

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1189

21 July - 4 August 2022

formerly **Militant**

UNITE AND STRIKE FOR A PAY RISE

KICK OUT ALL THE TORIES

What we all feel, as we try to make the money stretch to cover the bills, has been proven true in the latest official stats. Real pay is falling at the fastest rate on record.

But workers are fighting back! The RMT's national rail strikes lit a fire in the bellies of workers

everywhere. We've known we were struggling, but now we also see what we can do about it. Join a union and fight back!

Now the rail strikes are swelling with train drivers in Aslef and rail staff in TSSA taking action too.

CWU members in BT are embarking on a national strike and Royal Mail workers have delivered a massive vote for action.

Bin and bus workers, factory workers, university and college staff and even barristers are taking action.

Now hundreds of thousands of public sector workers are getting

ready to join the strike wave. Teachers and support staff, local government workers and civil service workers are all getting ready to ballot in the autumn. The Fire Brigades Union has also rejected an insulting 2% pay offer.

The growing strike wave is rattling the nerves of the rich bosses and their political friends.

Feeling the pressure, the Tory government has been forced to announce a pay 'rise' for 2.5 million public sector workers, whose pay had been frozen for a decade. The austerity mantra of 'we're all in this together' actually meant losses of

20% and more in real terms pay for public sector workers, while the rich got considerably richer.

But with RPI inflation currently at 11.7%, the pay 'offers' the Tories have announced are still pay cuts!

Whoever wins the Tory leadership election, this divided but vicious government of the rich must go. Boris Johnson going won't change anything much. Let's build this movement to kick out all the Tories.

But as Sir Keir Starmer and his lackeys have made abundantly clear, replacing the Tories with Starmer's Labour won't mean striking workers have a party on their

side. If we want a party to give a political voice to the fight for a pay rise - as well as £15-an-hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hour contracts, to build council houses and fully fund services, and all the other policies we need to really tackle the cost of living - workers have to fight for that too.

We need a new mass party of the working class. That can fight to take the wealth off the bloated super-rich, democratically nationalise rail, mail, energy and more, and campaign for socialist policies for the benefit of working-class people, not the rich.

THE SUMMER STRIKE WAVE CONTINUES

▶▶▶ p2,3,6

LATIN AMERICA: CONVULSED POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY

▶▶▶ p8-9

RMT strike continues: Coordinate the action

JARED WOOD
RMT NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers Union (RMT) members are taking further strike action across train operating companies and Network Rail on 27 July, 18 August and 20 August. At the time of writing, the union is also considering further strike dates on London Underground.

RMT is in the front line of a battle to prevent the bosses from imposing another round of wage cuts, pension attacks and an intensification of work onto the working class of Britain.

The rail industry faces a combined cut of £4 billion from the budgets of Transport for London (TfL - £2 billion) and Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies (£2 billion). The government claims there is a 'funding gap'. Well there is, but only because the government has chosen not to subsidise rail in the UK to anything like the level seen in most European countries. London Underground is the only system of its kind in the world not to receive substantial operating support from public funds.

Network Rail has offered RMT members two years of below-inflation pay for 2022 and 2023. This would be an insult at any time, but these members have not received a pay rise since 2019, in spite of working to keep trains running throughout the Covid pandemic.

That is only the half of it though. In return for this five-year pay cut, RMT must agree to the cutting of a third of all maintenance workers on the national railways.

The train operating companies have not even made an offer on pay,

but they also want to restructure the whole industry, cutting staff, running down catering, and closing all ticket offices in the process.

On London Underground (LU) the scale of cuts is similar. LU management are still looking for £300 million of recurring operating cuts this year, and government demands for further cuts keep coming. The Labour Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan is looking to deflect blame for these cuts, although he enthusiastically embraced the idea of cutting the operating subsidy when he was standing for election.

It is unquestionable that the responsibility for cutting the subsidy to London Underground lies with the Tory government. In 2015, LU received £1 billion a year (in today's terms) in government funding. That has been removed completely. But the mayor must decide whether he is serious about protecting his workers. He says he is not convinced that attacking the TfL pension is the right thing to do, but he will not give tube workers an assurance that he won't do it anyway. He is also proceeding with a review of service levels and cuts across every function of LU, including an immediate reduction of 600 station staff.

The government and the mayor hope to ride out the strikes on our railways. This is not to make the books balance. The press claim that every strike day on LU alone costs the London economy £50 million. RMT members have taken four days of action already. Another four and the London economy will have lost as much as LU is aiming to save from its budget.

The Tories are determined to show



PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

that RMT cannot prevent them from imposing the costs of another capitalist economic crisis onto workers. It is crucial that other unions now follow RMT into action. This is already developing with CWU members in the Post Office, BT and Royal Mail. Unite has started preparing for action in the London bus sector, raising the possibility of coordinated strike action on the tube and London buses for the first time in a generation.

It is also essential that unions take up political demands. With the Labour Party refusing to 'take sides' in industrial battles it has never been clearer that Labour has decisively broken from its historic position as a party of the working class. Many in the trade unions are arguing for community campaigning and this should be supported. But given the situation, it is disappointing that the recent RMT annual general meeting voted to call on the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) to stop standing candidates opposed to Labour's cuts agenda.

There is a crying need to build a new political party that can represent trade unions and working-class communities in local, regional and national government. This was the conclusion of the rail workers union, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, back in 1900. Socialists within the RMT will continue to campaign for this conclusion to be drawn again today.

The key task right now though is to build action across the trade union movement in defence of pay, jobs, pensions and conditions. A generalised wave of strike action to resist another attack on Britain's working class will strike fear into the ruling elite. This is how we can win the battle. The TUC Congress this year should step up and support RMT's resolution calling for coordinated action starting with the rail strikes.

Historic CWU national action in BT, Royal Mail and the Post Office

GARY CLARK
CWU SCOTLAND NO. 2 BRANCH SECRETARY,
PERSONAL CAPACITY

For the first time in the history of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) we are seeing all sides of the union having national disputes at the same time.

BT and Openreach members will be taking strike action on 29 July and 1 August. This is the first national strike in BT (formerly British Telecom) since 1987. It would have been in EE too if it wasn't for the Tory anti-union laws, which meant the ballot failed to meet the turnout threshold by just eight votes. Like in Royal Mail, there is an angry mood against the greedy corporate bosses, while some members rely on food banks.

We have already seen CWU members working in the Post Office taking days of action over a pay freeze for last year and an offer of 3% this year.

And now we have just seen a massive 'yes' vote for strike action over an imposed 2% pay rise by Royal Mail. There will also be another ballot for strike action over terms and conditions.

The CWU leadership must now name the dates for strike action as Royal Mail are pushing ahead with executive action on the parcel hubs around the country. We believe they are going to impose further executive action over the coming weeks.

We should coordinate our union's action and make a call to other unions to work together. Let's try and name the same dates.

Lobby the Trades Union Congress to coordinate action

As strike action develops against the cost-of-living crisis, with workers demanding the pay rises and job protection that we all need, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) is again organising a rally and lobby before the start of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) conference in Brighton on Sunday 11 September. The NSSN is calling for the six million-strong unions to coordinate action across the private and public sectors. A new generation has had a glimpse of the enormous power of the organised working class and the floodgates for action have been opened. Let's strike together!

Please take this model motion to your union branch and trades council:

"This (union branch/trades council) gives our full support to workers being forced to take strike action against their employers backed by the Tory government. The cost-of-living crisis, 'fire and rehire' tactics, and other attacks by employers in pursuit of maintaining profits at our expense, all mean workers are uniting to fight back.

We will continue to give our solidarity, building practical and financial support to all striking workers.

The increasing number of disputes shows the immense power of workers. If unions act together, significant victories can be won.

We also oppose the Tories' threats to introduce further anti-union legislation to the raft of undemocratic restrictions already in existence, and call on the TUC to coordinate opposition.

We call on unions in struggle to urgently come together to discuss and formulate a strategy to coordinate industrial action ballots and strikes.

We therefore agree to build the National Shop Stewards Network rally and lobby of TUC Congress in Brighton on Sunday 11 September behind this call."

Email the NSSN via
info@shopstewards.net

- to tell us the model motion has been passed

- if you would like copies of the leaflet to distribute at your workplace or in your area

- if you would like a stall for your branch or campaign at the rally

- if you need transport to the lobby in Brighton

NSSN supporters could draw up lists of workplaces and fellow trade unionists in your area you can also approach to support and mobilise for the rally and lobby.

To make a donation to the NSSN and/or get your union branch/trades council to affiliate for an annual fee of £50, either make a cheque out to 'National Shop Stewards Network' and post to NSSN, PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE or pay online: HSBC - sort code 40-06-41, account number 90143790.

Aslef train drivers' strike: smash the pay freeze and derail the Tories!



PHOTO: LICHENSA/CC

AN ASLEF MEMBER IN THE MIDLANDS

This summer of Tory discontent is seeing one of the biggest nationwide industrial actions by train drivers in the Aslef trade union on 30 July. It will be the first major strike for some members. For others, it brings back memories of the renowned 1982 'flexible rosters' strike under British Rail.

Aslef members across eight different Train Operating Companies (TOCs) absolutely smashed the anti-strike thresholds put in place by the Tories. With positive votes for strike action coming in on average at over 90%, Aslef members have a democratic mandate that these capitalist politicians could only dream of!

With pay frozen for over three years while inflation skyrockets, it was necessary for industrial action to be presented as an option. Every negotiation and chance to settle an equitable pay claim has been stonewalled by the employer.

However, the real puppeteer behind many of these TOCs, stopping fruitful negotiations from taking place, is the government. The Tories want to force working-class people to pay for the

capitalist economic crisis.

We know the money is there. Millions have been siphoned off by our privatised railway system into the back pockets of shareholders in the form of dividends. Meanwhile, train drivers, who not too long ago were called 'key workers' by the government as they worked through the pandemic, can't have their pay match inflation.

The poisonous campaign of divide and conquer tactics pushed by the Tories and their friends in the right-wing rag media, to turn worker against worker, in large part has failed. The race to the bottom is being rejected. It is vital to build upon this growing mood of workers fighting back by looking to coordinate action with the other railway unions against common employers where possible.

This is a turning point dispute that should be supported by the whole labour movement. But as the old saying goes: 'You can't control what you don't own'. We battle for an equitable pay claim but the war must be for a nationalised, publicly owned railway, run for and by the interests of railway workers and service users.

the Socialist
formerly Militant

Issue 1189
21 July - 4 August 2022

DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?
The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

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

CONTACT US

editors@socialistparty.org.uk
020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

DEADLINES

Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.

