



the SOCIALIST

Issue 1230 8-14 June 2023 formerly **Militan**

Nurses and doctors

STILLSTRIKING TO SALE OUR NISS

For a fully funded inflation-proof pay rise



MATT NHS NURSE

or the third time this year junior doctors in England are once again taking strike action. Walking out from 7am 14 June to 7am 17 June, over appalling pay and working conditions.

Junior doctors have had their pay cut by over a quarter in real terms since 2009. Some are paid just £14.09 an hour according to their union the British Medical Association (BMA).

And on top of that, NHS underfunding means an even bigger workload for all staff. Doctors regularly work unsafe hours, some over 70 hours a week!

Reports last year indicated that over 12,000 doctor and 50,000 nurse vacancies had been left unfilled. This causes real issues with patient safety. Pay is a major reason the NHS isn't recruiting and retaining doctors and nurses. Anyone who works in the NHS will have had discussions about pay, and how betrayed we feel by the government and the pay deals offered.

The BMA has been offered a 5%

pay rise by the government. This doesn't come close to the real-terms cut over years, and definitely isn't enough to match inflation this year.

Royal College of Nursing (RCN) members, despite their leadership recommending they accept, rightly rejected the inadequate pay offer. The RCN is re-balloting its members in England for strike action to continue the fight for the pay nurses deserve. If RCN members can deliver a resounding 'yes' vote then an escalation of action is a must. In Wales, RCN members are already out on strike again (see page 11).

So far, doctors and nurses have taken strike action on different days. A real message to the government would be to unite the health strikes. Mass picket lines outside hospitals of doctors, nurses and Unite members, including ambulance workers, would show the strength of feeling and resolve NHS staff feel.

This could be part of campaigning for the TUC to unite all workers fighting for pay rises and the Tories' attempts to attack our right to strike.

As a nurse I'm proud to stand alongside colleagues in their fight. Our NHS is in crisis, caused by repeated governments' lack of investment, privatisations and attacks on our pay and conditions. We've fought off a pandemic, now we need to fight off the Tories and their insulting pay offers.

the **Socialist**

8-14 June 2023

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

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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

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The Socialist is the weekly newspape of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee

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BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS Socialist Books: our publishing house

socialisthooks.co.uk Left Books: Marxist classics bookshop leftbooks.co.uk

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ISSN 1366-9621 Published by Socialist Publications PO Box 1398. Enfield EN1 9GT Registered as a newspape 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.'

Why is Black unemployment so high and what can we do about it?

TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

Statistics recently published by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) show unemployment among black and minority ethnic (BAME) people was at 6.9% in 2022, over double the unemployment rate of white people 3.2%. The unemployment rate of : BAME women is almost three times higher than that of white men.

It shines a clear light on the issue of racial discrimination not just in the workplace, but also the hiring processes of employers. While job huntng in the past. I have found I'm more likely to hear back from a workplace when I don't disclose my race.

In fact, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), although the unemployment rate for the whole adult population has dropped since 2008, the number of unemployed BAME adults has ac-

Racism and class oppression are clearly linked. BAME workers are more likely to be low income or unemployed than their white counterparts. The types of jobs typically done by black workers are not only low paying but are also often temporary or precarious, so there's a lot of iob insecurity as well. This makes it difficult for black workers to bring in a steady income.

The TUC is calling for mandatory ethnic pay gap reporting, which would force businesses to reveal if they are paying employees different salaries for the same job. They are also calling for an end to insecure work, and the banning of zero-hour

contracts. BAME unemployment rates would definitely drop if workers weren't having to constantly look for their next job!

Although this is a good start from the TUC, we can't just rely on businesses to do the right thing. Trade unions should be given the power to oversee these changes and hold bosses that don't cooperate

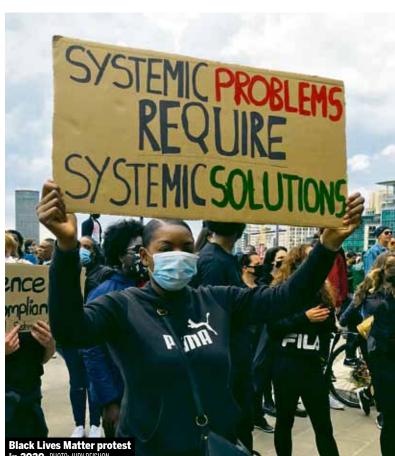
Tory divide and rule

The current Tory government is making an effort to divide BAME and white workers. They're upping their rhetoric about blocking refugees from entering the country and tightening the reins on immigration. As if money spent putting up refugees in hotels is the reason why nurses' pay rises can't be afforded, for example, Meanwhile the billionaires get richer.

It benefits the capitalists to divide the working class. By promoting the narrative that black workers (specifically immigrant workers) are to blame, they make BAME workers the enemy; it takes the blame off of them. BAME workers are not taking jobs from white workers, and they're definitely not the reason working-class people are struggling!

It is important for the working class to band together and point the finger at those that are really to blame - the super-rich capitalist class. This is why the working class must build a united movement to fight back.







New York and the Party of the P

Fully fund mental health services

BEN GOLDSTONE

LAMBETH AND SOUTH WEST LONDON SOCIALIST

Sir Mark Rowley, the chief of the Metropolitan Police, has announced that he intends to stop officers attending mental health calls from September, in an initiative called 'Right Care Right Person' (RCRP).

Who is going to replace the officers attending these situations? Ideally, specially trained mental health responders would be available, but currently, the NHS, mental health, and social care services are already stretched to breaking point.

The programme has been running in Humberside since 2020 and has also been introduced in North Yorkshire and Lancashire, with its aim being to free up officers to do 'back to basics' policing. The Home Office has said that RCRP will soon be standard practice across England

Pulling the police from attending mental health crises, without actually recruiting and funding alternative professionals is surely only going to lead to vulnerable people being put in more danger.

The Approved Mental Health Pro-

expressed concerns. It says it could lead to 999 call handlers declining to send officers to incidents where they are required to protect the public and possibly lead to people with protected characteristics being stopped from receiving the same level of support as others. It is true that often a police officer

is not the 'right person' and having police attending mental health crises can sometimes exacerbate the situation, with people feeling as though they are being treated like criminals instead of people in need of support

Democratic control

What is needed is democratically run public services, including the police, which are accountable to local committees made up of trade unions local communities, and local authorities, so working-class people have a say in how they are run and what their priorities are. For instance, instructing police to

stop wasting time arresting innocent protesters! Another necessity is a massive expansion of public services, such as the NHS and social care, so that high-quality care can be pro-

Priced out of eating

Fight for pay, pensions and benefits that rise with the cost of living

TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

make vourself a cheese sandwich today costs 37% more than it did a year ago, an increase that people across the UK are becoming sadly familiar with. With food inflation sit ting at around 20%, it's no wonde nearly half of the country's population is cutting back on their food

The crisis of capitalism globally has created food supply issues, with the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine reducing the supply of key ingredients. To make things worse. the rising cost of energy has led farmers in the UK to reduce their outputs, and a lack of cheap labour available in Tory post-Brexit Britain has left a large amount of crops

profit for the top three supermarkets, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda in **2021 - doubled from 2019**

profit for just eight of the top ten food processors and manufacturers in 2021

Recent years have also shown us how climate change, and the extreme weather that comes with it, is an increasing threat to global food supply. This will only get worse until proper planning and international collaboration is used to properly fight climate change.

World events and extreme weather conditions don't however tell us the full story of the rapidly rising cost of food. Food supply issues have provided a perfect opportunity for the capitalists to extract more and more profits from working-class people. Record profits are being recorded at each stage of the supply chain from suppliers and traders to manufacturers, and the supermarkets selling us the goods at the other

In the UK, the main three supermarket chains reported a near to 100% increase in profits since 2019, at the same time as British people are told by the government and the media that this crisis is just a 'natural result of world events. With the situation becoming

increasingly desperate, the government is starting to have conversations on ways to control the rising cost of food. It's not clear what exactly this would look like, with the possibility of 'voluntary' price caps on basic items. But why would supermarket bosses volunteer to make ess money? And who decides what 'basic items' means?

The Socialist Party fights for inflation-proof pay rises, and benefits and pensions that rise with the cost of livng too. We fight for a minimum wage of £15 an hour now. A starting point is to give people enough money to be able to afford a healthy diet. We need a food production sys-

tem which is run with socialist,

more food parcels, nearly three million, distributed by Trussell Trust in the year democratically agreed planning, food, and provide a real alternative

and whose food sources are publicly owned to allow food production to be run for the good of working-class people rather than for profit. This : • Read more 'Food price crisis would allow everyone access to highquality, affordable, and sustainable

to the widespread hunger we have under canitalism

what is the socialist solution?' at socialistparty.org.uk

Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

The Socialist Party has regular meetings in towns and cities across the country, in which we discuss socialist ideas, past events in working-class history and how we can apply those lessons to the fight for socialism today. If you would like to participate:

- Go to socialistparty.org.uk/join Or text 07761 818206 with your name and





cost of living so much that they have to steal baby formula. Average prices for formula have risen over 24% over the past two years. The cheapest brand, Aldi's Mamia,

has risen by 45%! The best-selling UK formula, Aptamil, now has a price tag of £14.50 a box. Families are being forced by pov-

erty to find any way they can to access milk for their babies. Some are watering down formula to make it go further, which sadly means the babies are not receiving all the nutrition they need.

