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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

No more austerity - we won't pay for their crisis

KICK ALL THE TORIES OUT

Strike together - build a new mass workers' party



PHOTOS: NUMBER 10/CC AND PAUL MATSSON

After twelve years of Tory-led governments lining the pockets of the richest and inflicting austerity on the majority, the Tories are reaching the end of the road. This Tory government is melting down in front of our eyes.

Truss is on her way out of office and is

already out of power. Jeremy Hunt has been brought in as chancellor in a desperate bid to try to convince the markets that this is a 'responsible' Tory government, by ripping up what remains of Truss' mini-budget.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, has welcomed Hunt's proposals as a 'meeting of minds'. But what does Hunt's 'responsible approach' consist of? Yes, reversing tax cuts which would have mainly benefited the rich and the big corporations, but also trying to implement savage austerity: further slashing public spending by around £40 billion. In addition, the energy price cap is now set to end in April next year. Even with it, bills

have doubled from a year ago, now they are set to rise further next spring.

This is a clear reminder that it was not the cruelty of Truss' blatant support for inequality which Tory grandees, the senior civil servants and the Bank of England objected to, but only her government's crass stupidity in discounting the dangers ahead. It was clear that her unfunded tax cuts would trigger the markets - which already sensed blood in the water given the parlous state of British capitalism - starting to increase the cost of government borrowing and selling sterling. It was also clear that her blatant pro-rich policies - after 14 years where payments to

shareholders have increased three times faster than workers' wages - would trash what little support the Tory government still has in the population.

Ultimately, however, the Truss catastrophe is an indication of, rather than the cause of, the accelerating Tory party meltdown, which is in turn a result of the deep and growing crisis of ailing British capitalism. There is no way out of this nightmare for the Tory party. Let's end it for them - by coordinating the strikes and building a political alternative that fights for workers.

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

Social care: 'underfunded, under-resourced and under pressure' - unions must lead fightback

GLYNN DOHERTY SOCIAL CARE TRADE UNION ORGANISER

Underfunded, under-resourced and under pressure to deliver care to an ever increasing number of people, with an ageing and underpaid workforce, means the social care sector is heading for complete meltdown.

The number of vacant posts in adult social care is the highest on record while filled posts have dropped by 50,000 - the first ever drop in the number of social care workers.

These are the headline findings in 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', published by Skills for Care.

The cost-of-living crisis means care workers are moving to better-paid jobs (almost all jobs are better paid!), compounding recruitment and retention difficulties.

Four out of every five jobs in the wider economy pay more than the median for care workers. This was £9.02 an hour in 2021/22.

This year, almost half of all social care workers saw their pay rise to



Birmingham homecare workers on strike in 2018 BIRMINGHAM SP

£9.50 an hour in April 2022 to keep them in line with the minimum wage. However, their real-terms pay has almost certainly fallen even further.

The report reveals the public sector is now responsible for delivering less than one-sixth of social care in England. Local authorities account for 7%, as does the NHS.

90,000 workers (in 120,000 posts) employed by individual direct payment recipients.

The remaining 79% of posts in adult social care were for independent employers. Almost three quarters of these were in the private, for-profit sector, the rest in voluntary/charity establishments.

The crisis in social care needs an urgent trade union response. The demand, highlighted on the TUC's website, for a £15-an-hour minimum wage must become more than

a slogan. The big three unions representing social care workers - Unite, Unison and GMB - should combine to submit pay claims to every employer in the sector and use this as a launch pad for a mass organising and recruitment campaign.

The unions must also demand the nationalisation of the industry. That campaign needs to include standing trade union candidates in council and parliamentary elections on such a programme.

Capitalist crisis drives food prices higher

THEA EVERETT SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Nobody should go hungry. But in Britain, in 2022, well over two million people rely on foodbanks and food sharing apps like 'Olio' to feed themselves and their families.

The capitalist food system is in deep crisis, with climate change war and trade conflicts disrupting supplies. The price of food is rising by 12.1% a year, putting millions more on the bread line this autumn.

'New normal'

It isn't luxuries that are going up in price but basic items that we all rely on: oil, butter, bread, milk and pasta. Some prices are rising by as much as 50%. The rising cost of energy has had a knock-on effect on food and drink inflation.

Meanwhile, TV programmes show us how to cook meals in the



KEVIN MALIK/CC

microwave because using the oven has become unaffordable, as if this is a normal state of affairs that we should all accept!

The global food industry is valued at \$8 trillion dollars, with two of the world's top five employers being Walmart and McDonalds, and a third of the world's workforce is employed in agriculture.

Socialists supports strikes for pay rises, and demand an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £15 an hour, as well as increases to benefits and pensions, so that people do not continue to go hungry.

We demand councils use their powers to make free school meals available to all children who need them, and to fund food banks, so that the nation's health is not reliant on people's good will.

The right to food should be fundamental. But the capitalist system we live squeezes wages and raises prices, all in the interest of profit.

Join us in campaigning for socialist change: for public ownership of the energy and food companies that are still raking in profits while we struggle to afford three meals a day. It doesn't have to be like this!

Tory 'markets' meltdown - Build a mass workers' party to fight for a socialist alternative



WHAT WE THINK

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Hunt's attempts to implement a new round of austerity are taking place against the background of the biggest fall in real wages since the 1950s, more than a decade of cuts to public services, and with the NHS in a state of collapse.



If Tory MPs agree Hunt's new round of austerity - taking place during a rising tide of strikes - it will lead to a gigantic social revolt



DFID/CC

crisis and to force a general election to get the whole Tory government out as soon as possible. The government is in its death agony, but that will not prevent it from raining down attacks on the working class, including the threat of trying to implement new anti-union laws.

The need for an industrial fight-back will not be removed when the Tories are finally forced out. Labour is now soaring in the opinion polls as a result of the widespread and overwhelming desire to ditch the Tories.

conference, however, contained many of the same phrases as Hunt's over the last few days about being "responsible" and making "difficult choices, particularly when managing the country's finances".

Starmer and the Labour leadership have ripped up Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto, including the pledges to renationalise energy, mail, water and telecoms. Instead of nationalising



The Tesco boss praised Labour - an indication that the capitalist elite now believes Labour would do a better job than the Tories now can in defending their interests

energy companies, Labour proposed a price cap on bills for just six months - a policy now adopted by Hunt! Sam Tarry, now deselected as parliamentary candidate for Ilford South, was sacked from the front bench for the 'crime' of saying workers need a pay rise.