The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

SUBSCRIBE

to the Socialist for weekly working-class news, analysis and fighting strategy
socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe
● Paper subscription £4.50 a month, or £6.50 including Socialism Today
● E-subscription £2.50 a month, or £4 including Socialism Today

SOCIALISM TODAY

our monthly Marxist magazine
socialismtoday.org
● Paper sub £3 a month, e-sub £2.50

SOCIALISM: THE PODCAST

weekly on all podcast platforms

FOLLOW US

facebook.com/CWISocialistParty
Instagram @SocialistPartyCWU
YouTube - Socialist Party
Twitter @Socialist_Party

SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International
socialistparty.org.uk
socialistworld.net

Socialist Party
CWU
GIT

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Socialist Books: our publishing house
socialistbooks.co.uk
Left Books: Marxist classics bookshop
leftbooks.co.uk

OUR NEWSPAPER TEAM

Editor of the Socialist	Editorial staff
Sarah Sachs-Eldridge	Scott Jones
socialistparty.org.uk	Ian Pattison
Judy Beishon	Josh Asker
Circulation manager	Paula Mitchell
Chris Newby	

ISSN 1366-9621
Published by Socialist Publications,
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT
Registered as a newspaper
at the Post Office
Printed by trade union labour
at Reach Printing Services

Militant issue 1: October 1964
The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997

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

Heatwave exposes cracks in the broken profit system

BEA GARDNER
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Record-breaking temperatures have affected most of the UK, with temperatures exceeding the highest previous temperature by several degrees in Wales and touching 40 degrees in England.

Despite health advisers and the Met Office sending multiple warnings - reflected in the red weather warning issued for large sections of England - the government again showed itself unprepared.

Deputy prime minister Dominic Raab suggested people should "enjoy the sunshine". Meanwhile, Boris Johnson was photographed in a fighter jet at the Farnborough Airshow - missing an emergency COBRA meeting on the heatwave!

The NHS and other public services were unprepared and already overstretched because of Covid and long-term underfunding. It is estimated that thousands of excess deaths will be recorded because of the heatwave.

More than 100,000 vacancies currently exist in the care sector, leaving vulnerable people at greater risk, without provision to help them stay cool and hydrated.

Most older hospitals have no air conditioning or ventilation systems, causing some wards to rise to 30 degrees by lunchtime on 18 July!

Meanwhile, a lack of investment in

key infrastructure to mitigate against high temperatures resulted in widespread disruption mainly to transport as trains were either cancelled or subject to speed restrictions, and flights grounded at some airports.

Many workers had to carry out duties despite the exceptional heat. The advice from the Trades Union Congress is that temperatures indoors at work should not exceed 30 degrees. But, unlike elsewhere in Europe and in the US, there are no legal limits. Workers' organisation is needed to fight for temperature safety measures. Workers well organised in trade unions will be best placed to negotiate changes in working practices. If necessary, collectively using Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act giving an individual worker the right to refuse to work in unsafe conditions, as teachers did earlier in the Covid pandemic.

The heatwave also exposes other inequalities in society - temperatures are higher and harder to manage in built-up urban areas where residents have limited access to green spaces or shade.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has triggered an "emergency response", including distributing water and suncream to the street homeless, but why not offer accommodation?

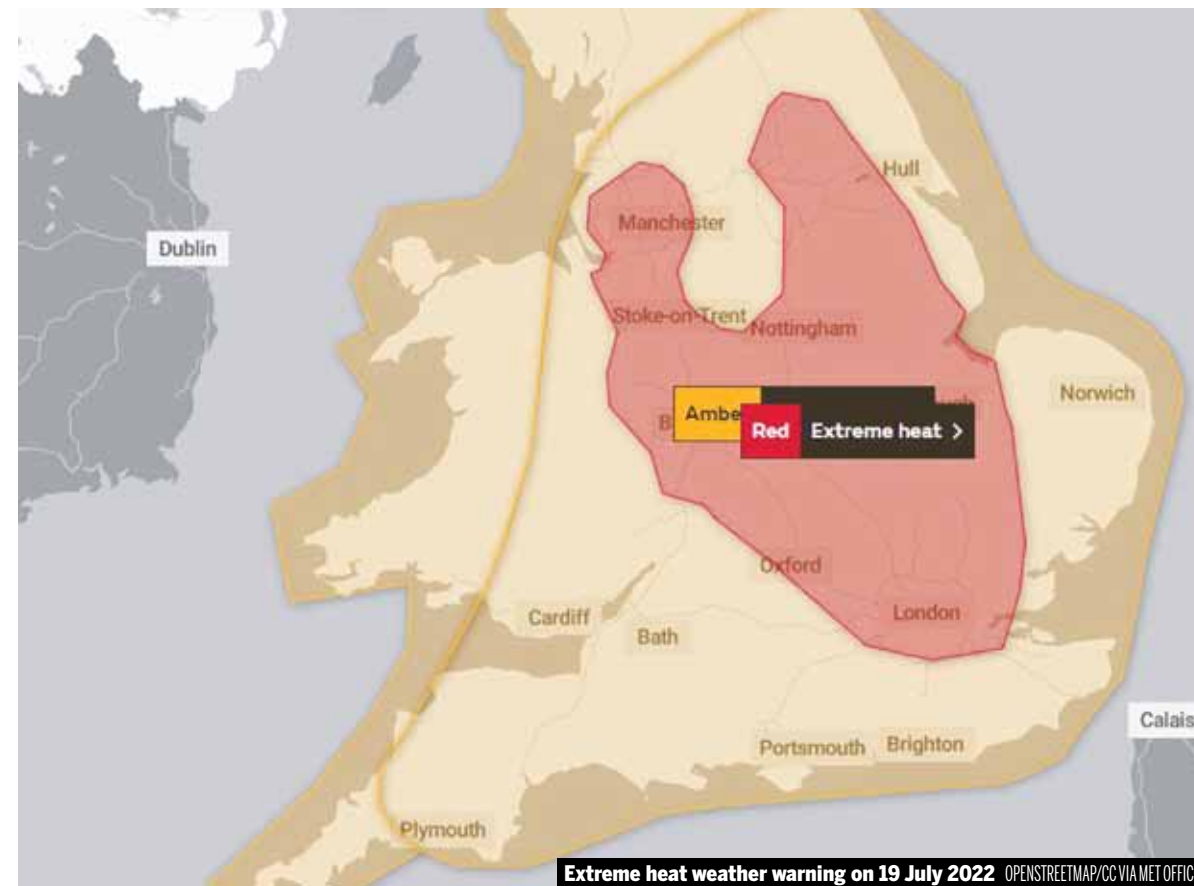
Pro-capitalists would like people to believe this to be a one-off, but it is becoming clear that extreme weather

events, including heatwaves, are becoming more common. Nine out of the UK's ten hottest days have occurred since 1990.

If global temperatures continue to rise, we will see far hotter summers in the future. Planned investment into building quality, well-insulated housing, opening community spaces, and resilient transport infrastructure is all needed, but won't happen under profit-driven capitalism. To save the planet from climate catastrophe, and deal with its consequences, we need democratic socialist planning that prioritises the needs of people and the planet.

As the Socialist goes to press, fires are raging. In London, as flames engulfed buildings, Labour mayor Sadiq Khan said that the London Fire Brigade is "under immense pressure".

Boris Johnson, serving as London mayor between 2008-16, closed ten fire stations and scrapped a further 13 engines from remaining stations. Since taking office in 2016, Khan has done nothing to re-open those stations, and nothing to fight other Tory cuts. Khan has offered advice: "Don't take risks". Our advice to him: Stop and reverse Tory cuts!



Extreme heat weather warning on 19 July 2022. OPENSTREETMAP/CC.VIA.MET.OFFICE



Socialist Students at the NUS protest in March. SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Students should unite with workers to fight the high cost of living

NOAH EDEN
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

One in ten students are having to use food banks, according to a recent survey by the National Union of Students (NUS). One in five students can't afford toiletries, and a further one in ten can't afford sanitary products when they need them. In June it was also reported that there has been a 3,000% increase in the number of graduates who owe more than £100,000 in student loan debts.

The fact of the matter is simple student loans aren't sufficient enough to provide students with the money that we need to survive. The average maintenance loan is £5,640 a year - nowhere near enough to cover typical extortionate rents, let alone buy food, energy, travel and the rest.

The NUS survey found that a third of students are being forced to live on less than £50 a month because of rent and bills, leaving many students unable to carry out proper weekly food shops and not being able to afford to travel into university.

Many of us take minimum wage jobs with dodgy contracts at the same time as being expected to carry out a 'full-time' degree.

The NUS has called on the government to provide a cost-of-living support package for students, and

for maintenance loans and the apprentice minimum wage to be brought into line with the 'National Living Wage' - just £6.83 an hour for 18 to 20-year-olds, and £4.81 for under-18s.

But we need to go further than that. Demanding the equivalent of £15 an hour to live on for students is necessary, and could be linked to low-paid workers also struggling for a £15-an-hour minimum wage. But an increase in maintenance payments for students cannot be funded by simply plunging us further into debt. We must fight for maintenance grants, not loans!

We also need to outline how it can be fought for and won. With the on-going summer of workers' strikes, and further strikes looking likely in the autumn, why doesn't the NUS build on the March student demo, and organise students to take to the streets alongside striking workers? To bring together the fight for a £15-an-hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hour contracts and right for everyone to be able to attend university without the fear of a lifetime of financial burden.

Join the student fightback
JOIN socialist students
socialiststudents.org.uk/join

This issue is the beginning of the Socialist's fortnightly summer schedule, before returning to weekly publication for issue 1192 on 1 September. Issue 1190 will be published one day later than usual.

Tory tax cuts for the rich won't solve cost-of-living crisis

SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL ORGANISER

As if we needed it, this year's Tory leadership contest comprehensively confirmed the things we already knew: the Tories are deeply split and utterly bereft of solutions to the cost-of-living crisis.

The third TV debate was cancelled in an effort to stem the public 'blue-on-blue' blitz of candidates tearing chunks out of each other. Tax cuts, an offer largely aimed at the Tory MPs and party members who make up the contest's constituencies, have been more a bone of contention than the 'red meat' they were intended to be.

Sunak, chancellor of and for the Rich List, was attacked as a 'socialist' by Liz Truss supporter Jacob Rees-Mogg over his March plans to raise national insurance. He has hit back calling Truss's £34 billion in tax cuts 'socialism' and comparing Penny Mordaunt's economic approach to Jeremy Corbyn!

But unlike Jeremy's policies or 'socialism', their proposals do nothing to address the growing ambulance queues outside hospitals or the growing numbers of empty-stomached children populating classrooms.

'Levelling up' sham

Johnson was elected in 2019 on a programme which promised investment in the NHS and 'levelling up'. Neither was achieved, and neither feature in the programmes on offer. Tory tax cuts are definitely not the answer.