Others are turning to Facebook marketplace buying opened boxes, causing alarm, as these boxes will be unsafe and unsanitary, and pose huge health risks. Using condensed milk, oats and alternative foods are other measures families are being pushed to take.

Baby formula companies are defending the price increases, blaming

market, and the market itself is worth £55 billion. These companies spend £12 billion a year on advertising that's £86 spent on each newborn

Sunak's woeful response

In response to the desperation of families, all Tory prime minister Rishi Sunak did was remind them about the Healthy Start vouchers. But at £8.50 per voucher, these don't go far enough to cover the cost of one tub. And this is taxpavers' money subsidising billion-dollar companies.

Just like the parasitic industry of big pharma, these formula companies exploit a basic necessity for newborn babies. Theft of formula milk is not a new phenomenon. It is just becoming more common, as more people fall below the poverty line. For years shops have put security tags on baby formula boxes.

Baby formula should be free for all

of these bloated companies should not be lined further.

of baby formula should be nationalised, under workers' democratic control, and fall under the wing of a socialist NHS.

Adverts, PR and marketing should no longer be used to pressure parents into formula feeding. Fully funded and fully staffed breastfeeding departments are also needed to help the 80% of mothers who start breastfeeding, but due to complications, social pres sures and lack of support, drop to jus 1% when the baby is six months old.

The preferred feeding method between a parent and their baby is a highly personal choice, and no parent should be shamed for their decision.

In capitalist Britain, still the sixthrichest country in the world, babies are at risk of being malnourished There is enough wealth in society that each baby need not go without food. But it will only be through the socialist transformation of our society that a baby's basic need for mill families who need it. And the pockets : will no longer be exploited for profit



UCU WORKPLACE socialistparty.org.uk socialistparty.org.uk

UCU in universities and colleges

University strikes break out against pay deductions

In previous issues of the Socialist, University and College Union (UCU) members have reported on the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) being undertaken by university staff, backing up the union's national campaign of strike action over pay. We argued that "It is essential that the union makes it clear it will back up members against any attacks by university bosses. For example, if management tries punitive pay deductions (such as deducting 50-100% of pay when all the rest of the work is being done), that must be met with immediate strike action." ('UCU embarks on first-ever national marking and assessment boycott' socialistparty.org.uk)

That is now coming into play, with UCU branches agreeing strike action in response to grossly disproportionate pay deductions. These include five days of strike action at Sheffield Hallam, and indefinite action at Leeds, where a UCU member who spoke to the Socialist wanted to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals.

'We're strong'

It really is a ridiculous situation to be in. Management are threatening 100% pay deduction for every day an academic partakes in the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) - at which point we might as well strike and not lose any more money.

The branch has produced a fund for those whose pay would be deducted. After literally months of

trying to communicate with man agement over the threat, the UCU branch has decided to stand in solidarity with participants of the MAB, and all go on strike.

It is galling that management are willing to punish the hardworking staff over this. Mrs 'Several-hundredthousand-a -vear, with house, car and travel expenses' (the vice-chancellor) can't stand that we're fighting and winning, and so has to up the ante. It's despicable, but she'll lose. We're a strong branch, and she's a

Why I'm going to NSSN conference

Looking for inspiration to transform our union branch

UCU MEMBER IN FE

I teach in a big FE college with four sites across West London, My college has been in formal intervention for five years thanks to appalling mismanagement by a series of CEOs, but equally to chronic underfunding. Never-ending staffing cuts, crumbling infrastructure, dying student support services, and so on - it's a well-known story.

Staff morale is at an all-time low. Many members have listened to our employers' mantra, 'We're broke, striking will get you nowhere!' for so long, they have come to believe it. My UCU branch has not been active - two branch meetings only have been called in a year, with little more than 5% of members attending. On those occasions, the possibility of striking over pay (in FE amongst the lowest in the education sector) and over unsustainable workloads wasn't even discussed. : conference details

: It feels like the wave of generalised strike action that has engulfed the UK over the last months has rolled past us almost unnoticed, as if in another country. So I'm going to do something

about it! As a UCU branch commit tee member, I am going to the NSSN conference on 24 June as one way of breaking out of the lack of action and isolation I feel we have fallen into. I want to connect up with the world of trade unionists 'out there', exchange experiences with them, get some ideas, be inspired to action.

I am also taking another branch member with me, so am hoping for two further outcomes. First, that together we can then trigger some lively discussion back in the branch. Second, that talk of the crucial importance of building networks of resistance and of coordinating action will rub off well on both of us. Two people on a same wavelength will surely have more leverage in branch decision-making than just one!

See back page for NSSN





Tyne Met, Bristol, Liverpool UCU strikes in FE and HE 2022-23 SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Action building in Further Education

The recent UCU congress agreed to prepare for a national ballot in September for strike action in Further Education (FE) colleges. It follows an e-consultation of 18,000 UCU members at 190 colleges, in which 87% voted for strike action. UCU is demanding a pay offer in excess of RPI inflation, a national workload agreement, and national pay negotiations. In the meantime, as pay is currently negotiated college by college, strike action has broken out in a number of FEs.

Fighting for pay and against closures at Tyne **Coast College**

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

Strikers at Tyne Coast College held up placards showing the pay discrepancy over the past decade between the massive 100% awarded to the college CEO, and the paltry 3.5% to staff during the same ten-year period.

The initial offer from the college was below even the recommendation from the Association of Colleges (AoC), which had already been reiected nationally. The college then put forward (in line with the rejected AoC recommendations) a belowinflation 2.5% offer. With less than two weeks to organise a ballot for industrial action, and straight after the Easter holidays, a magnificent 94% voted to take strike action.

Alongside the pay dispute there were strikers at Tyne Met (part of Tyne Coast) who were angered over it he edict of an unaccountable colplans to close Oueen Alexandra Sixth : lege CEO.

Form College. Strikers told us that during Covid, while teaching staff were furloughed, the sixth form college was moved into Tyne Met. By May 2023 the college announced they were closing the sixth form.

There was a public outcry. The announcement came just five days before the first AS-level exams. Lecturers on the picket line told us there were kids crying in the corridors. By the end of the week, after an emergency meeting, there was a U-turn and the closure was postponed until

One of the strikers commented, that to date, even though the college have admitted to making mistakes, they have not committed to an ineducation to be under democratic control, including participation from teaching unions and students - not

Yorkshire colleges join the strike wave

There were over 50 pickets outside Leeds City College as UCU members took strike action for the first time in many years. The strikes on 5 and 7 June were coordinated with strikes at three other colleges in Yorkshire, Bradford, Kirklees and Harrogate, with further strikes scheduled for the following week.

One striker said: "Initially I think some staff members felt uneasy about striking on GCSE exam days, as we all care about our students. However, for over a decade staff have seen their wages decrease in real terms due to inflation. We have food cupboards at work, essentially mini food banks, for people who are strug-

have a principal on around £250,000 a year. When you look at it like that, I think it has made everyone realise it is time to make a stand."

Strikers at Bradford College have told Socialist Party members visiting the picket line similar things.

At Bradford College, Socialist Students has run campaign stalls with petitions demanding college management give an inflation-proof pay rise to staff, as well as putting up posters to show staff there is student support for them.

Socialist Students aims to do the same in Leeds.

The Socialist Party is hosting an open meeting about the college strikes and the indefinite action about to begin at University of Leeds, on Monday 19 June, 7pm at the Adel-

St Mungo's housing workers: 'We're going to win!'



mood on picket lines and at rallies across London, and in Oxford, Bristol and more sites around the country, organised by the Unite Housing Workers branch. Homelessness workers. many young first-time strikers, are picketing and protesting at neardaily rallies and marches in the fight for a decent pay rise from 'the UK's leading homelessness charity' St Mungo's.

As speakers at the daily rallies have explained, senior managers have seen their pay skyrocket whilst frontline staff have seen their pay fall off the end of a cliff.

In a short space of time, strikers are discussing and learning lessons. The rallies around London keep up the pressure and the profile, win wider support, and keep up morale. Many strikers are also discussing and understanding the importance of maintaining effective workplace pickets to build the strength of the strike amongst members, and win more to the union, to hit the bosses where it hurts. The fifth day of strike action had 30% more picketers than at the start

STRIKERS SPOKE TO ISAI MARIJERLA

"I am striking because I don't feel able to stand and do nothing, when there are people working in a charitable organisation with not enough income to support themselves without welfare, and using food banks to get by. We are told that there isn't enough money to fund an adequate pay rise, but we are also told we cannot see the evidence for this. It's very difficult to accept the information

general feeling that we are losing the ssence of what the charity was created for. It has become increasingly corporatised. This should not be at the cost of providing sustainable incomes for people to be able to carry out their roles without the additional pressures of financial hardship. "We hope that the senior leader-

ship team will be willing to return to the negotiating table. We are told that there is always the invitation for dialogue, but we are also told that there will be no amendments to the previous inadequate pay offer. We very much hope this changes. We are extending invitations for progressive conversation. We hope these are accepted and that we can return to our roles as soon as possible."