'The markets'

Sir Keir Starmer's 'New Labour' doing the bidding of the 'markets' therefore means the trade union movement will need to be ready to organise a fight for workers' interests under a Labour government.

We need to begin to build a mass workers' party that will stand up for the interests of the working class, and fight for a programme to take the levers of power out of the hands of the unelected capitalist elites.

Advertisement for 'SOCIALISM 2022' featuring a collage of socialist imagery, text about a capitalist crisis, and details for a rally on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November at Queen Mary University.

Liverpool dockers speak to the Socialist Standing up to millionaire bosses

Unite shop stewards spoke to Phil Speakman, Liverpool Socialist Party

To understand the current situation in the dispute between the workforce and Mersey Docks & Harbour Container Services (MDHC), we need to look into the past.

On 19 September, 68 engineers and 600 dock workers withdrew their labour for a fortnight of strike action. This was in response to dissatisfaction among the workers over the implementation of the union-agreed 2021 pay awards.

The 2021 award was the first increase in pay rates since 1995! It was negotiated to be implemented on 1 April 2022 in two distinct stages.

Firstly, the roles within the company had been divided into twelve categories, of which only four subsequently received rises, of between 0.6% and 4%. The remaining eight categories received zero increase. Unite members have refused to accept this.

Secondly, a negotiated rise in 2021 of 4.5%, with an additional 0.5% increase from July 2022, was reneged upon by the employers. They stated 'failure to meet targets' as the reason for not complying. This was despite the port running at 120% capacity for over two years, even through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the grievances of the workforce have been exacerbated by the failure of the employer to restructure shift patterns, as previously agreed with Unite. Currently, the shift patterns are divided into two groups: permanent night shifts and rotation shifts.

The rotation shift pattern is currently two weeks of days followed by one week of nights. In order for the workers to enjoy a better work-life balance, a new structure of three weeks of days followed by one week of nights was negotiated in 2021. This has now been delayed unilaterally and without consultation, and won't be implemented until 2024.

So what's the real story on pay, instead of the fantasy wage figures often quoted in the mainstream media, where average pay of £43,000, and indeed up to £71,000, are often stated as fact?

The lowest-paid workers currently earn £25,000, with an average worker earning £31,000. This results in the lowest-paid worker taking home £371 per week after tax and National Insurance deductions. Hardly enough to fund a tabloid-concocted 'champagne lifestyle'! A fully qualified HGV driver on the docks earns £12.37 an hour, compared to local supermarket wages often reaching £13 an hour.

So that gives us a historical perspective as to where we are now. On Tuesday 11 October, MDHC escalated their attack on workers' rights by issuing 'HRI' forms to all employees in the container section - putting 132 workers on 90-day redundancy notices. 109 are dockers, but technical and clerical staff, and two apprentices, are also affected. The Unite union does not accept the need for any redundancies, voluntarily or compulsorily.

In response to this provocation,



NEIL DUNNE

Now Royal Mail bosses threaten job cuts too Whole trade union movement must support CWU

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER IN CWU

The dispute between Communication Workers Union (CWU) and Royal Mail management has taken a dramatic turn with the threat of 10,000 job cuts.

The announcement came as CWU reps from across the country met in London to be given an update, which included that talks had re-opened and some small progress was being made!

On the same night, CEO Simon Thompson was on social media saying that no talks were planned. He said that any talks would need to be done via the arbitration service

ACAS, despite having served notice of withdrawal from major national agreements, reducing the CWU's role to just consultative and not for negotiations.

The threat is that 6,000 of the job cuts would be through redundancy, including possible compulsory redundancy, which is a breach of another national agreement.

This has only hardened the resolve of CWU members. We demand the removal of the CEO, as it's becoming clear that this fight won't end until he is removed.

The bosses also raise the threat of separating off the profitable international parcel service GLS, which they claim 'props up' the postal service.

What is wrong with that? A publicly owned, integrated service would precisely ensure that essential aspects of a service would be maintained, even if they are not 'profitable'.

The Tories are in deep crisis - Royal Mail bosses would think again about their plans if Keir Starmer threatened now to enact the CWU's motion passed at Labour Party conference to nationalise Royal Mail.

The 19-day plan of action is continuing. The CWU has now launched a strike fund. The whole trade union movement needs to come behind the CWU.

The next all-Royal Mail strike day on 20 October is coordinated with CWU members in BT.

Reporting from the Royal Mail picket lines

Robin Clapp reports that on a buoyant and well-attended CWU postal workers' picket line in south Bristol, the visiting divisional union organisers reported to the pickets on tentative talks. He was in no doubt that Royal Mail management had been spooked by the determination of the workforce and the difficulties posed for them by the ongoing strike, as Black Friday and then the pre-Christmas rush loom on the horizon.

"We've forced the talks, but posties all round the country have made clear to our senior negotiators we don't want 'toilet paper promises' in order to give management a phoney Christmas ceasefire. We're out for as long as it takes to get a cast iron agreement that protects jobs and conditions."

Chris Corney and Ellen Kenyon-Repors report that the picket line in Walthamstow, east London, turned into a de facto union meeting, as pickets were joined by the local CWU area rep and national executive member. Royal Mail was reported to be putting new starters on a 40-hour week, on lower pay than current staff on 37 hours, and wants to shift drivers onto a self-employed model.

They remarked on the bravery of



Leicester STEVE SCORE



Reading the SP bulletin in Hockley, Birmingham NICK HART

Over 40,000 BT and Openreach workers in the CWU are taking two more days of strike action on 20 and 24 October in their fight over pay - the first national strike action in 35 years. The strike will again be joined by 500 workers in 999 call centres. BT bosses are still refusing to negotiate a fair agreement. PHOTO: DUNCAN MOORE, PLYMOUTH



Mobilise now to remove the Tories and defeat the bosses

As the Tory government descends further into turmoil, amid a rising tide of strikes against the cost-of-living crisis, the reconvened Trades Union Congress (TUC), which involves all of the national trade unions, is meeting at its annual congress.

On 16 October, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) held a pre-congress action summit in Brighton, of over 200 strikers, workers preparing for action, and others struggling against the cost-of-living crisis.

NSSN chair Rob Williams opened the summit saying that it could not be more urgent for the TUC to address the question: "How do we get rid of the Tories?"