Truss proposes to cancel a planned 6p rise in corporation tax worth £17



billion a year and abolish a £12 billion increase in national insurance contributions. She also promised to lift the green energy levy on bills, saying: "We immediately need to start putting money back into people's pockets." But the lie to this is given when she and the other contenders all rule out inflation-proofed public sector pay rises. Coordinating the many planned strikes is the necessary response to the new leader, whoever they are.

Sunak proposes tax cuts too, but only once he has 'dealt with' inflation using savage austerity. His Spring

Budget pencilled in tax cuts to coincide with when he expects the general election to take place.

Big business benefits

Their argument generally goes that big business-benefiting tax cuts will kick-start the ailing economy. While big business would certainly be the main beneficiary, even their representatives deny it will change the downward economic direction. One business leader dismissed the proposals as "fantasy economics".

These comments reflect the dire condition of the British economy.

Fears of recession abound. Debt - government, corporate and personal - is spiralling. According to the Office for National Statistics, UK private business investment is more than a third down on pre-Brexit levels. And it was low then.

It is not a lack of funds that prevents big business from investing and creating jobs. For example, in 2019 the FTSE 100 companies paid a record £110 billion in dividends to shareholders, double a decade previously. But business investment fell that year.

The system the Tories exist to

defend, capitalism, is not driven by what is socially useful, in developing technology or scientific understanding, but by where the biggest profits can be made. In a rational society there would be plenty of reasons to invest - this summer's hot weather makes clear the urgency of creating clean, green energy and industry, as just one example of many.

For the capitalists in Britain it has become entirely logical in recent decades to focus on financial speculation rather than investing in production, because that is where the greater profits are to be made. This is a major factor in the current economic crisis - and the Tory contenders have nothing to offer, hence the bickering over tax cuts today or tax cuts tomorrow.

Meanwhile, polls show support for nationalising the energy companies growing. But that is not on offer from the Tories or from any Westminster party.

Pro-capitalist Labour

Hatred of the Tories, regardless of which one wins the leadership, may mean in the future Sir Keir Starmer's Labour finds itself in government. But under Starmer, Labour has ditched the entirety of Corbyn's manifesto, including nationalisation. He said: "We're starting from scratch. The slate is wiped clean."

That slate is now being marked with pro-capitalist policies. A future Labour government that defends capitalism will also fail to offer a way out of inflation-austerity misery for millions of working-class families and will also find itself in crisis. The working class needs a mass party that acts in our interests with a socialist programme. None exists - it must be built, and working-class people moving into struggle through strike action are increasingly drawing that conclusion.

Labour abstain on free school meals extension

Build a new mass workers' party that fights to end poverty for good



CATHERINE CLARKE
SOUTHAMPTON WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

800,000 children in England live in poverty but do not qualify for free school meals. An amendment moved by Lord Storey, a Liberal Democrat, in the House of Lords sought to extend the programme to all children whose families receive Universal Credit.

Unsurprisingly, the Tories voted against it and the amendment fell. Shockingly, all but three Labour Lords abstained. It is thought that the Keir Starmer leadership whipped for an abstention.

Labour's leader in the House of Lords, Lady Chapman, said that Labour would have voted for it if the Tories had. So much for being an 'opposition'!

Some of us once naively thought that Labour represented the working class, whether in the Lords, or the House of Commons. Who knew their role was to play parlour games with our children's lives?!

As it stands, government rules restrict free meals to those families with a net annual earning of less than £7,400. But with prices rising, more children are being thrown into poverty.

Many parents are forced to make a choice between working more hours or keeping free school meals for their children. A family with three children has to earn £3,133 more after tax to make up for the cost of losing free school meals - another Tory poverty trap.

Don't be fooled. The UK is the fifth richest country in the world. There is

no reason why healthy and nutritious free school meals cannot be extended to all school children, and during the holidays too!

Neither is there any good reason why children should grow up in poverty. A real living wage of £15 an hour, with decent benefits and pensions, all rising with the cost of living, is also possible.

But we need a party to fight for it. Labour is clearly not that party. That's why we call on the trade unions to help establish a new mass workers' party - one that actually fights for a socialist solution to the cost-of-living crisis.

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

As we go to press, the Tories have announced public sector pay offers well below the RPI inflation level of 11.7% to teachers and NHS workers, as well as prison officers, police, armed forces and senior civil servants. As the articles below show, angry public sector workers are preparing for action. Follow our website for updates.

Major national action in schools brewing

SEAN MCCAULEY
NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Before the end of the year, we could see hundreds of thousands of teachers and support staff in schools take national strike action over pay.

With the government announcement on pay for 2022 expected, the national executive of the National Education Union (NEU) agreed a timetable to ballot for strike action in the autumn, which will be implemented unless the offer is considered adequate. Plans are also being discussed for sixth form and further education colleges.

Socialist Party members on the executive and throughout the union will work as hard as we can to achieve a 'yes' vote that defeats Tory anti-union thresholds.

Education workers, like all workers, are struggling with the immense cost-of-living crisis, having endured a ten-year pay freeze.

In fact, we have campaigned for eighteen months for the union to prepare for national action. The

leadership of the union in the 'NEU Left' grouping previously told us this was fantasy, and that in reality only school-by-school action was possible. But we argued that the union needed to lead from the front as well as build from below.

Leadership

It is essential to build up membership and organisation at a school level, but there is no better recruiter and organiser than to couple this with bold leadership and action.

This lesson has been shown both by the RMT strikes and by the NEU itself in the action to keep schools safe during Covid at the start of 2021.

We previously put forward proposals to the executive that would have enabled action to take place sooner, which were rejected. If our timetable had been accepted, we would have been able to coordinate strike action with the RMT recently.

Some on the left have subsequently admitted in meetings that they are surprised at the anger of teachers and their willingness to fight, and now wish they could get action going sooner.

The rules of the union insist on an indicative ballot first.

These rules were established when the union was formed through a merger of the National Union Teachers (NUT) with the traditionally more conservative Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), and were opposed by Socialist Party members at the time.

Nonetheless, the agreed timetable will allow for action to take place this year. The indicative ballot will start on 24 September.

Support staff

We are pleased to report that it has been agreed to also ballot support staff members of our union, coordinating with the other support staff unions: Unison, Unite and GMB.

Again, this is something Socialist Party members on the executive argued for, and which was dismissed by others. We are delighted that this position has now been taken.

Now we must build a mighty campaign, starting immediately, and then getting ready to hit the ground running when the schools start in September.



Drapers Pyrgo school picket line (see opposite page). There's been a number of school strikes JAMES IVENS

Gearing up for action in local government

MARK EVANS
UNISON LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

The local government pay offer for 2022 is due to be announced by the employers at the end of July.

Unison's national joint council (NJC) committee, which negotiates with the employers, has written to all Unison branch secretaries in local government.

Assuming the offer made is not one they would recommend, they want to move straight to an industrial action ballot without first running a consultative ballot, in order to avoid delaying a fight this year.

The committee also agreed that the ballot would be disaggregated, ie a separate ballot for each employer.

Given that wages for many local government workers have fallen in value by nearly 25% since 2010, and many are forced to juggle several jobs at once, a serious fight is absolutely necessary.

Socialist Party members will work tirelessly to ensure a 'yes' vote in this ballot. We have consistently argued for the recently elected left leadership of the national union to lead a fight on pay, jobs and cuts – the essential issues that affect the lives of all our members.

Unison organises many support staff in schools, and this decision opens up the potential to coordinate action with the National Education Union, which is also preparing to ballot in the autumn.

Over one and a half million public sector workers could be on strike before the end of the year.

To get over the undemocratic Tory thresholds, in place to try to stymie trade union action, a big campaign must be launched immediately, with detailed preparation in every area.

Campaign

The lesson must be learned from last year's lacklustre ballot campaign, the result of which was overwhelmingly in favour of action, but turnout fell considerably short of the threshold.

This is why Socialist Party members on the union's national executive have put a resolution to the NEC,

calling for the NEC itself to make fighting the cost-of-living crisis its priority, and to take a lead in supporting and coordinating across all groups of the union.

That is particularly important given that some key service groups in Unison, such as health, remain in the hands of the old, right-wing leadership with a record of holding back struggle.

The NEC is discussing a motion to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) calling for it to coordinate action across TUC unions.

Health workers discuss response

As we go to press, the health service group of Unison is meeting to discuss its response to the government's derisory pay offer. Since 2020, health workers have been protesting for significant pay rises. Socialist Party members will be arguing for a serious national campaign, including preparation for strike action.

● **NHS workers will report in the next issue of the Socialist.**

Colleges to strike

The University and Colleges Union has announced the "best further education college ballot results since the Tories brought in their anti-union bill". Last year 15 colleges passed the threshold to take strike action to get a better pay deal. Now 39 have passed the threshold! Coordinated strike action is planned for September.

Firefighters say no to insulting pay offer

The Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union FBU has voted unanimously to reject a 2% pay 'offer'. The union says that firefighters never take industrial action lightly, but plans will now be made to step up its campaign for decent pay, including preparation for strike action.

● **A firefighter speaks to the Socialist in the next issue.**

PCS union to hold strike ballot on pay and jobs

DAVE SEMPLE
PCS BRANCH SECRETARY WIGAN (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

PCS is to ballot its civil service members for strike action over pay, pensions, jobs and redundancy terms. The ballot period is 26 September to 7 November.

The union's demands are for a 10% pay increase with a living wage of at least £15 an hour, an immediate 2% cut in pension contributions, no worsening of redundancy terms, and no job cuts.

The ballot takes place against a background of a wage cut in real terms of at least 20%, as a result of over ten years of government pay restrictions, and a recently announced massive attack on jobs, with Tory plans to axe over 90,000 posts.

Socialist Party members in PCS support the strike action ballot, though believe it should have taken place earlier.

With RPI inflation running currently at 11.7%, the government pay limit of 2-3% is an insult. The 10% pay claim is modest and represents the least we can accept.

We also support the inclusion of jobs and other issues in the ballot. We have consistently argued for such a position, together with other members of the socialist rank-and-file Broad Left Network group.

When previous statutory ballots failed to secure the Tory anti-strike law 50% turnout threshold, we said the inclusion of other major issues would boost the prospects of winning a strike ballot.

At the union's recent annual conference the Left Unity leadership of PCS rejected our call for the inclusion of jobs in the ballot.

They now concede, behind closed

doors, what they refused to accept in open debate.

The decision to provide within the ballot an element of disaggregation is welcome. This means that should the overall ballot fail to secure a turnout threshold of 50%, those groups within government departments that get the 50% will not be prevented from taking action.

Socialist Party members have consistently made the case for disaggregated ballots to be an option. The Left Unity leadership previously scoffed at the idea - they went with an 'all or nothing' approach, and ended up with nothing.

Tories weak

The Tories are weak and divided and, no matter the outcome of their leadership election, this will not change. The only thing that unites them is their determination to make workers pay for the crisis of their system.