"I've been doing this job for nine months. And I'm striking now in support of the pay dispute and the demand for a 10% pay rise in line with inflation, because I'm in solidarity with all the frontline workers in my organisation who are not being paid enough to live. "It shouldn't be this way. Everyone

in society doing a job should be paid enough to live comfortably. I think it's really disgusting that there's such inequality of wealth - in our society, but also within St Mungo's, that ostensibly exists to support people who are suffering. And the people that we support are suffering because of poverty and wealth inequality. In this organisation, there's a CEO that's earning around £200,000 a year, and frontline workers on very minimal wages. It feels like rather than addressing the issues it's set up to address, Mungo's is actually entrenching those problems.

"Among many strikers there is a : to utilise the power that we have as workers and withhold our labour until some of this inequality is redressed and frontline staff have their wages increased. People don't donate to charities like St Mungo's because they want to line the pockets of a few people. They donate because they see homelessness as a problem. So that's why I'm joining the strike and I'm on the picket line.

OTHER STRIKER SPOKE TO BEN GOLDSTONE "I'm in a management position after

five years with Mungo's and my salary is liveable. What made me decide to strike is knowing that members of my team struggle towards the end of a pay period. Many of them support the strike but are worried about being able to afford it - which is exactly why it needs to be done!"

OTHER STRIKERS SPOKE TO A UNITE

"We've had an amazing turnout here today [at the first London rally], an amazing atmosphere, everyone's going strong. Really confident about the campaign, we're going to win! It's great to hear Jeremy Corbyn speak ing here, and we just need to keep

EIVINAS. PROJECT WORKER AT ENDSLEIGH GARDENS AND UNITE REP

"Great atmosphere at our first rally a the beginning of our strike, we had a number of great speakers. We've got to keep the momentum going and we're going to get this pay rise."

HARVEY, PROJECT WORKER AT BIRKENHEAD

Send messages of support to:

Social workers in South **Gloucestershire Unison strike for fair** pay, coordinating with refuse workers

ADULT SOCIAL CARE REP AND BRANCH SECRETARY SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE LINISON (PERSONAL

When in adult social care we found we were to be underpaid by £3.000 per year in comparison to those in children's services, we felt insulted and angry.

The yearly retention payments were offered to children's social workers back in 2021 and Unison members in South Gloucestershire Council have been organising for equality in adult social care since. Ne have taken five days of strike action from April this year, and have a strong mandate until September.

Adult social workers and occupational therapists (OTs) have exactly the same qualifications as those in children's social care, and are facing very similar challenges in recruitment and retention. We support people in some of the most challenging circumstances in society, from complex disability, to domestic abuse and mental health issues. Working flat-out during the pandemic, our reward has been to see our pay decimated and funding for services coninuously slashed.

We demand that the council also give us the uplift, to ensure we are keeping hold of our experienced colleagues and attracting new staff. The cost-of-living crisis means many are having to vote with their feet and go

to where the pay is better, working for an agency or another council. Some of our members told me on the picket line that they are now even taking second jobs just to make ends meet.

Due to the council's intransigence over this issue, further strike action is planned to coincide with a lobby of the newly elected cabinet on 12 Iune. We will be coordinating our action with striking council refuse workers in Unite, who are also out that week.

The Conservatives have just been ousted out of South Gloucestershire after eight years, and there is now a Lib Dem-Labour coalition. While there is some optimism among members that Tories are finally out, there is rightful scepticism towards the other two parties. Already they've started to show their colours. The Labour leader has not agreed to meet Unison and we've had absolutely no response vet from the Lib Dem leader!

Unfortunately, this is an indication of what is to come on a national basis, demonstrating the urgent need for socialist councillors as part of a new mass workers' party, who are prepared to stand up and represent Social workers and OTs in South Gloucestershire will continue to apply the pressure until we get paid fairly, which is the first step towards providing quality adult social care services to our communities



Get all the latest union news...



WORKPLACE WORKPLACE socialistparty.org.uk

UNISON CONFERENCE A CRUCIAL TIME TO WIN A FIGHTING UNION

LINISON NEC MEMBER PERSONAL CAPACITY

ison members have been part of the wave of trade union struggles against the cost-of-living crisis.

Local government and school workers could be the latest to join this tidal wave, as they are being balloted for strike action. The Local Government National Joint Council committee (NJC - made up of reps from local government unions, including Unison) has rejected the underwhelming flat rate pay offer of £1,925. The joint union pay claim for 2023-24 was for 12.7%. The offer is identical to last year.

which, without a strong lead from the top, Unison members accepted. However, this year is not the same as last year. When the employers' offer was made last summer, we hadn't seen the huge spike in energy prices. In the last year, gas prices rose by 132%, electricity 66%, mortgage interest payments 26% and petrol 22%.

With food inflation at 19% and still rising, members cannot live on such low pay and are angry. The pay offer amounts to only 4%-7% for most members. This is in effect another pay cut for members who have lost 25% of the value of their pay since 2010 and the austerity years.

As many people have commented. it is not a cost-of-living crisis but a cost-of-existing crisis! With no end in sight!

That is why Unison members have been fighting back. Unison members in higher education and the environment agency have balloted and taken strike action, and will be taking more industrial action over the next

In spring, we saw health workers and ambulance workers taking strike action, with a number of hospitals only just missing the ballot threshold to strike alongside their RCN

Health members, following a huge campaign for 'accept' by the rightwing leadership of Unison's health service group executive (SGE), accepted the poor pay 2022-23 deal as they desperately needed some money. Socialist Party members on the SGE argued for reject, and were part of a sizeable minority of 15 against 21.

The deal, of an unconsolidated lump sum starting at £1,665 for 2022-23 and a below-inflation pay rise of 5% for 2023-24, did nothing to address low pay, the criminal shortage of staff and the crumbling of the NHS as it is continues to be privatised and starved of funds. Many members campaigned for reject, and our health members are still angry and are gearing up to fight for next year's pay campaign.

In April, Unison's health conwithdraw from the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB - made up of : the strike wave



government-appointed so-called experts) so they can directly negotiate with the government on pay. A Tory government initially refusing to negotiate with the trade unions has been forced by the huge pressure of striking workers to negotiate directly with all the trade unions.

RCN members courageously rejected the shoddy deal, against the recommendation of the RCN leadership, and are reballoting for further action. Unite has also rejected the pay deal and is engaged in a number of strikes.

Socialist Party members on Unison's National Executive Council (NEC) have continually called for coordinating all the strike action so that

The year-long strike wave sees no sign of abating yet, with teachers, civil servants, and transport workers in the RMT and Aslef continuing action. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) has suspended balloting its members on the inadequate Royal Mail deal, due to no change in the actions of management, including the victimisation of hundreds of reps and members. Many other workplaces, such as Amazon workers in Coventry and now homelessference unanimously agreed to ness housing workers in St Mungo's (see pages 5 and 7), are also part of

School workers and teachers could potentially take action together in the autumn if Unison local government workers pass the Tory-imposed 50% turnout threshold in their disaggregated ballot.

In addition, over 50,000 National Education Union (NEU) support staff, although not part of the NJC, have balloted for strike action. If they pass the 50% threshold in their national ballot, they should be taking ioint action along with Unison, Unite and GMB members.

The NEU has been fined by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for organising school support staff members, following a complaint made by the other support staff unions. Socialist Party members on the NECs of Unison and the NEU made a joint statement calling for maximum unity of school workers instead of such division (see Unison and NEU: For maximum unity not division' at so-

cialistparty.org.uk). It is essential to ensure there is effective action to win decent pay rises. for all of us. We need to work together with the NEU, such as on the joint education unions' lobby of parliament on 20 June on schools funding.

Unison conference also takes place as the Tories' anti-strike minimum service levels bill is going through

action could find themselves facing punitive action in the coming months. The Socialist Party calls on all Labour councils and mayors to refuse to issue employer notices as the Scottish SNP government has already pledged to do. It is also vital that all trade unions discuss together now how to respond with urgent action - including preparations for a 24-hour general strike - should the law be enacted against any trade

The left won a majority on Unison's NEC for the first time in 2021, including four Socialist Party members, with the Time For Real Change (TFRC) grouping in the leadership. Members had had enough of the old right-wing leadership that held back the fight against a decade of

However, at last year's conference the NEC was censured and a vote of no-confidence was passed as the TFRC leadership were not seen to take complaints of bullying and harassment by mainly women members seriously. The Paul Holmes issue has. incredibly, still not been resolved, which will continue to give ammunition to the old right wing of the union who are desperately trying to win

The right wing of the NEC are hap by to do Starmer's bidding and would hold back members from taking any effective action against future attacks by a right-wing Labour government. who in turn will be happy to do the bidding of big business.

That's why it is essential that the left leadership steps up to the plate with a serious fight on pay, conditions, jobs and funding in all sectors

Starmer's Labour won't deliver

As industrial action continues, many members are also looking to desperately end the rule of the Tories. There is visceral hatred of the Rishi Sunak government, which has presided over the continued calamity of the collapse of living standards.

Many members will clearly vote to kick out the Tories in the general election which will have to take place in the next 18 months. But there is ittle enthusiasm for a Starmer-led Labour government, whose policies are increasingly difficult to differentiate from the Tories. The U-turn on Labour's policy for free education is another nail in the coffin of Corbyn's policies in the Labour Party, and a kick in the teeth for young people.