The deepening Tory chaos, with Liz Truss now a "revolving door" of U-turns, reflects the crisis of the capitalist system. Billions in new austerity cuts could be on the cards, but also "ballots are piling in and piling up" in the new stage of the strike wave.

The trade union leaders should use the TUC to hammer out a platform of striking together, marching together, and changing the situation in the interests of the working class.

This includes on the political front as well. Rob said that, while Starmer can be the immediate beneficiary of the workers' movement forcing the Tories out of office, workers need a voice that is not embarrassed to support workers' action, pay rises and nationalisation. Rob said he hoped Keir Starmer would be asked directly at TUC congress why he doesn't intervene directly into the Royal Mail dispute, to say a Labour government will rationalise the postal service.

Jane Loftus, Communication Workers Union (CWU) vice president, described how the CWU strikes unite public and private sector workers providing a public service - and how the strikes are growing with cleaners and engineers joining the action.

Jared Wood, rail union RMT London Transport regional organiser, backed the NSSN's demands on the TUC, including drawing up plans to fight the anti-trade union laws. He pointed out that Sadiq Khan, the Labour London mayor passing on the Tory cuts, was elected with 16% of eligible votes; Liz Truss was chosen as Tory leader in an election in which only



Some of the attendees at the NSSN action summit SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE

170,000 Tory members had a vote; and no one elected the Avanti train operating company bosses - but they have the power to halve the service.

Bakers' union BFAWU general secretary Sarah Woolley spoke about new campaign initiatives, including 'Organise Now', which aims to support currently unorganised workers getting into trade unions.

This was a theme taken up in the discussion from the floor, including by Adam Powell-Davies, bringing solidarity from the Youth Fight for the Jobs campaign. He spoke of the need for the TUC to step up its fight for a £15-an-hour minimum wage, which would make a huge difference to young workers. Matt, from Brighton Trades Council, made the point that

results are the best recruiting tool for the trade unions.

Padraig Mulholland, deputy general secretary of Northern Ireland public sector union Nipsa, explained how an initiative is being put through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for meetings in every town to discuss how the trade unions can prepare to offer a lead, including building strike committees and workplace action committees.

This was a theme taken up by Pubchihetti, the president of the Ceylon Independent Teachers Union and a member of the Socialist Party's sister party, the United Socialist Party, speaking via Zoom from Sri Lanka. He said: "No matter how hard the government tries to suppress the

movement, it's regaining confidence". The unions are fighting to play a role in that, pushing for a working-class leadership.

Socialist Party member Len Hockey, Barts Health Trust Unite branch secretary, was joined in the meeting by a group of Unite members, privatised ancillary workers, whose recent strike won a historic victory to be brought back into the NHS. As Len said, health workers are "neither angels nor heroes, but workers who demand decent pay and conditions".

Leadership

Udsway member Scott Jones also touched on this, explaining why it was necessary for him to stand in the shop workers' union general secretary election. Udsway organises some of the "key-est of key workers", who haven't yet been drawn into the strike wave. This was not due to a lack of willingness to strike, but due to the lack of leadership. The current general secretary, Paddy Lillis, has "presided over the loss of 50,000 members because they weren't supported". Scott described how Lillis has attacked Unite leader Sharon Graham for her criticisms of Keir Starmer, and explained that in standing he was fighting for a political lead as well as industrial lead.

Paul Kershaw from the Unite housing workers branch pointed out the "material difference" a Labour opposition that backed workers could make - for example, if it committed to banning evictions and building council homes. But Labour is not even "harmless". Paul gave the examples of Tower Hamlets Labour council being the first to use fire-and-rehire, and Coventry Labour council attacking its bin workers. Therefore the question of a political

Privatised Unite members in Barts Health Trust have won being brought back into the NHS PAULA MITCHELL



PAULA MITCHELL

voice for workers in struggle is "desperate and urgent now", given the potential for a general election to be called at any time. Paul proposed trade unionists ask Labour candidates if they support the demands of Enough is Enough, and if they don't, to stand themselves. Candidates that represent the labour movement can stand under the banner of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

A CWU rep continued this theme saying: "If we get a Labour government in we get a watered down version of the Tories, and we don't need Tories mark two." He said that P&O showed what the bosses' agenda was: more for less. "The NSSN was never more important to bring workers together" - and to demand action, not statements, from the TUC.

Gary Clark, CWU branch secretary in Scotland, also demanded concrete action. He welcomed the NSSN's call for the TUC to coordinate the building of mass strike funds, and the announcement by his union of a strike fund. Gary called on Labour MPs not just to sign a letter to the Royal Mail boss - which only 45 of 197 have done - but to donate a day's wages to the strike fund. He appealed to TUC delegates to do the same.

The many other contributions included Unite member Suzanne Muna, speaking about the Social Housing Action Campaign, with the demand for rents, service charges and evictions due to the cost-of-living crisis to be frozen; Brian Debus about the campaign his Unison branch is fighting to defend libraries in Hackney; and Tom from 'Don't Pay'. Kye Gbangbola from 'Truth About Zane' made an appeal for trade union support for his family's campaign for justice for his son.

Attendees comment:

"We've had enough. We want a better life. We've come here to support all other unions, to stand together and to fight the pay cuts."

ELLEN BARZEY UNITE REP IN BARTS HEALTH TRUST

"We had just one Unite member at our workplace - now people want to join the union. The employer is anti-union, but we're fighting low pay and unreasonable workload. We're looking for solidarity as we move toward strike action."

UNITE MEMBER HESTIA HOUNSLOW, A SUPPORT SERVICE FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS - SEE WWW.HOUSINGWORKERS.ORG.UK FOR DETAILS

● Please move the NSSN's model motion in your union branch or trades council. The motion can be found at www.shopstewards.net

30 YEARS SINCE THE YRE WAS LAUNCHED: HOW RACISM AND FASCISM WAS FOUGHT IN THE 1990s



October 2022 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the launch of Youth against Racism in Europe, 'the YRE', which played a leading role in the battles against the far-right British National Party (BNP) in the 1990s.

Socialist Party member **Lois Austin** (left), who was national chair of the YRE, spoke to the Socialist about why the YRE was formed and the approach it took to fighting racism and fascism.

The YRE was formed because, in a situation of economic downturn, unemployment and poor living conditions, there had been an increase in racist, and outright fascist, activity in Europe. There had been terrible attacks in Europe, for example on a hostel in Rostock, Germany, that housed migrants from Turkey.