Other public sector workers are already taking action, such as the RMT, with still more preparing to do so. Securing a statutory strike ballot will put PCS in a strong position to win on pay and jobs.

Socialist Party members will work tirelessly for a 'yes' vote. We will also be demanding of the union leadership a serious plan of action that shows a willingness to do what is necessary to halt the attacks on our members, and which wherever possible coordinates action with other workers.

PCS members have already suffered enough - it's time to fight back!

● Find out more and join the BLN at pcsbln.wordpress.com

Get all the latest union news
nationalshop
stewardsnetwork
NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net

Bexley bin workers strike back



Socialist Party members supporting the strike SOCIALIST PARTY

BERKAY KARTAV
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

On 12 July, over 100 bin drivers and loaders in Bexley started four weeks of strike action, over pay and attacks on working conditions.

Last summer, Bexley bin workers were on indefinite strike for more than six weeks, fighting against the outsourcing giant Serco. But Serco was replaced by another private company, Countrystyle Recycling, which initially was forced to make a better pay offer.

However, one year on, the company has offered workers a below-inflation pay rise with strings attached.

The company wants to scrap the 'job and finish' provision in the contracts. This would mean that workers who finish their rounds are forced to stay at the depot and do extra work.

Unite the Union says that Countrystyle is trying to scrap this provision

in order to punish workers for asking for a cost-of-living pay rise.

Workers were also appalled by the heavy-handed tactics of the police and the company, which put up barricades to stop workers from picketing outside the depot - a public building. But the intimidation tactics did not work and workers continued to picket by the roadside.

Public services should remain public services. The Tory-led Bexley council is once again dodging its responsibility.

Serco, Countrystyle and all other private companies only care about their profits and nothing else. All outsourced workers should be brought back in-house, along with inflation-proof pay rises and decent terms and conditions.

• Donations to the strike fund can be sent to: Unite LE/649, Branch No 60-83-01, Account No 20441911

Barristers' strike: "Justice for all... who can afford it"

Adrian Chaplin, from an Exeter-based chambers, spoke to Plymouth Socialist Party members on the court steps of Plymouth Crown and County Court:

"As has been made clear by the Criminal Bar Association, legal aid rates have been cut by nearly 40% in the last 15 years. 25% of specialised criminal barristers have stopped working in the criminal courts in the last 5 years.

"The recommendation of the Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid was that immediate minimum steps were needed to increase the rates. The government has had that report since November 2021, but the current government proposals will not see any change to the rates actually paid until far into 2023 and beyond.

"Nearly 40% of the most junior barristers left in one year alone. Some of them had ended up taking home less than the minimum hourly wage for a case. The overall result is that we are genuinely concerned that the levels of funding will result in young barristers being unable to afford to work in criminal cases. That will mean that we are at risk of not surviving as a group of specialist practitioners. That in turn will mean too few defence or prosecution barristers, and in time too few judges, for a properly functioning criminal justice system."

Christopher Barry, former solicitor, also spoke to Socialist Party members:

"Eight years ago, I left the legal profession during a period of massive legal aid cuts.

"Just like they were when I was a lawyer, the Tories are still in charge,

still bleeding the profession dry. It was the Tories who brought in Crown Court means-testing in 2014, leaving many defendants without lawyers for really serious offences, trying to conduct their own cases.

"I worked as a solicitor for a criminal defence firm until 2013, when my firm got into financial trouble, the underlying cause being the continual cuts to our funding. The government was paying less and less, and getting slower and slower at paying it.

"Redundancies ensued and I was one of about ten who got the chop. Two further rounds of redundancies after I left saw more talented defence lawyers forced to rethink their careers. Many left criminal law behind.

"The Law Society reports that the number of criminal duty solicitors outside London has fallen 7% between 2018 and 2021. And the ones remaining are ageing: only 4% are under 35 because criminal defence is no longer an attractive long-term career. Defence solicitors have received no fee increase since 1998.

"81% of specialist criminal barristers in the UK voted for strike action and are calling this their 'last stand'. I hope they succeed, because if they don't, this mass exodus of lawyers will only continue."



Barristers on strike in Plymouth RYAN ALDRED

East London school strike

Downgrade the academy bosses, not essential staff!

JAMES IVENS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Teaching assistants and support staff at Drapers' Pyrgo primary school in Havering, east London, have struck for weeks against pay cuts. Staff with many years' experience are being forcibly downgraded.

Pickets told us on the thirteenth strike day, Thursday 14 July, that bosses at their academy chain have an ulterior motive. They suspect the trust plans to pave over surrounding parkland and throw up a massive 'learning village' with a primary, secondary and college combined.

The bosses' aim is presumably to attract in more students and more money, never mind the quality of

the facilities and conditions for staff and students. Slashing support staff pay at this primary would be a step towards winding it up ahead of that.

Why else build a whole new primary right next door, and stop even publicly offering Drapers' Pyrgo as an option? Why else allow the facilities to fall into disrepair, like the disgusting boys' toilets? Why else give students at other sites in the academy trust a school trip for free

or discounted, while charging £50 a head here?

The trust has £800,000 in reserves. Its top twelve earners make £1 million a year put together. Downgrade their pay! The money's there and the strikers know it.

The local press has sided uncritically with management. The local borough council, led by a Residents Association-Labour coalition, has done nothing to support the workers. The working class needs its own party to do that job.

The truth is that schools just can't operate without good numbers of experienced support staff. But the bosses don't care. The workers at Drapers' Pyrgo are standing up for themselves and education. Victory to the NEU strike!

Yorkshire bus drivers fighting for decent pay

IAIN DALTON
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

After a month of the management of Arriva buses demanding in the press that Unite members be balloted on a pay offer, trying to portray the union as undemocratic and out of touch with members, their full and final offer was rejected by the majority of the workforce across the five depots in Yorkshire.

Arriva's new line became how disgraceful it was that Unite reinstated the suspended action and demanded that ACAS be brought in to mediate. You would expect that position from the bosses - but Labour West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin put out a press statement with the same demands!

When the strike resumed, picket lines were once again solid at the Wakefield and Selby depots, where Socialist Party members visited to offer our solidarity. After just two days, the strike was suspended once more for further talks, with Unite announcing it would give 14 days notice of further action.

On the picket line, some drivers were questioning whether they should have suspended action for the ballot, as there is a danger the stop-start nature of the strike could alienate passengers due to the uncertainty.

• As we go to print, there has been an announcement by Arriva that a new offer has been made that will go to ballot this week.

Get all the latest union news...

nationalshop
stewardsnetwork

with the
NSSN bulletin
shopstewards.net

LATIN AMERICA: CONVULSED POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY

TONY SAUNOIS
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

Latin America is convulsed in political turmoil and crisis. Throughout the continent the effects of the Covid pandemic, which compounded the economic and social crisis, have not been overcome. Economic growth and employment have failed to return to the levels which existed pre-pandemic. 30 million workers with jobs officially live below the poverty line - millions higher than before Covid.

The continent was rocked in 2019-20 by mass uprisings and social revolt. Millions took to the streets in Chile following a national uprising, and a general strike took place in Ecuador. Colombia followed with an historic general strike and mass movement of the poor. Peru was shaken by a series of strikes and mobilisations. In Chile, Colombia and Ecuador the power of the mass movements had the potential to overthrow the right-wing reactionary regimes there. In Ecuador, the government was forced to flee the capital, Quito, in 2019. But, the lack of organisation and clear political objectives at the time allowed the regimes to cling to power by a thread, despite a collapse in approval ratings and social support.

However, much of the continent has now experienced a second 'pink wave' with the election of a series of 'left' governments. Gabriel Boric in Chile won the presidency, followed by Gustavo Petro in Colombia. Petro's election victory represents an historic turn, as it is the first time the 'left' has won an election to the presidency in Colombia. It represents a blow to the ruling class and oligarchs which rule Colombia, and also to US imperialism, which has rested on Colombia as one of its closest allies in the region.

The first 'pink wave' saw the coming to power of a series of left regimes like those of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1999,

Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2006 and Rafael Correa in Ecuador in 2007. These regimes were driven by powerful revolutionary processes among the masses. Motivated by a revolutionary upsurge, they encroached upon the interests of capitalism and imperialism. At the same time, other far less radical governments came

to power, like in Brazil under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva or the Peronist national governments of the Kirchners in Argentina.

However, these governments failed to break with capitalism, and the reforms they introduced were reversed step by step by the ruling class. Corruption, bureaucratic methods and lack of workers' democratic control stifled the regimes, which increasingly saw their support eroded.

At subsequent elections, a series of right-wing neoliberal governments and parties were elected. Sebastián Piñera in Chile, Mauricio Macri in Argentina, later the far-right populist Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and, most recently, Guillermo Lasso in Ecuador. In Venezuela, although the right-wing opposition has not been able to oust Nicolás Maduro, who became president after the death of Chávez, the economic collapse, compounded by US sanctions, corruption and bureaucratic methods has resulted in the regime morphing back into the pre-Chávez capitalist governments.

The protracted swing to the right by Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua bears no resemblance to the initial Sandinista regimes and revolutions of the 1980s. Ortega, despite being opposed by US imperialism, is ruling in the same despotic manner the former Somoza dictatorship, which the Sandinistas overthrew in the 1980s.

The right-wing governments came to power more as a consequence of protest, resulting from disillusionment with the failure of the 'left' governments which were imprisoned within the straitjacket of capitalism. The social explosions which rapidly erupted against them illustrate that they lacked a consolidated social base of ideological support for right-wing neoliberal policies. Although, as Brazil illustrates, Bolsonaro does maintain a core of solid supporters.

Ecuador, which elected the right-wing government of Lasso in May 2021, was less than a year later faced with another mass uprising. On 13 June, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE, began staging protests across the country demanding

economic reforms. The movement demanded increased fuel subsidies, price control of agricultural goods, and the ending of government decrees that eased mining and oil drilling.

The movement intensified much more rapidly than in 2019. From day one, police patrol cars were burned, police were detained by the mass protests and private companies were threatened. Within two weeks of the movement oil production - its main export - was down 50%. The driving force was the increase in petrol prices and food inflation. Despite initially trying to repress the movement, the Ecuadorian government has been forced to make concessions, which have resulted in the movement being suspended, although it could erupt at any time.

Central banks in Latin America have implemented interest rate increases which have fueled both poverty and anger. Fearful of confronting mass social explosions, the newly elected governments of the second 'pink wave' have so far not adopted such policies as radical as those introduced during the first 'pink wave' in Venezuela, Bolivia or Ecuador.

In Chile, Boric has seen his approval rating plunge within a few months of taking office. He has formed a government with many of the former parties that were in power, and which were totally discredited. All the corrupted 'centre' parties, apart from the Christian Democrats, are now back in government.