From banning frontbench Labour MPs from visiting picket lines, to barring Corbyn as a Labour candidate to suspending Diane Abbott from the Labour whip shows his direction of travel - further and further to the

Our members need inflation-proof pay rises, full funding and an end to privatisation. We need to cancel all PFI debt, bring back in-house all the privatised services, and renationalise the public utilities where our mem bers work, such as water, gas and electricity. But Starmer has made it clear whose side he is on in this fight - and it's not ours!

Yet when the decision to bar Corbyn was taken at the Labour NEC. the Unison reps abstained! That is why the Socialist Party calls for a democratic discussion about how to achieve a genuine political voice for Unison members. Branches should be able to democratically decide to support candidates that back Unison policies, even if outside the Labour

The Socialist Party argues that the trade unions must back Jeremy Corbyn to stand independently of the Labour Party, as part of a workers' list of candidates. That could be a step towards the new workers' party we need, that could genuinely defend the interests of Unison members and the working class.

cialist Party conference

- 5.30pm/end of conference
- Wednesday 14 June
- Suite 1, Leonardo Hotel, opposite conference venue (formerly Jurys Inn)

Tewkesbury workers take on Swedish multinational

DAVE GRIFFITHS, COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY. SPOKE TO LINITE MEMBERS AT TRELLERORG

120 shop floor workers at Trelleborg in Tewkesbury, members of Unite the Union, have won an increased pay rise following ten days of discontinuous strike action over three weeks.

The Swedish multinational had boasted of its best-ever quarter and had given its CEO a huge benefit payout, yet only offered a 4.7% rise.

Industrial action has secured as 8% rise plus two net, but unconsolidated, payments of £250, making the deal worth 10.5-11.5%. There will be a further 3% rise in January, to be re negotiated if inflation is higher than

The workers had sought a rise above Decembers' RPI figure of 13.4%

Hardly any worker there had ever been on strike before, but a strong sense of union solidarity has been built, with members understanding the union phrase: 'You don't get anything by not standing up for

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Rugeley sites ballot for strike action.

MB union membership at Amazon BHX4 has more earlier this year was led by 300 Amazon workers walking out, and now it than doubled during the series of strikes at the Coventry stribution centre. Recent morning pickets have attracted hundreds, as workers fight to achieve union recognition and a £15-an-hour wage. It is clear that Amazon workers are more equipped than ever to han-

Building well-organised and lively pickets has inspired Amazon workers across the country to come forward

dle Amazon's tactics to defeat union

Coventry workers visited the Swansea warehouse to help build confidence, with union backing, and show that there is real possibility for change. The recognition of the need for 'fulfilment centres' in the UK to organise together is starting to ouild momentum, as Mansfield and

Membership continues to grow, regardless of Amazon's efforts to defeat unionisation. The first strike

has more than 700, with more confidence and consciousness

Amazon: Union support grows at

Coventry and spreads to other sites

and join themselves.

Amazon is reportedly planning to hire hundreds more workers to stop GMB meeting the 50% turnout threshold needed for statutory recognition. This would allow GMB to

directly negotiate pay injustice and

conditions. This attempt to move the goal post vet again from upper management has only made workers more determined to win others over. Workers still stop most cars and lorries in their tracks mornings and evenings

> tance it holds. These issues were discussed at the 30 May meeting in Coventry called by GMB. A packed room of supporters

to have informed debates regarding

joining the union and the impor

heard from Amazon Labor Union (ALU) president Chris Smalls from the USA, alongside ALU campaigners Gerald and Jordan, and Darren and Garfield from the Coventry dispute. Both US and British speakers focused on how and why their fights with Amazon began. Garfield highlighted that the common theme in

dous mistreatment of workers. During the discussion, Socialist Party members highlighted the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference, which some Amazon workers have already confirmed they will attend.

We also raised the need for a political voice for workers alongside the ndustrial struggle. The next Labour government has no intention of supporting the working class or robust rade unionism. We demand a new mass workers' party that prioritises and facilitates workers' control, decent hours, and earning enough to live a comfortable life!

Why I'm going to NSSN conference

"Getting ideas and spreading the word"

GARFIELD HYLTON

Asked about the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference at the Amazon support public meeting in Coventry, Garfield said:

"I met a gentleman from that or ganisation in Swansea today and I've been given an invite to attend the 24 June conference. And I'm quite glad to be going there, firstly to get advice from them about supporting members, and secondly to try and establish relationships and spread the word. I'm looking forward to it. A gathering of shop stewards would be an excellent venue to get ideas from



Unionisation drive at Swansea Amazon

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

organisation.



GINNY BAYLISS

SWANSEA SOCIALIST STUDENTS

On Tuesday 30 May, Swansea Socialist Students were invited to assist GMB union reps and members of the Staten Island (New York) Amazon Labour Union (ALU) with a unionisation drive outside Crymlyn Burrows warehouse. We took part alongside representatives of Swansea Trades Council and the Socialist Party.

Having reached the 50% of the workforce threshold at the Coventry warehouse, the GMB have filed for official recognition, and are aiming to do the same at Amazon sites in Bristol and Swansea

The poor working conditions at Amazon are common knowledge. and they lead to an astronomical turnover of staff. To tackle this issue, Amazon hold regular recruitment initiatives aimed at students, whose financial precarity often forces is able to win recognition for the more

continues to make profits for the bosses at the top on the back of their workers.

The drive was joined Chris Smalls founder and president of the ALU. He discussed with us the challenges he and his team faced while building the union, as well as how they were able to overcome ruthless unionbusting tactics by Amazon. We were told that the ALU's recognition at the Staten Island warehouse, with 2,654 workers voting in favour of union recognition verses 2,131 against, was a victory for a union which showed that perseverance and creative organising strategies can defeat one of the world's most powerful capitalism organisations. Amazon spent more than a million dollars per organise attempting to stop the ALU's efforts but after 11 months of daily flyering, meetings and demonstrations Small's and the ALU were ultimately

Two Militant MPs, the 'longest suicide note in history', early Liverpool tremors... 1983 ELECTION: A HARBINGER OF BATTLES TO COME

The 1983 general election occurred 40 years ago, on Thursday 9 June. The Tories won a landslide victory, which Labour's right wing blamed on a left-wing manifesto. But new left-wing MPs were elected, including Jeremy Corbyn and two supporters of the Militant newspaper (forerunner of The Socialist). We asked one of those former MPs and now Socialist Party national committee member **Dave Nellist** to recall some of the events of that pivotal

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 1983 GENERAL

The general election of 1983 saw Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher re-elected with an increased majority of 144. The election consolidated 'Thatcherism' and opened a decade of privatisations, deregulations, and attacks on the working class.

The Tories, and Mrs Thatcher in particular, used the previous year's Falklands War between the UK and Argentina, which ended 12 months earlier in June 1982, as a political tool to successfully boost the government and her national leadership in the general election.

The election was a significant defeat for the Labour Party, with the loss of : the vote. 52 seats and its national vote falling to 27%. In addition to the 'Falklands factor'. Labour's loss of three million votes between 1979 and 1983 was compounded by the creation of the : It was the description given by the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Two years earlier, in March 1981, four 'moderate' (in reality, right-wing) Labour MPs and former MPs, all former cabinet ministers and known : as the 'Gang of Four', split from the Labour Party. Twenty-eight more Labour MPs and one Tory were to join over the next twelve months (though a more significant number of rightwing MPs with the same policies as the splitters staved in the Labour Party). It was the biggest parliamentary defection for almost a hundred years.

Shortly before the 1983 election. the SDP formed an electoral alliance : greater. with the Liberal Party (later, the two merged to become the Liberal Democrats). The SDP was set up to prevent Labour from returning to government with a series of left policies. Big business gave the SDP millions of pounds to assist in that task. Similar to the £9: ropean Economic Community (which million David Sainsbury gave the Liberal Democrats in 2019 to help build an alternative to Labour then under the radical policies of Jeremy Corbyn.

The press and media used that split from Labour, and the internal witch- : ing basic amenities or needing major hunt against the Militant and its supporters, to portray a divided party.

In 1979 the votes were: Tory 13.7 million, Labour 11.5 million, and Liberal 4.3 million. In 1983 it was: Tory 13 SDP-Liberal Alliance 7.8 million. technology - "with public enterprise

Five Militant supporters stood as : taking the lead".

received 2.4% on the Isle of Wight in a seat that had been (and still is) Tory since 1931. Rod Fitch gained 29.6% in Brighton Kemptown - almost Labour's best result in the south of England in 1983. Pat Wall was narrowly defeated in Bradford North with 30.9%. And there were two victories.

In Coventry South East my candidacy recorded 41.1%, with a reduced Labour majority of 7% on changed boundaries (the majority in 1987 climbed to 17.6%). But in Liverpool, Labour's vote rose from 42.7% in 1979 to 47.3% in 1983. And Liverpool Broadgreen saw the third-largest swing to Labour in the country, and Terry Fields was elected with 40.9% of

WHY WAS LABOUR'S 1983 MANIFESTO DESCRIBED AS THE "LONGEST SUICIDE NOTE IN

late former Labour MP, Gerald Kaufman. Before becoming an MP, Kaufman was a newspaper journalist and a writer on the BBC TV satirical programme 'That was the Week That Was'. in itself."