In Britain's deprived inner-city areas, after more than a decade of Tory cuts and privatisation, there was an increase in activity by the far-right British National Party (BNP) and a series of racist attacks. The BNP set up 'Combat 18', a street-fighting group of thugs, to organise attacks on left-wing opponents.

It was Militant supporters (as the Socialist Party was then known) in different European countries who initiated the setting up of a pan-European anti-racist movement. There were lots of young people protesting, taking part in demonstrations, so it was an obvious thing to do to try to link them up.

There was a demonstration in Paris around the 'sans papiers' (migrants with no papers) and we took young people from Britain to that - a precursor to the setting up of the YRE.

European demo

The first major mobilisation of the YRE was a big demonstration in Brussels against the rise of the far-right Vlaams Blok. Our sister party in Belgium was campaigning against the Vlaams Blok and had mobilised big numbers of youth. We had a huge demonstration with young people from across Europe: 60,000 marched. That was the YRE's founding demonstration.

The build up to launching the YRE in Britain was the activity of the far right around the BNP headquarters in Welling, south east London. The BNP moved into Welling in 1987. At the time, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) was a sizable campaigning organisation, and the Bexleyheath LPYS, which is what I was a member of, responded to the BNP moving in. We set up the 'Bexley and Greenwich Labour Movement Campaign against Racism and Fascism'. And we set out to get the HQ closed down. We pointed out it was not a bookshop - which the BNP were claiming - it was a headquarters, and its presence would encourage racism and the growth of the far right.

The Tory council, the right-wing Labour Party, and the local press all tried to say that we - the left - were as bad as the right! And lots of people said: 'Why are you giving them publicity, you're giving them oxygen?'. We said: 'They won't just go away, they'll get bigger and stronger and we need to push them back'. Ignoring them wasn't an option for the local Black and Asian community. They needed to be confronted, isolated, and driven out of the area.

Racist murders

We organised protests and demonstrations. There were four racist murders in the area. Rohit Duggal, who was a young Asian man; Rolan Adams, from Thamesmead, who was brutally killed by a racist gang; Orville Blair; and then Stephen Lawrence.

We were out demonstrating in response to every racist murder and attack. We held demonstrations in Welling and Eltham, where the racists outnumbered us, skinheads giving fascist salutes. That's what we were up against - the presence of the HQ was giving racists and fascists confidence.

We linked up with the Greenwich Commission for Racial Equality and the Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks. And we took the campaign to oppose the BNP to all the local trade unions, which affiliated to the campaign.

We held all-night vigils round the homes of local Asian families who lived near the BNP HQ. They were frightened by racist graffiti and bricks thrown through their windows. We organised public meetings, including one in Welling library, which the far right attacked. We were there right at the start.

These were the early steps which laid the basis for the launch of the YRE.

It was after Stephen Lawrence was murdered that the tables really turned on the BNP. It was such a terrible attack, there was a mass response, an outpouring from the local community. He was murdered in April 1993. The YRE called a demonstration on 8 May, and we had 8,000 young people turn up. It was a joint demonstration with the Black socialist campaign organisation, Panther.

The Anti-Nazi League (ANL), led by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), organised a demonstration a week later, with the local Tory mayor on

the platform and less than 2,000 in attendance. We wouldn't have the Tory mayor on our platforms because they had done nothing about the BNP. We'd lobbied and petitioned to get the council to use its powers to close down the HQ and they'd done nothing but denigrate our campaign. So we said they were partly responsible for what had happened. Instead, we mobilised the local community, Black and white.

And that is what made us different from the ANL, that is why the YRE was necessary. First of all, we weren't linking up with Tories. We were prepared to work with the ANL and anyone who genuinely wanted to fight racism and fascism, but our campaign was necessary because we weren't prepared to link up with Tories who were partly responsible through their inaction for allowing the BNP to fester.

And, of course, the Tories were responsible for creating the economic conditions that allowed the far right to grow, conditions of high youth unemployment and rising housing costs. So we launched a campaign that said: 'don't let the racists and fascists divide us'. YRE was a mass democratic youth campaign which attempted to combat racism with an appeal to working-class young people to fight for jobs and homes for all, and to oppose racism.

We took the campaign into local community centres; we went into areas that were mainly white, like Thamesmead, and attempted to win young people over. It wasn't a campaign based

just on bussing people in from around the country like the ANL did, it was about mobilising the local community, alongside the trade unions, to isolate the BNP and force them out, to make it impossible for them to grow.

But despite Stephen Lawrence's murder, still the BNP didn't move out. None of the authorities acted. So then we organised a second big demonstration, in October 1993. The YRE proposed a joint demonstration of all the anti-racist organisations and the 16 October march was co-organised with the Indian Workers' Association and the ANL. It was a massive demo. We knew it was going to be huge, you could feel it, such was the anger everywhere, especially in the local community. There were 50,000 people on that march.

Police brutality

The police and the state refused us our right to march past the BNP HQ. And when we got to the point where we wanted to march up the road to the HQ, all avenues were blocked by the police. The police were really out to discredit the protesters and the campaign. They brutally attacked protesters - that's all documented, it's filmed and photographed. YRE had argued for democratic stewarding of the demonstration. This was opposed by the ANL leadership but, on the day, YRE stewards were able to play an



Demonstration on 8 May 1993 following the murder of Stephen Lawrence, organised by YRE and Panther. SOCIALIST PARTY

important role in defending the demonstration from the police brutality it faced. We had to negotiate, myself and other Militant members, to get a road opened up so that people could get out to safety, out of the trap that the police had created.

But because there was so much anger and pressure on the establishment after the demo, they did have to act. The BNP was becoming a big nuisance for them and they wanted them out. But they didn't want to publicly say 'we've given in to these protesters' - which is actually what happened - so they set up a judge-led planning enquiry. The evidence the YRE gave to that planning inquiry was the crucial evidence that got the HQ closed down. We had to link our arguments to planning issues. We said having a fascist HQ in the community was linked to the Race Relations Act and was causing detriment to the community. So, in the end, the state acted to shut them down, because on the ground we had isolated them and driven them out.

