infamous dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, managed to get 31 million votes, more than double the amount of his closest rival and current vice-president, Leni Robredo.

This will be the first president to receive a majority of votes (just over 50%) since his father supposedly won with 53% in a highly controversial and disputed election in 1986. The dictator Marcos was then ousted by the masses just a few months after a series of popular demonstrations.

Alongside the new President Marcos, Sara Duterte, mayor of Davao city and daughter of the outgoing president, also won a majority of the electoral votes to become vice-president. Although touted as a presidential candidate herself in the years leading up to this election, Sara Duterte decided to throw her weight behind Marcos, and they successfully captured both posts. This is seen as the coming together of two political dynasties with an agenda to establish powerful control over the country.

This election result will serve the outgoing president, Rodrigo Duterte, enabling him to maintain a certain amount of power in the Philippines government. This is crucial for his political survival, as numerous human rights and other organisations are waiting to bring him to the courts and tribunals on charges of widespread extrajudicial murder throughout the six years of his presidency.

## Rehabilitation of a dictator

By winning the presidential election with a landslide, Bong Bong Marcos has finally fulfilled his long-term aim to rehabilitate his late father's image. The Marcos family has been working quietly for many years to regain political ground in the Philippines. It has slowly managed to crawl back to power by denying all of their corruption and crimes. But if not for the intervention of Duterte, Marcos Junior would not have been able to stand in the election due to an outstanding criminal charge for tax evasion.

Throughout his presidency, Duterte had used the support of the Marcos family to bolster his power in Congress. In return, Duterte provided them with political and economic favours to further increase their power. In 2016, the body of Ferdinand Marcos was transferred from a burial site in Hawaii to the Philippines, despite heavy objections. He was buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani (Cemetery of the Heroes) as part of a Marcos rehabilitation campaign.

The successful candidates claim to have the political will to establish law and order, reduce poverty and wipe out weak and corrupt elites. Although void of any concrete programme, they claim to have the 'political will' that other politicians supposedly lack to deliver on their promises.



Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Junior  
PATRICKROQUELO/CC

Although coming from a political dynasty, Rodrigo Duterte managed to portray himself as an 'outsider' from rural Mindanao, capable of disrupting the so-called political elites which have dominated Philippines politics for decades, without any benefit for the majority. Now, by vowing to continue all of Duterte's economic and political policies, Marcos and Sara are following in his footsteps and also portray themselves as political 'outsiders'.

Since the masses overthrew the dictator Marcos in 1986, none of the subsequent presidents or governments have managed to lift the masses out of the miseries of capitalism.

So-called democratically elected presidents after Marcos, like Joseph Estrada and Gloria Arroyo, were also corrupt and ruled with excessive force. Not only did the people remain poor and exploited, but the Philippines also became less stable.

None of the other candidates managed to put forward an alternative. Leni Robredo, the second most popular candidate for president and the first choice of the business community, did not have a programme to rally mass support. In foreign policy, she favours taking a hard stand against Chinese military expansion in the South China Sea and building closer ties with the US. It aided the Marcos campaign to spread rumours that Leni is a puppet of the US.

The Philippines economy took a nosedive in 2020 due to the

pandemic, when the GDP fell by 9.6%. Despite managing moderate growth since then, the economy is battling with rising inflation. The new president does not have a clear way out of this.

Although Marcos Junior and Sara Duterte got elected by promising economic stability and prosperity, but without any alternative to capitalism they cannot deliver on any of their promises.

If the new regime is not able to address the current worsening economic conditions for the masses in a swift and meaningful way, it will not be long before the poor and the downtrodden start to clamour for change. Historically, the Philippines working class and poor have played a massive role in bringing a notoriously violent and repressive dictator to his knees with mass movements and protests.

It is not impossible to imagine another historic people's movement developing in the Philippines, with the incoming administration failing to solve the economic crises and trying to use force to silence people's voices.

## History of mistakes

Unfortunately, there is no leadership coming from any of the left parties or trade unions. None offer a perspective of building a working class-based mass political organisation with the aim of replacing the rotten capitalist system. The Communist Party of the

Philippines (CPP) has been involved in perpetual guerrilla warfare with the state since its inception, and has made crucial mistakes throughout its existence. It did not take part in the 1986 movement against Ferdinand Marcos.