The promise Boric made to allow the release of pension funds has been weakened. A state of 'exception' has been declared, allowing the use of the military against the Mapuche people in their territories in the south. Strikes by miners, in opposition to closures of copper mines on environmental grounds with no guarantee of alternative work or no loss of pay, have seen the police deployed against them.

The mass movement in 2019 compelled the Chilean ruling elite to agree a process to consider rewriting the constitution bequeathed by former dictator Augusto Pinochet. The Constitutional Convention has drafted a very mild replacement which, while speaking of rights to housing, education and a decent life, makes no provision of how to achieve them.

Demands for the nationalisation of the copper industry, raised during the mass movement, are not mentioned. Even the mild reform of the constitution is too much for the far right, which has launched a ferocious campaign against it. It remains uncertain if it will be accepted or rejected in a national plebiscite in September.

In Peru, the government of president Pedro Castillo plunged into crisis only weeks after being elected. Moving rapidly to the right, he was ejected from the party Peru Libre which he stood for when he won the election. He has been through four prime ministers since winning in 2021. Inflation, and especially the rise in food and fuel costs, is a crucial factor in the crisis.

Despite the historic victory of Petro in Colombia, he has unfortunately also taken the route of trying to manage capitalism and appease the ruling class and its political representatives. He has formed alliances with the 'centre' and 'centre-right' - the same parties that he has

spent years opposing when he adopted a more radical left agenda.

Petro promised a land reform programme, a crucial issue in Colombia, that will prove a crucial test. Yet compromising with representatives of Colombian capitalism and landlordism will not result in serious land reform being carried through. Every attempt by previous governments has been thwarted and, in reality, abandoned in a serious form.

The depth of the crisis shaking Latin America is reflected in the crisis of the left parties and their leaders which have won recent elections. Rather than draw lessons from the first 'pink wave' which attempted to remain with the framework of capitalism, they have compounded the mistakes and repeated them on a higher level in a deeper world crisis. It cannot be excluded that, faced with renewed massive social explosions, which are certain in the coming

months and years, they could be pushed in a more radical direction, but this is not the trajectory they are on at this stage.

Every country in Latin America is now facing political or social convulsions. There is no stability. A growing source of social conflict is the worsening environmental crisis. In Chile, from the Atacama desert to Patagonia, a 13-year mega-drought has strained fresh water resources to breaking point. By the end of 2021, 50% of Chileans were living in areas suffering from "severe water scarcity".

By April, an unprecedented water rationing plan was announced for the capital Santiago. During the mass movement in 2019, the cry was often heard: "It's not drought, it's theft", as Chile has one of the most privatised water systems in the world - a product of Pinochet's constitution which guaranteed "water rights to be treated as private property".

Capitalism is the cause of the water crisis. 59% of water resources go to forestry - to the big companies to cut and sell wood. 37% goes to agriculture - to grow and export fruit and avocados. Just 2% is set aside for human consumption! Drought and water shortages were also a significant part of the struggle in Ecuador. The struggle over natural resources and the environment are increasingly becoming class issues which conflict with capitalism and private ownership.

The crisis in Argentina is explosive. The Peronist government is split and weakened over how to manage the ongoing debt crisis. The public debt stands at 67% of GDP, and has been reduced from over 80% - paid for by the working class. With inflation ravaging the economy at over 80%, big battles are poised to erupt. Politically, the socialist left alliance FIT made important gains at the last election - in the working-class city of San Salvador de Jujuy it took 25% of the vote. In the working-class areas of Buenos Aires it managed to score up to 10% in previously solid Peronist strongholds.

The mass demonstration of nearly 500,000 throughout the country against poverty in 2022 is an anticipation of struggles to come. The crucial task confronting the FIT is whether it can now take further steps forward to reach out to Peronist workers and develop beyond an electoral alliance of various Trotskyist organisations into a party, with a federal character, rooted in the struggles of the working class and local communities. The protests against the International Monetary Fund and the demand for non-payment of the foreign debt are crucial demands for the working class in Argentina and Latin America as a whole.

The convulsions taking place throughout the continent can be crystallised in the clash that is pending in Brazil in the October elections. Bolsonaro is trailing badly in the polls, which point to a victory for Lula who is standing again for the Workers' Party (PT). However, Lula is reassuring the ruling class that he is a safe pair of hands for them and can be relied on



The continent was rocked in 2019-20 by mass uprisings and social revolt as millions took to the streets



Jair Bolsonaro (left) and Lula are set to go head to head in the October Brazilian elections PHOTOS: RICARDO STUCKERT/CC AND ISAC NOBREGA/CC



The waves of struggle and political convulsions sweeping the continent pose sharply the need for the lessons of the past to be learnt



The 2019-20 mass movement in Chile PHOTO: CARLOS FIGUEROA/CC

to defend capitalism. He has selected as his running mate for the vice presidency Geraldo Alckmin, a member of the capitalist PMDP, who Lula and the PT have fought against in the past.

The left socialist party PSOL has mistakenly taken the decision not to stand in the presidential election, which it could do in the first round without threatening the possibility of Bolsonaro winning. Standing in the first round would help prepare the ground for future struggles, which are certain to erupt under a pro-capitalist Lula presidency. The elections in Brazil can become even more convulsive should, as seems possible, Bolsonaro attempt some sort of coup, involving sections of the army, and attempts to cling to power.

This would open the prospect of a massive polarisation and conflict in Brazil, with an element of a civil war. This, the ruling class would hope to avoid at all costs. However, they are not in control of Bolsonaro and his supporters. Lula, coming to power during such a situation would open the way for a massive upsurge in struggle and demands for a change.

The waves of struggle and political convulsions sweeping the continent pose sharply the need for the lessons of the past to be learnt, especially the need to build mass workers' parties with a programme to break with capitalism and introduce a socialist programme. Latin America has entered a renewed cycle of struggle and upheaval. New parties of the working class need to be urgently built, which can pose the idea of fighting for a voluntary democratic socialist federation of the continent. This is the only way to end the cycle of crisis and upheaval which capitalism guarantees.

London Olympic legacy of unaffordable housing



The Olympic Stadium, part of the expensive and debt-ridden Olympic Park, that has failed to deliver its promised jobs and affordable homes PAUL MATTSON

NIALL MULHOLLAND
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Ten years ago, I took my excited young son to the opening day of the Olympic Games in east London. As local residents, we were able to successfully apply in a ticket lottery.

For thousands more visiting the sports event, and the millions watching on TV, it was two weeks of spectacle. And many people will fondly remember director Danny Boyle's opening ceremony, which celebrated the NHS.

But what about the much-vaunted Olympic 'legacy' promised by successive Labour and Tory governments? A devastating report by Oliver Wainwright – an architecture and design critic – revealed "how London's Olympic legacy was sold out."

Sebastian Coe – a former Tory MP and chair of London's Olympic organising committee – promised "regeneration of the area for the direct benefit of everyone that lives there", producing 30,000-40,000 new homes, "much of which will be affordable housing".

London's first elected mayor, Ken Livingstone, led the bid for the games, as "the only way to get the billions of pounds out of the government to develop the East End". The target for affordable housing was set at 50%.

Mayor Johnson

But after Boris Johnson became London mayor in 2008, he slashed the number of houses planned for the site, and the Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition government changed the definition of 'affordable' to mean up to 80% market rate.

This means that 'affordable' in the Olympic Park area requires an annual income of at least £60,000 to £90,000. Average income in the local boroughs is £27,000.

A decade after the games, only 13,000 homes have been built. Only 11% of these are deemed genuinely affordable to people on average



A decade after the games, only 13,000 homes have been built. Only 11% of these are deemed genuinely affordable to people on average local incomes

local incomes. The four boroughs bordering the Olympic Park – Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest – have over 75,000 on the council house waiting list.

Families on low income and on council housing waiting lists were displaced and relocated from Newham by the council in the run up to the Olympic Games. Some were forced to move out of east London, including to the north of England, far from relatives and friends.

Council homes

An area of council homes and tower blocks – Carpenters Estate, just south of the Olympic Park – was depopulated and allowed to run down by Newham council. In 2014, young single mothers, facing losing their homes, were joined by activists in a week-long occupation of empty properties on the estate.

Last year, in the midst of the Covid pandemic, Newham council and its housing company, Populo Living, spent at least £350,000 on campaigning for a 'yes' vote for 'regeneration' on the estate. Campaigners had no access to public funds. The ballot result means almost 60% of the estate will be demolished.

This is not the first time that local people in the Olympic Park area have been treated with contempt. To make way for the Olympic site, 280 small businesses, employing 5,000 people, were largely forced out.

Genuinely affordable places to live in Clays Lane, a housing cooperative near where the Olympic velodrome now stands, were demolished in 2007. 450 low-cost tenancies were lost. The net gain built since 2012 is estimated at a mere 100 genuinely affordable homes.

Building the Olympic athletes' village was taken over by the government after the private developer ran into financial crisis in 2008. The village was sold off again in 2011 for half of the cost to build – a £275 million loss to the taxpayer.

In the Olympic Park, the price for a one-bed flat starts at £465,000, and £1 million for a terrace house. Many

residents are tied to costly energy contracts with East London Energy, which has a 40-year monopoly over the park.

Residents at L&Q housing association report that their flats have many defects. They pay a 'fixed estate charge' for the upkeep of the Olympic Park – £1,357 a year for a three-bedroom flat, plus a £2,500 service charge to L&Q.

Under the Tories, the Olympic Park bequeathed massive loss-making 'icons'. The ArcelorMittal Orbit, named after its steel-tycoon sponsor, offers a climb to the top of the tower and a slide down again for £17. It costs £10,000 a week to maintain. It has at least £13 million of debt.

The Olympic stadium cost £486 million to build, and was later converted into a football stadium for another £274 million. The new home of West Ham football club costs the public £10 million to operate each year.

The monstrous MSG Sphere, which will be built in a densely populated residential area near Stratford station, is another woeful Olympic legacy. The enormous new Vegas-style music venue will have events throughout the day and night.

The outer surface of the huge sphere will be used for advertising, causing unprecedented light pollution. Even most local councillors who sit on the London Legacy Development Corporation opposed the MSG Sphere. But it went through on the approval of unelected appointees.

Sports participation

What about participation in sports and exercise? This has also been sacrificed on the altar of big business.

Since the Tories came to power with austerity in 2010, there has been an almost 50% drop in funding for grassroots sports. With local government funding cut by 60%, publicly owned swimming pools, parks and other leisure facilities have been hit hard. And the number of PE teachers has fallen.

Newham has some of the lowest levels of adult physical activity in the country. In 2017-18, just over half of residents were getting the recommended 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. The proportion of London children classed as overweight or obese is highest in the poorer east and northeast boroughs, such as Newham at 44%.