The other big events were in Tower Hamlets, in east London. Tower Hamlets was a borough with the worst male unemployment and greatest overcrowding in London. At the time, the population of the borough was majority white, with the Asian population concentrated in particular areas. Disillusionment in the right-wing Labour council meant that the Liberals had taken control, and ran poisonous and divisive campaigns (for example, on the Isle of Dogs, 'Island Homes for Island People'). The BNP were temporarily able to exploit that anger.

While the campaign was going on in Welling, in Tower Hamlets in August and September 1993 we were challenging the spot where the BNP 'sold' their paper every Sunday morning for weeks - really provocatively, in the heart of a Bangladeshi area on Brick Lane. This was not a paper sale, but an act of intimidation. We were

building a campaign with the local youth and trade unions, and marching to their spot to challenge them. On 19 September, the local Asian community and the YRE had built up enough support so that when the BNP turned up their spot was occupied and they couldn't carry out their sale.

Meanwhile, the Isle of Dogs 'Action Group for Equality' launched a petition to end all immigration. A young Asian teenager, Quddus Ali, was attacked and put in a coma. The BNP won a councillor, Derek Beackon, on the Isle of Dogs, in a by-election in September 1993.

BNP politicians

The day after his election, council staff walked out of the neighbourhood centre in response. We campaigned in the local community, where we already had links because of the anti-poll tax campaign, to try to cut across divisions. We helped to build up a campaign to save local services and for a 'People's Budget' for community services. We mobilised against Beackon; for example at his first council meeting people occupied the council chamber.

Asian youth, supported by the YRE, called a demo in the borough in October under the banner Youth Connection. In March 1994, the YRE organised a Tower Hamlets school students' strike against racist attacks. Then the Trades Union Congress (TUC) led a demo of 40,000 through the borough. Beackon lost his seat in the full elections in May 1994.

Part of the campaign against the far right was helping to organise community defence. We helped local people organise a whistle-alarm system, where if fascists came on to an estate and people felt under threat, people would blow their whistles and lots of people would come out to confront them, to move them out of the area.

Alongside the YRE campaign, Militant Labour took the step of standing in a by-election in Weavers ward, Tower Hamlets in 1994, to put



YRE protesters in Welling. SOCIALIST PARTY

forward a political alternative with a working-class programme to answer the concerns of all sides of the community: no to local authority cuts, investment in jobs, build council houses, a future for young people.

We did a YRE school pack as well, to get into schools with our analysis, and to answer racist lies. In that pack we also talked about the history of the labour movement and the working class in fighting fascism, the need for working-class unity and the role of the trade unions. That had never really been done before.

We also launched Show Racism the Red Card in football. That came out of the school pack. And we had another big march and gig in Brussels, as well as an album, 'By Any Means Necessary'. We also ran an anti-fascist youth camp in 1994.

Capitalist state

We were doing all this work and were arguing that we couldn't rely on the state and the establishment to get rid of the far right. That has been proven by the Spycops inquiry. While they should have been looking for

Stephen Lawrence's killers, they were actually spying on the Lawrence family, and on the YRE. Rolan Adams' family was spied on too, and they are now core participants in the Spycops inquiry.

After one of the demos we organised in Becontree, east London, against a far-right 'Blood and Honour' gig, the police imprisoned us and put us on a tube train. They took us to Earls Court and, when we came out of the station, we were brutally attacked by riot police. Their priorities were to criminalise protestors and frighten people from protesting using their brutal tactics, rather than doing something about racism and fascism.

FIGHTING FASCISM AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM

Come and discuss at
SOCIALISM 2022
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The BNP were beaten back in the 1990s, but the ongoing crises of capitalism, which the bosses always attempt to make the working class pay for, means that the possibility for the far-right to grow can re-emerge. The consolidation of the Labour Party as a pro-capitalist party under Tony Blair, which betrayed working-class people with cuts and privatisation, allowed the BNP to win councillors and even a London Assembly member in the 2000s.

Adopting the same methods as in the 1990s, the Socialist Party supported Youth Fight for Jobs to lead a demonstration of young Black, Asian and white people through Barking where the BNP had 12 councillors.

As racist and hooligan groupings like the English Defence League (EDL) and the Football Lads Alliance mobilised street demonstrations

during the 2010s, hoping to grow in fertile territory under the blows of austerity. Again the Socialist Party responded with a class approach. We worked among young people and working-class communities, and in trade unions, to mobilise against these organisations.

Despite being attacked for doing so by the SWP, for example in the campaign to prevent the EDL from marching in Walthamstow, we linked fighting racism to fighting the cuts, putting forward demands that can unite all sections of the working class to fight the bosses and the super-rich, and so pull the rug from under far-right groupings.

The strike wave now taking place, and the campaign for a new workers' party with a socialist programme, hold the potential to again undercut support for racist and divisive ideas and organisations.



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!

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Usdaw staff strike over pay and working arrangements



Head office picket line PHOTO: GMBX39 BRANCH

A SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER IN USDAW

Around 100 Usdaw ancillary and clerical staff, members of the GMB, took a first day of strike action on 30 September in a dispute over pay and hybrid working. As well as picketing Usdaw's new head office on Salford Quay, pickets were also present outside the union's offices in Cardiff and Glasgow.

Usdaw's leadership is refusing to even discuss a plan for hybrid working as part of resolving the dispute, while saying that the £1.3 million they have unilaterally added to the pension fund brings their 3.5% pay offer to 11%.

Would Usdaw members accept this behaviour from one of our employers?

Most Usdaw members were on the front line during the pandemic, working in factories, distribution and retail. But there are members who work in administrative roles, for example, who could work from home. But Usdaw negotiators, arguing for

our members to be entitled to work from home, will be hamstrung if companies can point to the union refusing our own staff the right to do that!

Likewise, we would be livid if an employer justified a below-inflation pay offer, by unilaterally investing money that could fund other benefits, without negotiating with us.

To make matters worse, in order for other sections of Usdaw staff to not have to cross picket lines outside offices, the union leadership announced at short notice that those not on strike would work from home!

Instead of forcing Usdaw staff to strike to get their voices listened to, Usdaw's leadership should agree to negotiations right away. In fact, the union should work with members to draw up a charter for home/hybrid working, and campaign on it, as well as making sure that arrangements for Usdaw staff at least meet those levels.

● *Further strike action takes place on 27 and 28 October. The strikers can be followed at @GMBX39 on twitter*

For the first time in 15 years, there is a left challenge to the right-wing leadership of Usdaw. Socialist Party member Scott Jones is seeking nominations to stand for general secretary. He is standing as a fighting candidate, for a member-led union.