Today's Labour right-wing still uses his sarcastic put-down of Labour's 1983 radical programme to characterise the supposedly inevitable election defeats of parties campaigning on socialist policies.

But there was more to the outcome of the 1983 election and it is arguable that, without that socialist alternative. Labour's defeat could have been

Labour's 1983 programme, 'The New Hope for Britain, was radical a clear indictment of the then Tory government and, more widely, capitalism. It proposed massive public investment, withdrawal from the Euwould later become the European Union) and nuclear disarmament.

In a Britain of mass unemployment, for example, it drew attention to the madness of three million homes lackrepair, while 500.000 construction workers were unemployed. Labour: a few days before the election and atcalled for a major increase in public investment, including transport. Sunday Times. housing and energy conservation, million, Labour 8.5 million, and the and in industry, especially in new Ben Ford 9%. Pat's vote was squeezed,

child benefits, increase pensions and spend more on education, social services and the NHS.

But its limitations were similar to those of the more recent manifestos of 2017 and 2019. It eloquently described the widening chasm between rich and poor, but it sought to eliminate inequality without eliminating the source of that inequality,

THE WITCH HUNT AGAINST MILITANT HAD ALREADY REGIIN REFORE ITS FIRST MPS WERE **ELECTED. WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE IN 1983?**

: Well-known Militant supporter Pat Wall should have won Bradford North in 1983 but for a vicious press campaign led by the Sunday Times, Just over a vear before the election, at the beginning of March 1982, Pat spoke in a university debate on the issue of socialism and the state.

Pat argued for real democracy, including ending the constitutional powers of the monarchy and the unelected positions of judges, and the full mobilisation of the labour movement to support the government moving on socialist lines. But, he warned, a capitalist class threatened with the loss of its power and privileges would view democracy differently. Indeed, one of Mrs Thatcher's 'liberal' ministers. Sir Ian Gilmour, had written in a book, five years earlier, that "Conservatives do not worship democracy... For them majority rule is a device... for Conservatives, therefore, democracy is a means to an end and not an end

Yet 'Marxism equals totalitarianism and violence' was the theme of the media reports, even though Pat had sought to warn that partial nationalisation, while not satisfying the problems facing the working class, could push the capitalist establishment towards sabotaging and eventually bringing down a radical and socialist government.

This was not an academic point. The debate occurred just over eight years after a murderous military coup in Chile toppled the elected socialist Allende government.

The vicious campaign against Pat included journalists camping outside his house, and letters being sent to his employer demanding he be sacked.

In the 1983 election the former local Labour MP, right winger Ben Ford, stood as an independent against him, and the right-wing SDP targeted Pat. Even 'left-wing' Labour leader Michael Foot spoke at a rally in Bradford tacked Pat using the same lies of the

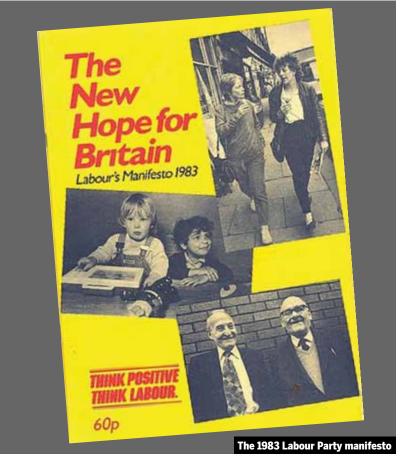
The SDP took 25% of the vote, and and he lost that election by 1,600 votes but won in 1987 with a 12% swing, one











bour's right was able to complete the expulsion of the five members of the Militant Editorial Board at the party conference at Brighton.

Although the expulsions of Peter Taaffe, Ted Grant, Lynn Walsh, Clare Doyle and Keith Dickinson were steamrollered through by right-wing union leaders, 80% of the constituency Labour Party delegates at the conference voted against, and the 'Militant Five' were given a standing

Unfortunately, that was not seen on the live TV coverage of the conference, as the national executive ordered the expulsions to be heard in a closed session. Even many of those who voted for expulsions did so in a mistaken attempt to 'get unity' and improve the image of the party' after the worst electoral defeat in its recent

WHAT WAS UNFOLDING IN LIVERPOOL?

It seems unfair to discuss 1983 in Liverpool in the context of one election result. But that result, the election of Terry Fields as MP for the Broadgreen constituency, was a product of a momentous class struggle unfolding in that city which reached its peak over the next couple of years.

As Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn noted in 'Liverpool, A City That Dared to Fight, Liverpool became "synonymous with militancy". "When visiting Indonesia in 1984. Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was greeted by demonstrating students chanting Liverpool! Liverpool! Liverpool!' and they weren't referring to the famous football team."

Liverpool's left-wing surge had been reflected by the selection by party membership of Militant supporters as prospective MPs: Tony Mulhearn in Toxteth, Terry Fields in Kirkdale: Terry Harrison in Edge Hill: and Derek Hatton in Wavertree. Though boundary changes were to leave Terry as the only Militant supporter standing, in the newly created Broadgreen constituency

Despite the Conservatives winning the 1983 general election with a landslide majority and Labour's support falling from its 1979 level, Terry won Broadgreen with a majority of 3,800!

The Broadgreen campaign evidenced the scale of the enthusiasm for socialist ideas in the election. A minimum of 200 canvassers were involved over weekends in the run-up to the election. On election day, 500 workers from Liverpool and other parts of the country worked in the constituency

The city had seen a major strike of 20,000 workers against privatisation of the council's refuse and street cleaning services. Liberal control of

In the post-election period, La-: council elections with Labour gain-: occupy much of our time in the ing 12 seats, including several won by Militant supporters.

22,000 more Liverpudlians voted Labour because of its programme of "no privatisation, a £2 rent cut, no spending cuts, a massive housing repairs programme, 6,000 new council houses, 4,000 new council jobs, and no rate rises to compensate for Tory-Liberal cuts!"

Until 1964, Liverpool could be described as a 'Tory city', mainly represented by Tory and Liberal MPs. In the 1983 general election, with the Tories winning a landslide nationally. there was not a single Tory MP in Liverpool for the first time in 100 years.

MILITANT'S TWO NEW MPS TOOK THEIR SEATS IN

Terry Fields' maiden speech in Parliament, on 24 June, reflected the bitterness that most workers on Merseyside felt for the Tories. He disdained the parliamentary pleasantries and the convention of an uncontroversial first speech (which for most MPs consisted of congratulating opposition speakers and wishing their retiring or defeated predecessor well).

Terry announced he was not there to appeal to the ruling class but to express the real feelings of working-class people against the Tory government and the system they represented, "Having listened to the cant and hypocrisy from the Conservative benches, it is difficult to keep my temper, let alone observe the proprieties of this place." (His speech is still well worth a read today and can be found at bit.ly/Terrymaidenspeech).

Terry ended: "The media and my political opponents during the election, in seeking to denigrate me and the socialism I stood for, made great play of the label 'militant'. Let me make my position clear. I wear the badge of a militant with honour, and do not forget that a militant is only a moderate who has got up off his knees. In time, the whole of the working class will arise from their knees, and you will not be laughing then."

My own maiden speech, on 8 July, was about youth and unemployment because "in the city of Coventry, once the richest working-class city in the country with two-thirds of the workforce in manufacturing industry, the prospects for our school leavers are now bleak. Only one in ten of those leaving the fifth form last summer have found work. In a city that was built on engineering, only 243 out of 5.000 who left school this summer have found apprenticeships."

Working with young workers on government training schemes - previously Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), and from 1983 Youth months ahead. Not least because the schemes had an appalling health and safety record.

In the previous three years, there were over 3,000 reported injuries and 17 fatalities on the YOP. Two more trainees died in the first two months of the YTS that year. We worked with several families in protests, organising meetings with ministers, lobbies and demonstrations.

WHY IS 1983 WORTH REVISITING TODAY?

1983 was just a harbinger of nine years of battles inside and outside parliament, for Terry and myself, Momentous struggles in Liverpool, in the miners' strike, against the rightward move of Labour and the witch hunt against Militant and other socialists, the Gulf War, the defeat of the poll tax and the resignation of Mrs Thatcher!

Labour's 1983 manifesto had radi cal policies that echoed in the 2017 and 2019 manifestos with Jeremy Corbyn as leader. There were the attacks and sustained character assassinations on the proponents of socialist policies, as we have seen again in more recent years.

Then, as now, there were thousands of activists trying to build a socialist alternative; then grouped around the Militant newspaper inside the Labour Party, today outside in the ranks of the Socialist Party.

Our opponents are still the same: a capitalist class determined to enrich its power and privileges at the expense of working people, and those layers currently at the top of the la bour and trade union movement who defend that system, rather than challenging it. The battles of 1983 are still with us today.

Dared to Fight by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn, £14.95



The First 30 Years by Peter Taaffe, £11.99

the Socialist Party

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Oppose suspension of PCS national campaign

PERSONAL CAPACITY

he union's National Executive Committee (NEC) met on 5 June to discuss the outcome from formal discussions with the Cabinet Office.