The Socialist Party calls for the entire Olympic Park to be brought into democratic public ownership. This would allow genuinely affordable housing for thousands of local families, and the park's sporting facilities and recreational sites free or at cheap cost for the use of local people and visitors. This would be an Olympic legacy really worth the name.



Youth Fight for Jobs organised 'Austerity Games' highlighting the effects of austerity on young people PAUL MATTSON

TV review: The real Mo Farah

Lenny Shail, Socialist Party national committee, reviews this documentary about Mo Farah.

'Mo spoke like us, joked like us, and lived like us'

I've been a fan and follower of Mo before he was Mo. For working-class kids like me who ran, Mo was a hero, even before anyone outside the running world knew him.

He was the young guy who we would cheer on. He won pretty much every domestic cross-country race. We got excited when we saw him on TV trying to make the step into the international stage, because he was one of our own who might one day mix it with the best runners in the world.

Snobs

The fact that he was a refugee only mattered to a few old snobs left over in posh clubs. Mo spoke like us, joked like us, and came from the same schools and areas as us.

I was lucky and privileged enough to train and run alongside him a few times as a teenager at the UK Athletics Endurance HQ in Teddington in south west London. I would often run to my cousin's, who lived near there, where Mo trained, just so I could say I saw him to my mates!

This programme documents Mo opening up about his hidden past and journey of how he arrived in Britain. "The real story is I was born in Somaliland, north of Somalia, as Hussein Abdi Kahin. Despite what I've said in the past, my parents never lived in the UK.

"When I was four, my dad was killed in the civil war. As a family we were torn apart. I was separated from my mother, and I was brought into

the UK illegally under the name of another child - Mohamed Farah."

Taken to live in Hounslow, west London, Mo was forced to work as a domestic servant. He was eventually able to go to school.

With little English, and still working as a slave, Mo struggled enormously. His teachers worried about his behaviour, he was unwashed and dirty, and his so-called parents never responded to communication.

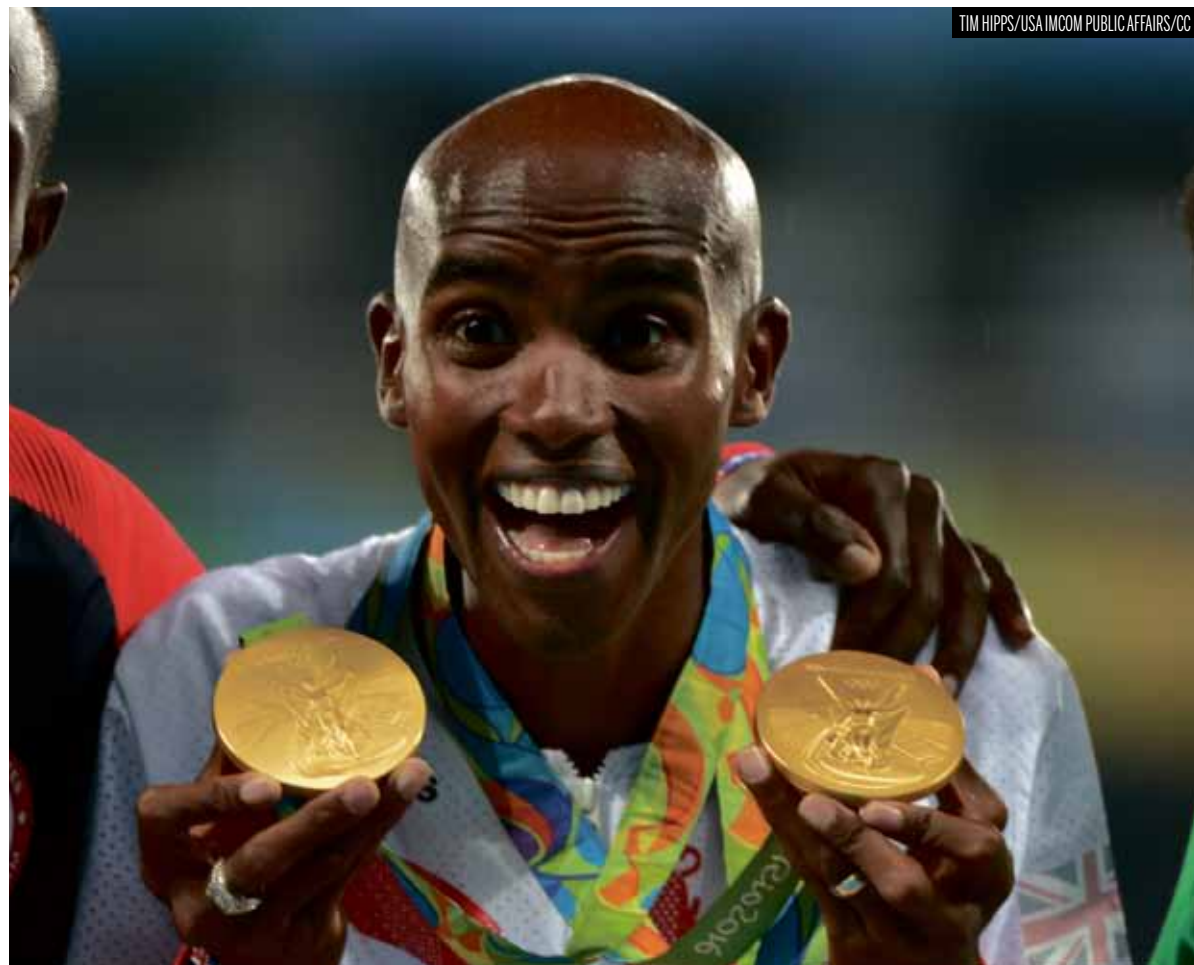
His only solace was sport, especially running. His PE teacher, Alan Watkinson, describes the freedom Mo experienced when given a field to run around, unleashing a phenomenal talent. Mo won his first race and just kept on winning.

Mo opened up to his PE teacher. He was able to help Mo move in with one of his mate's mum, where he was treated as part of the family.

Deportation

Despite hypocritical Tory MPs calling Mo brave, the same situation today could result in a deportation flight to Rwanda or a bus ride to a detention centre. Priti Patel and other Tories were no doubt shaking in anger when they found out that Mo was granted British citizenship and a passport aged 16 after a long-waged battle by his teacher to allow him to travel to other countries to run for the British team.

Mo went on to be one of the greatest distance runners ever. One of only a handful of people to win the 10,000 and 5,000 metre double at the Olympics twice.



TIM HIPPS/USA IMCOM PUBLIC AFFAIRS/CC

Mo sees through Tory racism

In the documentary, Mo finds out that officially over 10,000 people were trafficked to the UK last year. But the real figure is likely to be over 100,000, not including the thousands also attempting to escape war and poverty for a better life in Britain.

Mo recounts towards the end that he is no different to the asylum seekers and refugees, and victims of trafficking and slavery, that are hated by the press and politicians. Mo has taken a risk revealing his true story. He even seeks guidance from

lawyers in the show to discuss the potential consequences of possible deportation.

We need to be outraged at the politicians and commentators who have spent years cheering on hate towards migrants and refugees. They have allowed the Windrush scandal and others to take place. How many gold medals do you have to win to pass racist immigration laws?

Control of asylum decisions cannot be left in the hands of this callous government. We demand that

elected committees of ordinary working people, including representatives of migrant organisations and the trade unions, have the right to review asylum cases and grant asylum.

The only way to permanently end the refugee crisis is to fight for a democratic socialist world. On the basis of capitalism, there will always be people forced to flee their country, not by choice but out of desperation as a result of war, environmental catastrophe and starvation.

Would funding cuts stop Mo's rise today?

There's an aspect to Mo's life that isn't touched on in the show. Can ordinary working-class people afford to live next to the fields that Mo first ran on? And the citywide comprehensive school cross country league races are diminishing every year.

While Mo's London 2012 victory was inspirational to so many working-class kids, the so-called Olympic legacy has been a legacy of money only thrown at elite sport (see opposite page). That ignores the greatest contributor to elite sport, and the much wider benefits of sport and exercise - mass participation.

Sports funding elitism has even reached a stage where some athletes were denied selection for the Rio and Tokyo Olympics, despite

having qualifying times, because they weren't deemed 'medal winners.'

The Socialist Party campaigns for the funding, facilities and time for everyone to take part in sports. Cuts and sell-offs of school and community facilities should be reversed. We call for the nationalisation of sport and exercise facilities for the benefit of everyone, and for investment in free, high-quality sport aimed at participation at every level.

Low pay

Today, low wages and long working hours are still an insuperable barrier to many aspiring athletes. A socialist society could see a complete change in how sport is organised and run.

Sport and facilities could be opened up, and hugely expanded, for enjoyment by everyone. This could be run democratically by fans, athletes, coaches and the local community. It could be based around workplaces, schools, communities, and local clubs, as part of a nationally planned set-up sharing expertise and resources.

This would allow everyone to play and take part to whichever standard they wish - just for fun, to keep fit or to push themselves to the very limit and be another Mo - a real hero of the oppressed, poor and working class across the world.

● The Real Mo Farah is available on BBC iPlayer



JUDY BEISHON

Obituary: Sian Ruddick – respected by members, feared by management

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN PCS

Sian Ruddick's death on the afternoon of Wednesday 13 July came as a profound shock to her many friends and comrades.

A long-time member of the Socialist Party, and widely respected activist in the PCS union, Sian had experienced ill health, including heart surgery last year. She appeared to have made a good recovery, but sadly this did not last.

Sian's long and distinguished record started in the CPSA days – a PCS predecessor union – and the fight against its state-connected right-wing leadership.

A union rep in her local office in Handsworth in Birmingham in the early 1980s, it wasn't long before she became branch secretary. It was remarked of Sian that she enjoyed the respect and affection of her members, and the respect and fear of local management.

Sian held many union positions over the years: Midlands regional committee chair, chief teller at the union's annual conference, and member of the DHSS (now Department for Work and Pensions) executive committee, to which she was first elected in the late 1980s. Sian was active on the union's national disability forum and a delegate to the Trades Union Congress.

Building the left

As a member of the Socialist Party, and our predecessor organisation Militant, Sian played a prominent role in building the left in the union. She could always be relied on to persuade her branch to support left candidates.

Sian was a Left Unity auditor in 2018 when PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka led an attack within Left Unity on Chris Baugh, the incumbent assistant general secretary,



Sian speaking at a 2014 strike rally over pay on behalf of PCS

who was up for re-election. Despite strong friendships with some activists who supported Serwotka, Sian never wavered in her loyalty and political commitment to the Socialist Party.

She supported Chris in the election, and helped form the Broad Left

Network, a socialist rank-and-file group developed as a consequence of the Left Unity leadership's refusal to back Chris Baugh, the LU-nominated candidate.