- Search 'Scott for Usdaw GS' on Facebook and Twitter, and email usdawactivist@gmail.com for more information, including how to nominate.
- All who want a fighting leadership of Usdaw are welcome to attend Scott's campaign meeting on Zoom at 6.30pm 30 October. Meeting ID: 882 6361 5072

Electric mood at Sunderland Stagecoach strike

ELAINE BRUNSKILL
NORTHERN REGION SOCIALIST PARTY

As we approached the GMB strikers, even before we could see them we could hear boos and shouts of "scab!", as strikebreaking Stagecoach bosses drove buses past them.

In response to bosses, who complained at the use of the word 'scab', Gary Smith, GMB general secretary, who had visited the picket earlier, emphatically responded: "People who cross picket lines are scabbing!"

97% of Stagecoach drivers voted for strike action, on an 83% turnout, after being offered a derisory, below-inflation pay offer.

GMB organiser, Stuart Gilhespy, told the Socialist that, despite Stagecoach saying they would leave no stone unturned in order to settle the dispute, bosses have refused to sit down with the GMB and negotiate.

The atmosphere on the picket line was buoyant, despite some of them being there from 3.30am. The strikers told us that at 8am there were around 200 of them packed into the local pub to discuss their tactics. The meeting ended with them all stamping their feet; the mood was electric. One striker said he'd worked in this job for 45 years and had never known such militancy.

A common comment, starting with the first words from the very first striker we approached, was: "We need a general strike!"

Leicester County Council “failing our children”



STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Angry parents of children with special educational needs protested on 13 October because the Tory county council is failing to provide the school places their children need. At least 150 children have been assessed, but do not have places. But that is the tip of the iceberg, because many more are waiting to get assessments.

I spoke to two protesting parents.

Corinne Toseland: “They are failing our children with special needs. My little boy hasn’t been in school for six weeks.

“He’s just been forgotten. I’ve heard nothing back from the local authority.

“I went to the papers, and realised it wasn’t just me, there are other parents in this situation as well. So,

amazingly, we have been able to create all this.”

Nicola Gough: “My situation is slightly different. My daughters do have school places, but not the support they need.



My little boy has just been forgotten

Corinne Toseland, protesting parent

“My oldest has been waiting three years to even see a paediatrician to get an assessment. My youngest, who was diagnosed three years ago, is in mainstream school, but not able to access help.

“That school have already said

that they can’t meet her needs. And I can’t even get an assessment to get her an educational healthcare plan that she needs for a specialist placement. I know that, even if she does get an assessment, the places are so few and far between that it’s going to be nearly impossible.”

Corinne: “They need accountability. They’re ignoring us, and making our children feel less valued. It makes you feel helpless and a failure. It’s heartbreaking.”

Nicola: “Their own policies say that every child should get an education, and that every child should be developed to their ability. They are failing on those counts.”

Corinne: “What’s behind it is funding. They say Leicestershire is underfunded compared to elsewhere, but everywhere is underfunded! We don’t have enough case workers, because it’s so overworked. There’s so much burn-out, and the wages aren’t enough.”

TUSC discussing workers’ alternative for next general election

The Wakefield and Newcastle legs of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) ‘Enough is Enough – but what can we do at the ballot box’ speaking tour took place on 13 October.

Newcastle

Martin Powell-Davies – National Education Union (NEU) and Socialist Party member – quoted from an RMT picket that “Labour are the least worst option in the next election, but we deserve better than the least worst”.

Emma Campbell, a University and College Union (UCU) branch secretary, whose members are striking over pay, said that even some of the few who had voted against action were now out on strike.

Emma said wages had stagnated and staff were relying on food banks. The massive staff turnover meant that the college couldn’t get specialist teachers, as lots were returning to industry. Now both the NEU and NASUWT unions are balloting for strike action as “all education has had enough”.

William Jarrett, from North Tyneside, outlined TUSC’s activity in the area, including a 15% vote in one ward in last year’s council elections. At the end of the meeting, three new candidates came forward to stand in the local elections.

NORMAN HALL
SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR SOCIALIST PARTY

Wakefield

Trevor Howard, a lay tutor for transport union RMT, said the Conservative government had been blocking rail companies coming to a deal to resolve the strike. Trevor said the phenomenal sums of money being taken out of the rail network by private operators makes the case for public ownership.

Yasar Ahmed is a leader of the Wakefield Drivers Association, that has organised protests over the council’s hated ‘Suitability and Convictions Policy’ (see socialistparty.org.uk). Yasar explained how taxi drivers across West Yorkshire feel let down by Labour councils – many say they can’t vote Labour. But Yasar explained that the Conservatives are no option either. That is why he welcomed TUSC standing candidates in the local elections to give drivers and other workers a real choice.

IAIN DALTON
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY

● Visit tusc.org.uk for more meetings

CAN YOU FIGHT THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN ELECTIONS?

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● Stop the closures of LifeSkills colleges



LifeSkills college in Basildon has gone into administration after funding from the government’s Education Skills Funding Agency was cut at very short notice. A demonstration of 50 staff, learners and their families took place on 14 October – the day of closure.

These colleges cater mainly for learners not well served by other providers. 14 staff and more than 150 learners, most who had just started courses, have been abandoned.

Student Kaydee said they have been told no other courses are available until next September. Dedicated staff are angry, frustrated that their learners have been let down, and obviously fearful for their jobs.

With colleges all over the country, 80 staff and over 500 learners are affected. Without alternative funding, there is no clear future for the college.

● Messages of support to laurentabert@outlook.com

CHRIS HUGGINS
BASILDON SOCIALIST PARTY

● Southampton trans pride was clapped and cheered

Over 200 gathered for Southampton’s first ever transgender pride. We marched through the city centre with flags and banners flying.

Despite online threats from anti-trans activists to cause disruption, the mainly young participants were clapped and cheered by passers-by. Socialist Party leaflets were snapped up, and we ran out of pamphlets.

Many good discussions took place, underlining that trans rights are workers’ rights, and the need to fight together – including getting involved in your trade union, so LGBTQ+ rights are defended at work too. Better access to health services is linked to the struggle for greater resources for the whole NHS, so we don’t become divided by unfair priorities.

Everyone was worried about the cost of living, supported the strikers and wanted rid of the Tories. Many were interested in the Socialist Party, and promised to come to our next meeting on fighting for a socialist green energy policy.