The Treasury Pay Remit has capped average pay rises for 2023-24 to 4.5% (or 5% if there is a focus on low-paid staff). The remit allows for individual departments and agencies to pay a non-consolidated one-off £1,500 in addition.

Our strike action has forced concessions from the government, but they are nowhere near enough.

It is not new money: departments are expected to come up with this money themselves. Not all are likely to be able to.

The Cabinet Office has outlined other concessions, including that no change to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS - that covers our redundancy rights) would be implemented before 2025, but that the consultation on cuts would continue.

Although the PCS website says the lump sum is "in recognition of cost of living pressures in 2022-23", no direct mention has been made of 2022-23 pay, nor of pensions.

There is no doubt that, in a preelection year, the Tory government would quite like to put the dispute in the civil service to rest. This is leverage we can use to benefit every civil servant in the UK, and to benefit the public services we deliver.

With none of our demands met. and the union far from being at the limit of the action we can take. there is no basis for resolution of our

However, following the meeting of the PCS NEC, it's clear that the leadership, under president Fran Heathcote and general secretary Mark Serwotka, has taken concrete steps to stand down the union's national

The majority 'Left Unity' group has



decided that planned reballots of key areas that missed the 50% turnout threshold in the recent national strike ballot, which were agreed by PCS conference in May, have been

The NEC has agreed that pay negotiations at departmental or agency level, that had been halted to force the government to negotiate nationally, can now take place if the departments sign up to pay the non-

According to the PCS website,

already-planned sectional strike action for this month will go ahead as

As a strategy, this fragments the strength of PCS. Suspending reballots tips the balance back in favour of the employer. It stalls any momentum built up by the action so far, by allowing delegated pay talks to begin on the basis only of the 4.5%-5% pay

This was not what activists and members signed up to fight for, in the debates and votes at May's conference, or in the 2022 and 2023

The NEC has stated that further talks will be held with the Cabinet Office at the end of June to consider progress in getting all areas to pay the non-consolidated £1,500 lump sum. The implication here is that if all areas get the £1,500 and pay talks over the pay remit of 4.5-5% go well, the campaign is over.

If only Mark Serwotka, Fran Heathcote and the NEC 'Left Unity' leaders hadn't waited three months to call national strike action!

Members and reps will be alarmed that the press release from the NEC is utterly vague on what happens next. It gives the real impression that the dispute could be concluded by a judgement of views at members meetings, rather than even a membership vote. Lay member control of the dispute and its progress must be a kev demand

The Broad Left Network, the socialist rank-and-file group in which the Socialist Party participates, does not believe it is the best that we can

We should reiterate our pay claim of 10% for 2022-23 and an aboveinflation increase for 2023-24. We should serve notice for a two-day national strike, with further dates of national strike action announced Reballots of areas that did not get over the threshold should go ahead. All ballots should include action short of strike action.

BLN has scheduled a recall conference of all our supporters on 1 July. If you are as determined as we are to make sure we fight on, and build a fighting, democratic trade union, led by socialist policies, then join BLN

union news



with the NSSN bulletin shopstewards.net

Get all the latest

TV review: 'Strike: Inside the Unions'

In the second and final episode of 'Strike: Inside the Unions,' we rejoin the ongoing struggle of workers in the strike wave. The first episode had us follow Mick Lynch of the transport workers union RMT, Pat Cullen of the nurses' RCN, and included some appearances from Unite's Sharon Graham. The second offering continues that trend, and also includes numerous GMB union reps fighting hard in Amazon warehouses and beyond.

Featured between the action shots of union leaders in action is footage of numerous strikes, demonstrations and protests. Unfortunately, these images are used purely for their imagery and with little time to elaborate

While it was great fun to pause : overwhelming lack of context.

was happening, or even to note the : Sunak appears on screen multiple demonstrations I had personally been on, I couldn't help but wonder why there was such a focus on the union leaders when really the strikes were about the struggles of workingclass people.

I'm extremely sceptical of the BBC at the best of times, so I went into this cautiously optimistic. I was very happy with the portrayal of Unite's Abelio London bus drivers and their monumental 18% pay rise, and the determination of the GMB's Coventry Amazon workers.

But the way the RMT and RCN disputes were presented left more questions than answers. Why had these much larger, fierce and protracted battles not been able to secure decisive victories for all involved? Throughout the episode there is an

A tired and dead-eved looking times to berate unions and workers for daring to stand up for themselves - of course failing to point out the

underhanded and disingenuous manoeuvres that he and his ministers have employed to cause the situation

Time is given over to sound bites and interviews discussing the horrors that the members of the public have been subjected to during the strikes, failing to acknowledge that these striking workers are also members of the public, being subjected to their own horrors by tyrannical

Ultimately, the fact that workers fighting back is being seen on our TV screens is a good thing. Workers feeling the squeeze themselves may find comfort watching it and even be gal-



Rail strikes continue: 'It's a big movement now'

HEATHER RAWLING REPORTS FROM LEICESTER

here was confidence and gritty determination on Aslef and RMT picket lines, helped by support from public. Rail union RMT struck on 2 June; train drivers' union Aslef on 31 May and 3 June.

RMT member Nigel said: "I can still see us being here at Christmas." An RMT guard said that passen gers, seeing his RMT badge, often comment that they support the

On Aslef picket lines, passengers were turning up having been sold tickets online that morning, despite Leicester station being completely shut. They were angry with the train company for selling the tickets and supported the strikers. Two of them bought a copy of the Socialist.

Aslef members were also prepared for a long battle, with both sides in the dispute digging in. There was a mood for coordination among the

ASLEF STRIKERS AT NEW STREET STATION SPOKE TO BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

At Birmingham New Street, one striking rail worker told us: "This strike isn't just about our pay and conditions now, but protecting jobs and conditions on the railway for years to come. I hate to think what things could be like in 30 years if we lose

Other strikers told us: "Right-wing news rags are trying to turn key work ers against each other, and use train drivers as a scapegoat for the Tories making a mess of the railways.

"People think this job is just pressing a button and could be automated. But less than half of this country's railway is electrified, and some lines still use Victorian signalling!

"Our union financially supports Labour, but Sir Keir Starmer doesn't want to support us!"

AN ASLEF MEMBER IN DEVON SPOKE TO **TOBIAS ROBSHAW**

"The media want to say it's all about pay, but it's about the working conditions that the union has fought for, for decades, that's the main reason we're here. The other reason is to stand up to this corrupt Tory government. That might not be the union's view, but it

"They want to make changes to our rostering process so it's done centrally by the company, instead of having our involvement, where every timetable change we can scrutinise the diagrams they give us, and check they match our terms and conditions such as maximum driving hours. We have to have scheduled breaks at certain times depending on the length of the job, that's a big one for us.

"We've not actually seen the fine detail, we get bits and pieces from the higher-ups in the union, but there was talk of overruling arrangements on monitoring our sickness. So that is a red line for us straight away.

"They offered us 4% pay rise for both years, so that straight away was a slap in the face as well. We've not had a pay rise in four years.

"Welsh Aslef negotiated a 20% rise over two years, plus RPI inflation in the third. Negotiating with Transport for Wales, they got a much better deal than we are getting with the Tory government in Westminster. "An important aspect for those on

strike is the mystery of what exactly is meant by 'general reforms'. Potentially that could mean they want to increase our working hours. Do they want to reduce our leave, or enforce more continuous driving time? "It's a big movement now, over the

last 12 months. It started off with the RMT, it's snowballed now, everyone's backing each other. I've been stood on picket lines for the BT guys, the post office; we get all sorts coming down to support us, students, there's

Why I'm going to **NSSN** conference

Solidarity and coordination never been

This was the first time in my 30+ years as an RMT member that we have had a national rail strike with all sectors of the railway industry in dispute. Not only against the companies nvolved, but with the Tory government, hell-bent on pushing through vith reforms to attack our terms and

more important

PAUL REILLY

During this last 12 months, I have been heavily involved in organising and campaigning, both on a personal level as a worker affected by the dispute, and also as an RMT representative, branch secretary and activist.

onditions, jobs and wages.

The NSSN was originally formed by he RMT back in 2006 when the late.

great Bob Crow was at the helm, with the aim of bringing together grassroots trade union activists and reps

from all industries and trade unions

to work together in support of each other's struggles. If this last year has shown us anything, it's that workers' solidarity and coordination has never been more important. By supporting each other and encouraging workers, most of whom have never been involved in industrial disputes in their lives never mind attending picket lines we have reinvigorated working-class unity and trade union activism, mak-

process. This is exactly why I will be attending this year's NSSN conference and why I'll be encouraging many other trade union activists from across the rail industry and from other indus tries to do the same

ing our movement stronger in the

Let's make this the biggest one yet!

See back page for NSSN



Nurses in Wales still striking for decent pay





BETH WEBSTER

The nurses' strikes continue in Wales. As many as 40 were on our picket line at University Hospital Wales, in Cardiff. Public support has been excellent from passing traffic.

Staff feel the turnout on the nicket line has been affected by the acceptance of deals by other unions and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) leadership's last-minute cancellation of the most recent strike davs.