The years that followed saw continuous repression of left organisations. The CPP continued their armed struggle with the state from rural areas and attempted to make several failed peace talks with the government.

In this climate, and in the political vacuum, right-wing leaders such as Duterte and now Marcos Junior have been able to win elections and gain power almost unchallenged. But as the masses see the fraudulent nature of the new regime, they will be forced to look for an alternative which has a concrete programme for changing society.

Partido Lakas ng Masa is a left political party and fielded a well-known labour activist, Leody de Guzman for president. He is the current chairman of the BMP trade union confederation, which comprises over 200 workplace trade unions, with a total membership of 100,000 workers. Although receiving a low number of votes, Leody managed to put forward a programme of higher wages and the abolition of oppressive contract work.

However, Leody failed to address many other areas of concern regarding the ailing economy, growing inequality, lack of job opportunities, international policy and other issues. His programme also did not clearly illustrate how the electoral promises would be funded, and did not bring out the inevitability of challenging the capitalist system in order to bring a meaningful change in society.

With support from a mass workers' organisation, such as the BMP, Leody and the Partido Lakas ng Masa should be able to build a strong political party based on the need for mass struggle, with a clear perspective. Bold socialist policies, such as a high living wage for all workers, free and quality healthcare and education for all, a public housing programme, a massive increase in public infrastructure and social development funds, and so on, should be put forward.

In order to fulfil these promises, the party should be committed to campaigning against capitalist class interests. The leadership should also put forward the idea of nationalising all the major industries under the management and democratic control of the working class as one of the main planks of their programme.

## Struggle

The working class and the oppressed masses of the Philippines are in desperate need of clear leadership to lead them to organise their anger into tangible actions, such as a general strike or mass protests. But they also need to take political power from the clutches of the capitalist ruling elites, as the situation develops.

It is clear that there will be no real progress under capitalism and the condition of the masses will continue to deteriorate. Only a socialist society, under the full democratic control of the working class and the people, will be able to bring society out of capitalist crisis and on the path to building a prosperous and peaceful future for all.

● See [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net) for full article

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# the Socialist

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# AS BILLS OUTSTRIP WAGES...

# FIGHT FOR £15 AN HOUR MINIMUM WAGE



**ADAM POWELL-DAVIES**  
SOCIALIST PARTY YOUTH ORGANISER

**W**hen the national minimum wage was announced last year to rise from £8.91 to £9.50, it was heralded by Tory ministers as one of the largest increases on record, at 6.6%.

But by the time the new minimum wage came into effect in April, it had already been outstripped by the rising cost of everything else: food, fuel, energy bills, increases to council tax and national insurance, and the rest. Since then, the situation has only got worse.

Workers face soaring costs on multiple fronts, but one thing that could most immediately help with all of these financial pressures is a pay rise.

For millions of workers, the cost-of-living crisis is in large part a low-wage crisis. No wonder so many workers are getting organised and striking for a pay rise.

That's why the Socialist Party calls for a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all now, to subsequently rise in line with average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.

This would give all low-paid workers a boost, but it would mean the most for young workers, who are more likely to

fall into the lowest-paid and most precarious industries, such as hospitality and retail. This is especially true for workers under 23 years of age, who legally can be paid only a fraction of the so-called National 'Living' Wage.

As the bare minimum, £15 an hour should be just a starting point. But for the time being, it would give young workers a bit more money to branch out and feel a sense of freedom and independence for the first time.

For a start, we could afford to move out of our family homes, experience new things, or just get from A to B - including travelling to important protests like the TUC demo called in London on 18 June! And it's why that demo must be only the start of the fightback we need.

Across the country, it's clear that young people see the need to get active - but they need a lead.

The trade unions across the country should all strike together against the cost of living crisis, with £15 an hour as one of their main demands.

And we also need a political voice in the form of a new mass workers' party, which can help spread workers' demands and socialist ideas far and wide among the working class and young people.



MARY FINCH

**Join the fightback**  
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- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](https://socialistparty.org.uk/join) or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206**

to find out more about joining us today!



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 9

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