The vitality of Sian, and the joy she brought to the lives of those who knew her, is impossible to adequately

convey. There have been many memories of Sian shared after the news of her death. A couple help fill out the picture by recollecting sharing a 24-hour picket of Birmingham airport during the 1981 pay dispute, and sharing a house with Sian and fighting off the poll-tax bailiffs.

And also, from a lifetime friend, and political and Northern Soulmate comes a message we can all identify with. "Sian – RIP comrade, friend and soul sister."

● Sian was never phased by weight of our union work

KEVIN GREENAWAY
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY AND
FORMER PCS NEC MEMBER

I first met Sian through my wife as they were at school together. I got to know Sian socially at various dances and parties. She loved a drink and a dance, as we all did.

Sian attended our wedding in 1981; at the point I had just joined Militant – predecessor of the Socialist Party. Sian joined Militant a little later, and became active with us as we built a Bromsgrove party branch of 16.

Sian joined us in the Labour Party, and on Labour Party Young Socialist activity, including being part of a 32-strong Broad Left that took on the right wing. She was active with us during the miners' strike 1984-85.

Knowledge and experiences

In the period I became consciously more active in the Association of Magisterial Officers (AMO), Sian was at work in CPSA (predecessor of PCS) Department for Work and Pensions. We shared our experiences and knowledge.

Sian had a phenomenal grasp of the detail involved in casework, disputes, fighting the right wing in CPSA, and the periodic controversies in Left Unity and with others on the left. I would occasionally glaze over with the weight of it all, but the point was, Sian always had something important to say.

The benefit of those conversations came through when AMO merged with PCS. Sian was vitally important in my union education and I will always be grateful.

Sian's passing is a terrible shock for all of her friends and comrades. I am happy to know that one of the last things she did was travel to Benidorm for a Northern Soul music event. Sian was as much a fixture on that scene, as she was in the Socialist Party and PCS. She will be missed and always loved.

Tolpuddle Festival attendees back our call for new party



CALLUM JOYCE

CALLUM JOYCE
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members attended the Tolpuddle Festival, which celebrates and remembers the history of the Tolpuddle Martyrs – early trade unionists in the 1830s who were convicted of joining a union and sentenced to transportation to Australia. But mass protests helped win them a pardon, allowing them to come home.

Hundreds of trade unionists and activists attended the festival over the weekend of 16-17 July, with thousands marching on the Sunday. We sold over 100 copies of the Socialist, and the Socialist Party had a vibrant presence on the march, carrying banners and leading the chanting.

We also participated in conference sessions involving speakers like RMT union general secretary Mick Lynch and Paul Nowak, soon to be general secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Strike together

After pressure from Socialist Party members, Nowak confirmed that some trade union leaders are in talks about coordinating ongoing strike action for maximum effect. The support for the strikes, especially action by the RMT, was huge.

Socialist Party also raised the question of political representation, following Labour's poor position on supporting the trade unions. Unfortunately, most of the platform speakers, did not agree, and were waiting for a Labour government. This sentiment was not widely shared by

rank-and-file members in attendance, however, and our call for a new mass workers' party was well received.

It was clear to attendees, as it is to us, that working people need new political representation – a new party – that will refuse to continue the years of austerity, and will fight for a socialist society where the major industries are owned and democratically run by the working class.

That's why the Socialist Party stands candidates as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), to show people that there is an alternative to Keir Starmer's Labour. If you want to be a part of that opposition, then consider standing as a candidate in your local area. If we join together in struggle, we can bring an end to the rotten system of capitalism.

Save English literature at Sheffield Hallam

Don't let Tories scrap my degree and others like it

JO HALL
ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDENT, SHEFFIELD HALLAM

Sheffield Hallam University plans to scrap the stand alone English literature course for new entrants in 2023. From then on, it will only be buried in another degree course as a secondary module.

Sheffield Hallam has given no explanation beyond a 'shake-up' of how English is taught. This is part of a wider attack on the humanities.

The Tory government is planning new attacks. Universities could face penalties for courses where less than 60% of graduates are in study or professional jobs 15 months after completion.

Dr Mary Peace, an English literature lecturer at Sheffield Hallam, described these cuts as "cultural vandalism... what kind of society will we have if there is no place for people from all social classes and

backgrounds to have the chance to read and think?"

The Tories' Office for Students has threatened to cut funding for 'low-value' courses. By 'value', they mean what matters to the capitalists.

We face real dangers to education. Limited academic freedom is under attack, with the government's focus on 'financial return'. They want to keep the next generation right where they can.

Assault on poor students

This is an assault on working-class arts. Just over 40% of Hallam students are from poor economic backgrounds.

Michelle Donelan has now resigned as Tory education secretary. But when she was in the Tory government, she said: "Courses that do not lead students on to work or further study fail both the students, who pour their time and effort in, and the

taxpayer, who picks up a substantial portion of the cost."

It is true that graduate work for humanities and arts students is low-paid, with many courses under the Tories' self-imposed thresholds for beginning to pay back student loans. But that is the fault of private companies as well as the government failing to create decent jobs.

Donelan claims certain courses will inevitably result in underemployment. However, it is only inevitable under one context: capitalism, which Donelan and peers want to protect.

The Tory government isn't interested in education but, rather, what education can do for them – streamlining people into profit-making industries. The Tories don't want the arts to be for us, despite it often being made by us. They want to keep it an elite pastime, not a legitimate working-class livelihood.



Dea-John's family fight for justice

CAMILLA MNGAZA
BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members from Birmingham and the Black Country marched with hundreds of others through Kingstanding in north Birmingham on 9 July, in solidarity with the campaign for justice for Dea-John Reid.

Dea-John Reid, a black 14-year-old was murdered in May 2021. He was chased by an all-white group – three teenagers and two adults – some in balaclavas, armed with a spanner and large kitchen knife.

Witnesses said the group moved like a pack, chasing down their prey. This was captured on CCTV.

One of the adults shouted racist abuse, telling the teenagers to kill Dea-John. Yet the jury only convicted the teenager with the knife – and of manslaughter, not murder. He was sentenced to six years.

Why were the accomplices cleared? Why were they not convicted of joint enterprise?

A 2016 survey showed over half of those convicted under joint enterprise were black, even though black people make up just 4% of the population in Britain. Dea-John's family has said the lack of diversity in the jury – 11 white and 1 Asian – does not reflect Birmingham.

The murder of Dea-John Reid was a racist hate crime. This is yet another racist gross miscarriage of justice.

Hate crime

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) says it takes hate crime extremely seriously. We beg to differ.

Under capitalism, justice will never prevail when it comes to race hate crime. The police, CPS and judiciary were built to suppress those who might challenge the capitalist system. The working class, especially black and brown people, have suffered the most.

We don't need reform. The system is broken.

"You can't have capitalism without racism" – Malcolm X.

TV review: Pistol - Danny Boyle's fresh take makes Sex Pistols biopic worth watching

ZAKK BROWN
MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

I'll be honest and say I went into this with a bias. Musically, while undeniably foundational, I always found the Sex Pistols lacking compared to their contemporaries.

They weren't as ferocious as Wire, as nimble as Gang of Four, or as experimental as This Heat. All of those are explicitly leftist and don't share Johnny Rotten's dodgy, 'Country Life butter' politics.

The other reason for my bias against the Sex Pistols is their charlatanism. Masterminded by middle-class artists like Malcom

McLaren, Sex Pistols used punk and class politics to generate sales and press attention.

I expected 'Pistol' to be another naval-gazing Hollywood cash grab. But director Danny Boyle recognises the revolutionary facade of the Sex Pistols, and the show is all the better for it.

The series is conscious and careful to highlight punk as something not born out of the class tensions of the 1970s, but a new form of artistic expression curated by middle-class elites.

The sets, soundtrack and dialogue reference precursor, avant-garde artists to the Pistols. These bands cut

their teeth at the famed CBGB music club in New York, which laid the foundation for the Punk movement.

By 1975, artists like Vivienne Westwood and Malcom McLaren – played with exceptional sliminess by Thomas Brodie-Sangster – took the earnesty of Punk, which attracted the working class, and transformed it into a new art form to be discussed in middle-class, liberal artistic elite circles. An art form as a remedy for the lofty pretentiousness of Prog and the vapidity of disco. Neither of these spoke to the working classes about their material conditions, which good art often does.

It isn't any wonder the Sex Pistols

themselves objected to the show's airing. Danny Boyle recognises the band for what they were – little capitalists using 'revolution' as a carefully manufactured product to sell to the masses.

The Pistols were incapable of art for arts sake over profit. Rotten later formed PiL, releasing avant-garde masterpiece Metal Box.

While there aren't any surprises in Pistol to the storytelling formula, Boyle's unique perspective on the Pistols and their contemporaries sets it apart from other more self-congratulatory biopics.

The performances are top-notch. Sydney Chandler's subtle emoting

as Chrissie Hynde and Anson Boon channelling Rotten's stage presence are particular highlights. All of which are brought to life in a 1970s film aesthetic.

The 4:3 aspect ratio evokes Quadrophonia, and the blocking of people moving in front of the camera in pubs feels like a kitchen-sink, Ken Loach flick. Although the Hollywood-esque rapid fire cuts and edits in the action are detrimental.

Pistol it is a generic biopic. Nothing you haven't seen before. But Boyle's seasoned directional choices and aesthetic, and the fresh take in acknowledging Sex Pistols as pho-nies, make it worth watching.

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2022	DEADLINE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2022
South West	872	1,800	48%	
West Midlands	1,053	2,600	40%	
Northern	118	750	16%	
East Midlands	286	1,850	15%	
Wales	268	2,300	12%	
North West	126	1,150	11%	
London	480	4,600	10%	
Yorkshire	133	2,550	5%	
Southern & SE	49	2,350	2%	
Eastern	0	1,200	0%	
Other	755	3,850	20%	
TOTAL	4,141	25,000	17%	

Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

● Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate or call 020 8988 8777
● or make cheques payable to Socialist Party,
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT





WHAT WE STAND FOR

Capitalism is an ailing, crisis-ridden system based on the exploitation of the majority of the world's population by a small, super-rich elite who own most of the wealth and the means of producing it. This way of organising society, in which the pursuit of profit comes before everything else, causes poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, wars and oppression across the globe.

The Socialist Party organises working-class people to fight against the attacks from this rotten system on our lives and livelihoods, and for a socialist alternative: a society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few.

Building fighting democratic trade unions in the workplaces and a new mass workers' party is a vital part of the struggle to change society along socialist lines.

Because capitalism is a world system, the struggle for socialism must also be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International which organises across the world. Our demands include:

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A £15-an-hour minimum wage for all, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.
- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.
- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.
- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.
- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.
- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.
- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public

ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.

- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.
- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.
- The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence – where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced – and unrecycled waste.
- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any loss of jobs, pay or conditions.
- A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.
- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.
- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and

all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.
- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off 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, not to the fat cats.
- 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 the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
 - or call **020 8988 8777**
 - or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206**
- to find out more today!