Pat Cullen, RCN general secretary, visited on 6 June.

the fight and not giving up, despite having recommended acceptance of a below-inflaion deal in England! Plaid Cymru MS's (Mem-

bers of the Welsh parliament) visited too - they spoke of increasing nurses' pay but put forward no real strategy of how to force the Labour ad ministration to pay up. In fact Plaid are in a 'cooperation agreement' with Labour in the Senedd.

We had a good response inviting strikers to come with us to the NSSN conference in London on 24 June. The strike continues on 7 June, and 12-

Thousands of students take universities to court

Build a mass struggle for fully funded free education

SOCIALIST STUDENTS NATIONAL ORGANISER

Nearly 1,000 students at University College London have brought a legal group claim against the university to the high court. They are demand ing compensation for disruption to teaching on the campus owing to the Covid pandemic and ongoing university strike action.

Students are angry at the state of further education with crammed lecture theatres, and overworked and underpaid staff. And at the end of it all, thousands of pounds worth of debt. A small expression of that anger is the 100,000 students reported to have registered their interest to make similar claims at other universities. The organisation making the legal challenge, Student Group Claim, estimates students could get as much as £5,000 compensation. If the claim is successful, demand will grow for all students to be compen-

Socialist Students backs the calls

funded in full, and fights for free i ions and democratically elected education and a cancellation of student debt. We fight for a fully publicly funded university education for all those who want to access it.

Students have faced disruption to their education over the last period owing to university workers taking industrial action. This disruption is not the responsibility of striking workers, but of university managements and the Tories who have carried through vicious attacks to the pay and conditions of university workers. And therefore to the quality

of education students receive. Faced with paying out large sums in compensation, university bosses, some paid as much as £714,000 a year, will say it is unaffordable. To those bosses who threaten course closures, pay cuts, pension attacks or administration, we say: 'Open the books!' Let us see the real state of : our universities' finances by opening

for students' tuition fees to be re-: them up to inspection by trade unworker and student representatives.

A collective fight of university workers and students is needed to win full funding from the weak and divided Tory government. Demands must also be put on an incoming Labour government to return to its 2019 manifesto pledge promising free The tuition fee funding model has

spelt disaster for students and university staff alike. Socialist Students calls for a mass struggle to win free education - the scrapping of fees, introduction of living grants available for all students, and the cancellation of all student debt. We also call for the democratic running of our universities and campuses by elected bodies of campus trade unions, students and wider society. We would be able to collectively make decisions about how the higher education system dents, staff and us all, not in the interests of the Tories and the bosses.



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND South West 2_387 1_800 Wales 2.502 2.300 Eastern 1.048 1.200 thern & SE 1,289 2,350 London 2,428 4,600 Yorkshire 1.208 2.550 353 750 Fast Midlands 861 1 850 984 2.600 Other 1.116 3.850 TOTAL 14.845 25.000

Donate to the fight for a socialist world

Capitalism gives you thousands of reasons for feeling down and making you feel like you can't change a thing. But we in the Socialist Party have a programme and ideas to change the world we live in. Everyone reading the Socialist can play help play a role in the socialist transformation of society. So that instead of struggling to survive, we could all live to our full

There is enough wealth to solve the many crises facing working-class and young people, but that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few super-rich capitalists and big businesses - whose profits have been ncreasing.

We say take the wealth off the super-rich, to use the resources as part of a plan to provide jobs, homes and services for all. Bring these big businesses into public ownership to be run democratically under workers' control and management.

Workers are fighting back. We are seeing a new layer of workers taking their first strike action. And fresh campaigners are fighting on issues including ending the housing crisis, saving the NHS, for free education and more funding for our vital

stand in solidarity with all those; the design and creation of the nev

taking strike action and involved: system, and the migration of our data in the struggle to improve our living standards. We have carried articles written by workers involved in numerous struggles. Socialist Party members have taken part in rallies protests and demonstrations for an inflation-proof pay rise for all.

Every quarter the Socialist Party has a target to raise £25,000 so that we have the tools to produce our weekly paper, monthly in-depth Marxist analysis in the Socialism Today magazine, and materials such as leaflets and pamphlets to help take the ideas of socialism to a broader audience. The current quarter ends

We have so far raised £15,932, from donations we have received through public activities and fundraising At the Socialist Party's recent South West conference, £4,310 was raised during the finance appeal, and Yorkshire regional conference raised £1,290.

Our members and supporters are based in the working class, and the donations we receive are a financial sacrifice. We want to thank all for the donations we have received.

We also want to thank all those that have contributed towards the £15,000 IT Upgrade Appeal. This ensures that the Socialist Party will have the necessary funds to upgrade The Socialist Party is proud to : the IT at the national headquarters,

from the old system to the new. (see 'Donate to help our party play its role in the fight for socialism' at socialist



Visit socialistparty.org.uk/ donate or scan the OR code and put 'IT upgrade appeal' in the comment box when you

Secretary of State gives nod for Merseyside toxic medical waste incinerator

8-14 June 2023

STOP THE SIMONSWOOD INCINERATOR CAMPAIGN AND SOCIALIST PARTY

Secretary of State Michael Gove has given the green light for the Simonswood medical waste incinerator in spite of huge local opposition.

Stop the Simonswood incinerator campaign group has urged a judicial review regarding the needless approval of a medical waste incinerator. This incinerator will spew out toxic substances that affect the lives of residents in a ten-mile radius Similar plants have seen an increase in respiratory problems, cancers and environmental issues in the sur rounding area. (see 'Campaigners to seek judicial review in fight against Lancashire incinerator' on socialist party.org.uk)

Nobody in the immediate vicinity of the plant wants or supports this plant being built Local residents supported the anti-incinerator campaign, descending on Kirkby for meetings, leafleting and marches.

The towns of Kirkby, Melling, Bickerstaff, Aughton and Rainford rallied against the planning application, only for Lancashire County Council planning committee to ultimately approve it. After multiple delays we were told that members of the public would not be able to attend or express disagreement at the planning

Eventually the committee did take place, but the campaign was limited to only 15 objections to the plans The committee approved the incinerator with a vote of four to three with two abstentions.

Not being deterred, Stop the Simonswood Campaign wrote to the Secretary of State to "call-in" the decision because the objections to i are so strong.

We have waited for half a year for the news to come through that the Secretary has accepted the application process as reasonable and allowed the council to continue with the process

This was a huge disappointment for the campaign but we will fight on. Next steps could include a judicial review by neighbouring council, Knowslev.

The fight continues.





Yorkshire conference brimming with confidence

The Socialist Party regional conference for Yorkshire and the Humber, was hosted in Sheffield on Saturday 3 June. 65 people attended from across

Socialist Party general secretary Hannah Sell kick-started the day with an invigorating speech introducing a discussion on perspectives for Britain. The talk covered the current state of the British economy and how we as socialists should prepare and organise ourselves against a seemingly inevitable Starmer-led

The discussion heard contributions which highlighted how food banks in the region are seeing

shortages of stock and demands for local councils to focus on food provisions for struggling communities.

We also heard various members report the activity they are undertaking in their respective trade unions. to encourage rank-and-file workers to place pressure on union leaders to continue battling for better pay and working conditions. This included mobilising grassroots campaigns like

NHS Workers Say No. Three workshops were held in the afternoon on recruiting people to the Socialist Party, running effective campaign stalls, and on the fight for a new mass workers' party. All three workshops helped attendees in confidence and welcomed suggestions on how to campaign effectively.

Regional secretary Iain Dalton

on building the Socialist Party in the region. We discussed campaigning A fantastic amongst young people and the stuengaging dent movement in preparation for universities reopening in September event with And how branches can best prioritise lots to learn their work to win more people to the

Party

Paul.

branches

and advice The fighting fund appeal raised £1290.70 and 21 members agreed to to take back ncrease their membership subs to building The conference comes after a year of growth for branches within the re our Socialist gion and established a clear strategy

for the vear ahead.

Socialist Party's ideas.



rounded off the day with a discussion

Why I joined the Socialist Party

RYAN LYDDALL

hadn't been involved in any political groups before joining the Socialist Party. My voting history was limited, sticking to Labour as they seemed like the best option. Everything changed during lockdown, when I immersed myself in political theory, fuelled by my passion for philosophy and a book on politics gifted to me by my A-level

Over the following years, my burgeoning interest evolved into an allconsuming obsession. All I would ead were books exploring leftist theories. It took a while before I could articulate my political position, I knew I was some sort of leftist but couldn't get more specific.

As my confidence grew, I began engaging in conversations with those around me. Friends, family - anyone who would listen. But despite these discussions, I battled with a sense of helplessness. My knowledge of the system felt like a burden, not a gift. I understood

felt powerless to effect meaningful

Things began to change this January. An Instagram story promoting an emergency protest organised by the Enough is Enough campaign caught my attention. Finally, I found myself presented with an opportunity to make some sort of contribution to a greater cause.

The next week I journeyed into London and upon arrival was hit with an initial wave of disappoint-

But, as the crowd grew my disappointment was replaced with hope.

It was during this protest I encountered a stall promoting the Socialist Party's mission to replace capitalism with a fairer system. I approached the man behind the stall and asked him some questions. A few minutes later. I had given my contact information so that someone from a local branch could contact me.