MAGGIE FRICKER
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

● Cardiff Socialist Students success shows appetite for fightback

At the freshers’ fair, we took nearly 200 signups across two days, and delivered an excellent first meeting to a packed room. This was repeated in our second meeting, showing the appetite students have for a socialist fightback.

1 October was a hugely important day of action. Socialist Students ran a campaign stall and stood in solidarity with workers at a ‘support the strikes’ rally, and on the picket lines earlier in the day.

We participated in the 10,000-strong ‘Yes Cymru’ march, making the case for an independent socialist Wales. And stood with Iranian and Kurdish people in Cardiff, protesting the death of Mahsa Amini.

We continue to hold successful meetings, campaign for a socialist society, and support strikes and protests.

GEORGE PHILLIPS
CARDIFF SOCIALIST STUDENTS

● socialiststudents.org.uk

Iran's revolutionary youth movement continues

Urgently prepare a general strike as the next step

LUKAS ZÖBELEIN SOZIALISTISCHE ORGANISATION SOLIDARITÄT (CWI GERMANY) AND ROBERT BECHERT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, CWI

Events are moving rapidly in Iran.

Despite massive repression - with over 200 murdered and thousands of demonstrators, and now strikers, being arrested - increasingly revolutionary protests continue to grip Iran. These have lasted for more than four weeks and have now widened in scope, especially as strikes in support of the protests have begun. All this underlines the new quality of the movement that broke out after Jina Mahsa Amini's death at the hands of the so-called 'morality' police.

Initially the protests were led by young people, especially women and teenagers. The deputy commander of the so-called Islamic 'Revolutionary' Guards (in reality the counter-revolutionary guards) has said that the average age of those arrested is 15 years old. Now protest strikes have spread in the oil sector, a key resource as Iran has roughly 10% of the world's proven oil reserves.

Repeatedly, the streets have echoed to the call: "Death to the dictator". In response there has often been brutal repression and, in a few areas, exchanges of gunfire between security forces and protesters. But the military and security forces do not exist in isolation; revolutionary movements can affect them. While most have so far stood by the regime, significantly, one video has shown riot police in southern Tehran walking without their helmets, alongside the demonstrators rather than attacking them.

Despite its Kurdish origin, "Jin, Jiyar, Azadi" (Woman, Life, Freedom) has become a main slogan of the movement as it spreads throughout the whole country. This illustrates how Iran's ethnic divisions can be overcome on the basis of common struggles. Significantly, the regime has met the protests in areas populated by ethnic or religious minorities, like the Kurds and Baloch, with greater repression. To prevent the regime using divide-and-rule tactics, the movement needs a concrete programme on the national question, which advocates equality and includes the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, while calling for joint struggle against the regime.

The explosive spread of the movement throughout Iran can be traced back to decades of fermenting anger over social injustices, regular repression of opposition, rigging of elections by blocking candidates and, in particular, the regime's brutal oppression of women.

The regime has also been undermined by economic crisis. Partly under the impact of western sanctions, the economy is between 4% and 8% smaller than it was in 2010. At the same time it is ravaged by inflation.



of the movement and the weakness of the regime's base. Some actions are developing through local initiatives. That is very positive but it is increasingly urgent for the protests to go to a higher level. The regime will not be brought down just by riots and demonstrations - which it hopes to sit out. A combination of a 24 or 48-hour general strike with mass demonstrations would be an extremely important next step in giving a shape to the movement. The formation of local bodies of representatives of workplaces, communities and educational institutes to organise such a strike would be an important step towards organising the movement and beginning to establish an alternative power to the regime's structures.

Since 2017-18, there has been a general rise in workers' struggles and the growth of semi-legal independent workers' organisations in some workplaces. Last May Day, a joint statement was issued by 15 Iranian working-class organisations which listed a series of demands and also called for the creation of "a coalition council among all the workers, teachers, employees, retirees, women, students, and the unemployed... This is not just a demand among others, but the urgent platform for aiming at a new organisation of work in our society". This statement ended with the declaration that "the emancipation of the workers is brought only by the workers' themselves!"

Now the militant Haft Tappeh sugarcane refinery workers have issued an appeal for a "nationwide strike". This call needs to be urgently taken up. Likewise the idea of a "coalition council" mentioned in the joint May Day statement needs to become a reality. This may require, as the next step, coordinated strikes from all semi-legal trade unions that can set an example and be rapidly further developed into a 24 or 48-hour general strike.

A campaign that prepares for a general strike is more necessary than ever. This needs to include a programme that links the immediate issues with the need for regime and system change. Immediate issues like the release of all detained protestors - trade union and worker activists, and political prisoners are starting points. So too the freedom of women to wear the clothing of their choice and to work where they want, and the abolishment of the 'morality' police,

the so-called 'Guidance Patrols'.

But these demands are just the beginning. The right to freely organise, in the workplace and politically, as well as the abolition of all oppressive structures, laws, and organisations (like the Basji), are essential. Economic demands such as the reduction of the working week and an inflation-proof minimum wage are immediately important.

The teachers' Coordinating Council call for classrooms to become spaces for discussion can also help stimulate the necessary debate on the question of what comes after the current regime, something that also needs to develop in workplaces and communities. Schools could become one of the venues in which such wider bodies could meet. Discussions in which the questions of how to secure democratic rights, what sort of society should be created, and whether Iran should remain capitalist or carry through a socialist break can be debated. But alongside discussions on programme, these bodies can begin to coordinate the struggle, including organising the defence of protesters and strikers from attack.

Splits in the elite

Ex-president Kathami has called on the repressive organs to take the side of the protesters, and it appears that parts of the military have already referred positively to his statement.

Likewise, the now detained former prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi sent out a message urging the security forces to end the repression, saying: "Armed forces! The powers vested in you are for defence of the people, not their repression; for protection of the oppressed, not service to the powerful and mighty. The hope is that you will stand on the side of truth and the nation. Your duty is secure the peace for the millions and especially the downtrodden, and not to consolidate the power of oblivious officials."

These are examples of divisions widening within the elite. While significant, it also needs to be kept in mind that members of the so-called reformist wing of the regime, like Kathami and Mousavi, are essentially concerned with saving the Islamic Republic's basis. To do so they may, for example, abolish the 'morality' police and the strict clothing regulations for women, but otherwise leave much of the regime intact. Even if elements like this want to remove large parts of the Islamic Republic's structures, it is clear that they would want to build a more 'normal' capitalist state, something which would leave the economic and social demands of working people and youth unanswered.