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

socialistparty.org.uk/donate



Protest at Sri Lankan High Commission in London LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Solidarity protest as Sri Lankan masses topple president

A mass movement and strikes have forced out the Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa. As the Socialist goes to press, a state of emergency has been declared while MPs decide the next president. **James Ivens, Socialist Party national committee member**, spoke at a solidarity protest in London on 17 July. We print edited extracts of his speech.

We are here to express our solidarity with this momentous uprising of the workers and poor of Sri Lanka, which in 100 days has swept aside the presidency, swept aside the prime minister and the parliament, and has the potential to take power into its own hands - for the moment. The control of the military is even in question, for the moment.

It is the ruinous policies of the capitalist elite in Sri Lanka that have led to the food crisis. We say: nationalise the large land holdings and allow the small farmers, according to a democratic plan, to produce the food that the people of Sri Lanka need.

It is the ruinous policies of the capitalist elite that have caused the debt crisis. We say: repudiate that debt, refuse to pay the IMF. And instead, nationalise the banks and the finance sector, and use those resources democratically to plan to provide public services for all.

There is this question of who is going to come to power next. MPs are selecting the next president. But all of the institutions which have allowed the Rajapaksas and their friends in the capitalist elite to rob the people of Sri Lanka, are waiting in the wings.

Those who represent the capitalists, should not be allowed to hold power. Instead, those committees that have already started to spring up, in order to lead the demonstrations and protests, should be replicated in every local area: in the farms, in the factories, in the offices, in every

neighbourhood - elected by ordinary working people and the poor, and subject to recall. Those committees should convene a revolutionary constituent assembly.

Behind me there is this slogan: "a new peoples' constitution now". We know the people of Sri Lanka are crying out for system change. The Socialist Party says that system change should be socialist change. Nationalise the commanding heights of the economy, for a democratic plan by the working class and the poor, to immediately implement emergency economic programmes to feed the people and to stop the Rajapaksas and their echoes around the world from keeping power.

Another speaker earlier today correctly said: "The best thing that workers in Britain can do in solidarity with this movement, is to bring down our own Tory government, which is a friend of the rich and the robbers around the world".

And the Socialist Party says: there are strikes building in this country, why not all strike together in the autumn? And not just the rail workers, but the postal workers, the teachers, the civil servants and all those workers striking against the cost-of-living crisis in this country too. And for the trade unions to put together a new mass party of the working class, which can fight for socialism, in Britain, in Sri Lanka and around the world.

- For updates on developments in Sri Lanka visit: Socialistworld.net

KARL SIMMONS
CWI JAPAN

The shockwaves from the assassination of Abe Shinzo are still resonating across the globe. Members of the political class, from the most liberal to the most conservative, are singing eulogies to the career of the former Japanese prime minister.

India's prime minister and Hindu nationalist, Narendra Modi, declared a day of national mourning on 9 July. Former US President Donald Trump announced that he would like to attend the funeral. Boris Johnson was "utterly appalled" and Joe Biden was "stunned, outraged and deeply saddened." The Asahi Shinbun, the main Japanese liberal newspaper, claimed that a "bullet pierced the foundation of democracy." Japanese premier Kishida also echoed the rhetoric of the threat to democracy. Aside from the standard platitudes uttered, these are largely nonsense.

The other theme that is echoed by even some of the quality press was that this was a completely unexpected event in a peaceful Japanese society, the 'pax Japonica', as an article in the British Financial Times called it. This too is largely false. While there has been a reduction in political violence since the end of the Cold War, Japan has been a country known for the remarkable number of political assassinations, not their absence.

There was an attempt on the life of the mayor of Nagasaki in 1990, and an attempted assassination of former deputy prime minister, Shin Kanemaru in 1992. The former prime minister Morihiro Hosokawa was shot in 1994, and Koki Ishi, an opposition backbencher, was stabbed to death in front of his home in 2002. In 2007, the Nagasaki City mayor was shot dead. These were political assassinations carried out mainly by right-wing extremists, the most famous being the assassination of the leader of the Japan Socialist Party, Asanuma Inejiro, in 1960, by a right-wing youth. The murder of Abe, however, bears little resemblance to these events.

At the time of writing, the picture that has emerged of the main suspect is very different from the perpetrators of these previous attacks. Yamagami Tetsuya, a former naval self-defence force recruit, claimed to have no political differences with Abe. He had no record of political activity, and sought revenge in a purely personal grudge against Abe for his support for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, colloquially called the 'Moonies'. He produced a homemade gun based on instructions he found on YouTube.

The suspect felt that his life had been ruined when his mother was bankrupted after making substantial donations to the organisation. It has been confirmed that she was a member, and that she had been declared bankrupt in 2002. The cult is known for selling 'spiritual goods', mainly vases, for extortionate prices, on the grounds that the cult's victims' ancestors were experiencing pain in the afterlife, and that buying an expensive vase was the only way to stop this. There have been numerous cases brought against the Moonies, including some taken to the Japanese Supreme Court for extorting money out of members and

Shockwaves from assassination of Abe Shinzo resonate across world



Abe Shinzo
PHOTO: ANTHONY QUINTANO

potential members.

At first, the police would not name the religious group concerned. Since it has become public, the propaganda of the group and the conservative media has implied that the perpetrator had been wrong to identify Abe with the cult.

Moonies cult

The Moonies originated in Korea as an extremely right-wing and anti-Communist religious organisation. It was heavily promoted by the Korean intelligence services. It spread to Japan in 1959 and figures on the right, such as Abe's maternal grandfather Kishi Nobusuke, a former class 'A' war criminal and effective ruler of Manchuria during the Japanese attempt to colonise China, played a significant role in promoting the organisation in Japan. The growth of the cult in Japan and, in particular, the finances raised from supporters here, allowed the group to spread internationally.

Today, it has around 600,000 members in Japan and they play an active role in providing support for Abe's conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Their youth movement is active in many

universities, and they make up a substantial part of what has become known as the 'internet right' in Japan. They were heavily involved in 'Stop the Steal' demonstrations in support of Trump.

It is not surprising then that Abe had sought their support, and that both he and Trump recorded video messages for a meeting of the organisation last year. The support from such an organisation would have been too much for a politician like Abe to resist. The organisation, 'Lawyers against the Sale of Spiritual Goods', representing people filing court action against the Moonies, had specifically requested that Abe and other politicians have nothing to do with the cult.

The murder is best seen as blowback from opportunistically using the support of a religious cult that used unethical methods to raise money from its supporters. In particular, Yamagami was said to believe that Abe had protected the cult from legal action. That is not an unreasonable belief given that LDP right wingers had used political influence to enable the cult's founder, Sun Myung Moon, who had been convicted of tax evasion in the US,

to enter the country, despite the fact that it was against Japanese law at the time.

Abe had faced many other accusations of using his political influence to protect friends and associates from legal action. Yamaguchi Noriyuki, an associate of Abe, accused of raping journalist Ito Shiori, is one example. Civil courts have ruled that she was raped by him, though, significantly, there was no criminal prosecution.

What political effects will the murder have? The Kishida government was returned with an increased majority in the House of Councillors (Japan's upper house) election on 10 July. However, even before the election, the opposition was expected to do badly. This was mainly because of the role that the big conservative private sector unions had played in breaking up an agreement for the opposition parties to agree on joint candidates.

An opinion poll in Tokyo showed that 13% of people had changed their vote as a result of the murder. However, looking at the vote in Tokyo, it must have been largely a swing of right-wing votes from other parties to the LDP. The overall turnout was only 52%, slightly higher than the record low of 49%, so any outpouring of sympathy for Abe was quite limited.

However, the LDP right will attempt to turn Abe into a martyr for their cause. While his death removes prime minister Kishida's main opponent within the LDP, he will come under more pressure to revise the constitution to complete Abe's political dream. Since there is a two thirds majority for constitutional revision in both houses, and with increased fears of China, a battle over the constitution is looking increasingly likely. Despite his majority, there is no guarantee that Kishida will be able to carry it through.

If a bullet has pierced the foundations of Japanese democracy, it was not one of those fired by the aggrieved but misguided individual who shot Abe. The LDP right is now attempting to suggest that all criticism of politicians is dangerous, because people who might kill them are a much bigger threat. As is the host of repressive legislation they have already passed, and their plans to weaken human rights provisions in their proposals for constitutional revision. The danger to democracy comes largely from the backers of former prime minister Abe.

A powerful socialist alternative is needed in Japan to fight for democratic rights and for the interests of working-class people.

SUBSCRIBE TO the Socialist

socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

● E-subscription £2.50 a month, or £4 including Socialism Today

● Paper subscription £4.50 a month, or £6.50 including Socialism Today

or call 020 8988 877

● or make cheques payable to Socialist Publications, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD (3 months £20, 6 for £35, 12 for £60)

Subscribe by direct debit and choose from a range of free books!



£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1189

21 July - 4 August 2022

formerly **Militant**

END CRISIS-RIDDEN CAPITALISM

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM



SCOTT JONES

The mass explosion in Sri Lanka, which has seen thousands storm the presidential palace forcing political leaders to flee the country, is a taste of things to come as the devastating cost-of-living crisis takes hold everywhere.

In Sri Lanka, people are struggling to get fuel, medicine and food, with prices for the latter 80% higher than a year ago. War rages in some places and climate catastrophe in others, both creating more refugees as people lose and flee their homes and unstable communities.

Meanwhile, the tiny minority who control the wealth in society - the capitalist classes - are continuing to make massive profits at the expense of the rest of society.

But the working class and poor are also fighting back. In Britain a summer strike wave is under way. Mass uprisings have taken place in a series of

countries, with powerful elements of a revolutionary character, the most recent of which has been the massive revolutionary upsurge in Sri Lanka.

In all countries, the conditions and movements they have spawned cry out for new mass workers' parties that can organise a united fightback and guide the growing anger in an anti-capitalist direction.

The Socialist Party and our sister parties in the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) are involved in fighting to build such parties, here and around the world. Fighting to create a new world run by the billions and not the billionaires, which would eradicate poverty, war and all the other chaos of capitalism - a socialist world.

Come to the international rally of the CWI and Socialist Party taking place on 30 July with socialist speakers from Sri Lanka, the USA, Chile, France, Nigeria and more.

• See right for details

GLOBAL CRISIS
WHAT'S THE SOCIALIST WAY OUT?

INTERNATIONAL RALLY

HEAR FROM SOCIALISTS FROM SRI LANKA, USA, CHILE, FRANCE, NIGERIA, AND MORE

SATURDAY 30 JULY 5-7PM

CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
SANDALL RD,
LONDON NW5 2DB
£3/5 ENTRANCE

www.socialistworld.net
www.socialistparty.org.uk

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 14