But the more conservative elements in the ruling class have not given up, they try both to divide and crush the movement. The speaker of the parliament, a former 'Revolutionary' Guard commander, has urged protesters not to allow the demonstrations to become "destabilising" while promising to "amend the structures" of the country's morality police.

Faced with the growing strength of the protests, President Raisi tried to appease the movement. On 15 October, the official IRNA news agency circulated a statement by Raisi saying that the regime would "review, revise, update" some of the laws in force in the country. He added that a social dialogue is needed to dispel



Iran's notorious Evin prison where most of the protesters have been jailed PHOTO: EHSAN IRAN/CC

"doubts" within society and that "we should also see if we have achieved the goals set and if not, where the problems lie."

The regime is undermined by its own divisions, and faces possible overthrow. But that immediately poses the question of what next?

The current movement has a cross-class makeup, it encompasses different elements opposing the current rulers. However, once the regime is overthrown or even severely weakened, the question will be posed: who takes over the power?

Inevitability in every revolution this question is posed. There can be powerful calls for unity, or at least unity against the forces of the old regime, which are made in arguments for the formation of a 'temporary', 'provisional', 'unity' government to 'secure' the revolution, organise elections etc. Certainly there can be unity of action against counter-revolution, but that is very different from the question of workers' organisations collaborating with pro-capitalist forces in a government maintaining the capitalist system.

The workers' movement needs to set its own agenda, a socialist agenda which combines together the immediate demands with the need to break with capitalism, so that the working class can begin the socialist reconstruction of society. Today the

revolution needs to seize the opportunity to do this and not limit itself to ending the decades-long repression by the counter-revolution that pushed the working masses aside and seized power after the mass revolt that ended the Shah's dictatorial rule.

Within the current opposition, liberal capitalists opposing the current leadership or even the entire regime, will want a more 'normal' capitalist system without the constraints of the top religious leaders and apparatchiks of the Islamic state bureaucracies. But the continuation of capitalism means that the fundamental issues facing Iran will not be answered, meaning that inevitably class struggles will break out as interests of the capitalists and the working class come into conflict. If the capitalist power is not broken this would pose the danger of counter-revolution, probably not on the same lines as 1979-80, but possibly like in Egypt in 2013.

It is also necessary for the Iranian working class and youth to have no illusions in the role of western imperialism. Aware of the potential strength of the Iranian working class they have long attempted to cultivate links with Iranian oppositionists and workers' leaders with a view to drawing them into a pro-capitalist orbit.

The alternative that the workers'

movement needs to stand for is the replacement of the present regime by a provisional government made up of representatives of the working class, youth and poor which immediately takes action to implement the revolution's basic demands. At the same time, it needs to encourage the development of local democratic bodies which can become the foundation of a new regime. Such bodies could be the basis for the election of a revolutionary constituent assembly to decide the country's future.

But to achieve this there needs to be a socialist force, a revolutionary party, which can argue for these ideas. This was the case in Russia in 1917 when Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, refused to join the pro-capitalist provisional government and instead campaigned to win majority support among the working class for socialist revolution. That is the example which needs to be followed.

The unfolding new Iranian revolution is a tremendous development; it is already starting to inspire youth and workers in other countries. If successful, it will have an electrifying effect in the Middle East and beyond. The energy and bravery of the young people are an example to all. What is needed now is the widening of the movement and a clarification of the concrete steps necessary to both defeat repression and to open the way to real liberation from oppression and all the ills of capitalism.

IRAN - CAN THE PROTESTS DELIVER AN IRANIAN REVOLUTION?

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BUILD A MASS STUDENT MOVEMENT AGAINST THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS



MARY FINCH

Solidarity with students in Ireland – let's walk out here too!

SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students extends its solidarity to the tens of thousands of students across Ireland who protested against the student cost-of-living and housing crisis on 13 October.

The large walkouts and rallies are a display of the huge anger that exists among students in Ireland, as sky-high fees and rents – compounded by an acute student accommodation shortage – have left many struggling to live.

Socialist Students supports the demands of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), that has called for rent caps, the abolition of fees and a publicly funded higher education system, among other demands.

The same crisis looms over students in the UK. During the summer, one in three students were left with £50 a month to live on after paying rent and bills. 11%

of students now use food banks, up from 5% at the start of the year. Like in Ireland, some UK students have been forced to defer their studies due to a lack of accommodation, while others have had no option but to live miles from campus.

The president of the USI said that the protests were “just the start”. Socialist Students calls on the National Union of Students (NUS), as the confederation joining together millions of students in the UK, to follow the example of the USI and take the lead in organising walkouts in all universities and colleges across the country, as the first step in a mass fightback against the student cost-of-living crisis.

But if the NUS does not act, then Socialist Students will be calling for walkouts and demonstrations on every campus, as a step towards building democratic and open student organisations that can link up nationally to build a mass student movement – for living maintenance grants, rent

controls, and fully publicly funded, free higher education.

By uniting with workers fighting back in the trade unions, students can force this weak and divided Tory government to concede to our demands. That's why Socialist Students will be marching alongside the trade union movement at the TUC lobby of parliament on 2 November. We call on all students looking to link up with the growing strike wave to join us.

Young people's experience of capitalism – poverty, crisis and austerity – has led many to search for a socialist alternative. Join Socialist Students to help build a movement against the student cost-of-living crisis, for free education, to campaign on campuses, and fight for socialism.

Join the student fightback

JOIN socialist students
socialiststudents.org.uk/join

Socialist Students says:

- No to price rises on campuses, early closure of libraries or other campus spaces, or any more cuts to our education, courses or jobs. No delays in access to student hardship funds for students in need
- For third-party halls to be immediately taken into the ownership and control of the university, as a step towards introducing democratic rent controls for students. Councils should use their powers to compulsorily register landlords, to force action on dilapidated and overpriced student housing
- Replace student loans with living grants tied to the rate of inflation – cancel student debt, scrap fees, and make the super-rich pay
- Link up with striking workers – build a movement to demand that the bosses are made to pay for the cost-of-living crisis
- Students and workers unite to kick out the Tories and fight for socialist change. For democratic public ownership of the banks, monopolies and major industry to provide us with a future

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ▶▶▶ see column on p8