True to his word, I received a call the following week from a local So-



that I met him in person as I attended my first meeting. Being in a room full of like-minded individuals with a shared goal of ending capitalism was an incredible experience that left an indelible mark on me. At the end of the meeting. I eagerly enquired about properly becoming a member

some questions, and the week after

and a couple days later. I was signed

Witnessing the growth of the party, and the impact of our collective efforts, has been inspiring. I take pride in the role I've played thus far. The weight of despair I carried for years, disheartened by the state of the world, has been replaced by confidence that the working clas can change society. Since January I've found myself surrounded by ar extraordinary community of like-minded individuals and engaged in endeavours I never thought mysel



capable of.

INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONAL socialistparty.org.uk 8-14 June 2023 8-14 June 2023 the **Socialist** socialistparty.org.uk

programme - with demands on pay,

housing, energy bills and food prices

- and sinking roots in working-class

The biggest left-wing alliance in

this election was the Labour and

Freedom alliance, which is made up

of the pro-Kurdish HDP and the new-

ly formed Workers' Party of Turkey

(TIP). While the HDP's vote share has

slightly decreased, TIP won almost a

million votes and gained four seats in

the first elections in which they stood

The top-down approach of the

leadership of the HDP and the Party

their uncritical support for the main

pro-capitalist opposition candidate,

and the right-wing shift in their pro-

support for the HDP. The HDP and

gramme all led to less enthusiastic

the YSP programmes do not go be-

yond simply calling for economic

After the elections, the former,

justice and a democratic republic.

jailed leader of the HDP, Demir

tas, correctly criticised the current

leadership for not standing in the

first round of presidential elections

and for the badly organised election

The Committee for a Workers' In-

ternational (CWI) argued that there

had to be discussions on the left for

there to be an independent working-

class stand on a socialist programme

In our pre-election article we said:

"It is unfortunate that the left did not

put forward a presidential candidate

in the first round. Standing in the

first round does not let Erdogan win

unless he gets more than 50% of the

votes. But by standing, the left would

have put forward a working-class

alternative and appeal to the broad

sections of the working class on the

basis of a socialist programme. Such

a programme could have appealed

to some working-class people who

are thinking of voting for Erdogan

"On the basis of an energetic cam-

paign in the trade unions and local

communities, the candidate could

have got a significant vote. Rais-

alisation of energy companies, fully

funded inflation-proof pay rises and

a mass programme of social hous-

ing class demands, such as nation-

because they have no faith in the Na-

tion Alliance.

in the presidential elections.

campaign.

of Greens and Left Future (YSP)

under their own name.

TURKEY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

ERDOGAN RETAINS POWER IN NARROW VICTORY BUT CRISIS WILL CONTINUE

n the presidential run-off election on 28 May, the incumbent Recep Tayvin Erdogan was re-elected as Turkey's president, beating his opponent from the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP) Kemal Kilicdaroglu by less than three million votes in a very narrow election

The results show that Turkey remains a highly polarised country, with almost half of the country voting for Erdogan, and the other half voting against him.

This election, and also the parliamentary election held on 14 May. took place amid an historic cost-ofliving crisis, where inflation is predicted to be over 120%, and following two devastating earthquakes which struck Turkey earlier in the year, killing over 50,000 people and displacing millions of people from their homes.

The parliamentary election was a breakthrough for the right-wing, as Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) electoral alliance gained an overall majority. Even though the self-proclaimed social democratic CHP increased its number of seats compared to the previous election, 39 of these seats were allocated to the right-wing parties in CHP's electoral coalition, the Nation Alliance, This means that the majority of the Turkish parliament will be made up of right-wing and far-right parties.

The results, inevitably, will temporarily have a demoralising effect on millions of working-class and young people who desperately wanted Erdogan to go, and hoped that a new government would bring an end to the economic crisis. They are fed up with the rapidly deteriorating living standards, attacks on democratic rights, and the vile language used by Erdogan and other leading AKP members.

Many of the people who voted against Erdogan will now be asking why. after all the problems exacerbated by Erdogan's rule, does he manage to win, and why the opposition failed to oust him, once

the working class and oppressed peoples against capitalism, and to fight for a There is no doubt that Erdogan, having ruled Turkey for two decades and strengthened his grip over the Turkish state machine and bureaucracy, used all the resources at his disposal to protect his electoral base. Massive amounts of money and resources were spent to prop up his campaign, and the majority of the media is under his control.

Populist policies, including a 40% wage increase for civil servants, early retirement for some workers and free gas for every household for a month.



as well as other benefits, helped al- : to have an independent foreign polleviate some of the effects of the eco- : icy under Erdogan's rule. This was nomic crisis faced by many Erdogan supporters, especially in rural areas where the crisis is less acute compared to big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara.

Despite the widening gap between the rich and the poor over the last 20 years, the AKP is still very well organised in working-class neighbourhoods through networks of patronage.

The Committee for a Workers'

International (CWI) is the internationa

socialist organisation which the Socialist

socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to. The CWI is organised in

countries across the planet. We work to unite

socialistworld.net

This is not only the case during the election period but also outside this period, in order to shore up its social base.

By posing as a Turkish nationalist. he resorted to divide-and-rule tactics and spurred on anti-Kurdish sentiments,

while continuing to repress Kurdish people during the election campaign. He especially targeted the jailed ex-leader of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), Selehattin Demirtas, many times in his speeches. After the second-round elections, he reiterated that Demirtas will never be released from prison as long as he is in charge.

Erdogan also posed himself as a 'world leader' as Turkey is perceived : After failing to secure enough

also combined with homophobic and sexist language.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan PHOTO: UNAOC/CC

The main election campaign against Erdogan was led by the CHP. They led the Nation Alliance electoral coalition and invited five right-wing parties, including the parties formed by a former prime minister and a finance minister who both served under Erdogan's rule.

Clearly, cooperating with AKP-lite parties failed to win significant votes for Kilicdaroglu or the CHP. What brought these different parties together was their common motivation to defend the interests of big business against the increasingly erratic and unpredictable rule of Erdogan.

Simply put, their whole electoral strategy was based on saying 'we are not Erdogan' and they hoped to win support from disgruntled layers in the society. The main pledges of this alliance was to return to parliamentary democracy and meritocracy in government institutions.

This was combined with an overly optimistic campaign that Erdogan would lose these elections, and enormous pressure was put on all other forces, in particular left forces, not to stand in the presidential (and even in the parliamentary elections).

Alliance took an even more rightwing turn and tried to exploit the anti-immigration sentiments in Turkey, a country that hosts the world's biggest refugee population. The main message of Kilicdaroglu was to deport all migrants from Turkey. It even made a pact with a far-right populist, Umit Ozdag, with the hope that this would secure an election victory in the second round. This politician was spreading rumours about refugees in the aftermath of the earthquake while teams were still trying to rescue people from the rubble.

There has been much debate on why the CHP has lost again. Some argue that it put forward the wrong candidate in the presidential elections. However, it was not an issue of who was standing but on what programme and with what strategy. The Nation Alliance failed to put forward a convincing programme that could potentially get support from people who voted for Erdogan. Economic issues and the ongoing problems in the earthquake-hit areas, in the main, were left out in their campaigns.

Socialist programme needed

This election was an opportunity for left-wing parties, including those who already have seats in the parliament, and those who do not to enthuse the working class and young people by raising a socialist

votes in the first round, the Nation

campaigned for him. reflected the existing mood.

ing could have had an electrifying However, without any democratic discussion within the workers' movement, the leaderships of the HDP and the TIP have succumbed to the lesser-evilism mood in society. In the case of the TIP, not only did it gave uncritical support for Kilicdaroglu while he was pledging to deport all migrants in Turkey, it actively Had it maintained an independ-

ent socialist position, it could have benefited from the anger that developed among CHP supporters after the elections and won them over to socialist ideas. Instead, they simply

Despite these important ideological and strategic mistakes, it is positive that the TIP was able to, albeit in a limited way, popularise socialist ideas among a new generation. But unless it puts forward a rounded-out socialist programme and organises and builds in working-class districts, they too could lose their popularity

HDP, the TIP and other left-wing; ards of the majority

organisations such as the Labour Party (EMEP) were able to come together, despite the occasional sectarian remarks by some in the alliance. Steps must be taken to strengthen and extend the Labour and Freedom Alliance and democratic discussions need to be organised with mass participation from the rank-and-file about the structure of the alliance and the programme it will need raise

in this period

The CWI would argue that such an alliance should be transformed into a genuine left front, with a federal structure and a group for workers who do not have any political affiliations, and boldly raise class demands on pay, housing, democratic rights and so on, as well as raising demands on socialist nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management. Such a front should also raise democratic demands, in a

Not a stable government

Far from signalling a return to a stable equilibrium, Erdogan's victory will likely deepen the crisis for Turkish capitalism and it will not mean any improvement in the living standards for the working class.

Foreign currency reserves have been severely depleted to prop up the Turkish lira and finance the current account deficits. The cost to insure defaults has gone up. After the elections, the Turkish currency depreciated further. One Turkish lira is now worth around US\$21.

Even though Erdogan appointed Mehmet Simsek, a former finance minister who is well regarded by for eign investors, as the new finance minister to restore the investors trust in the Turkish economy, the economic troubles will continue Simsek pledges to return to 'rational' orthodox economic policies. What he means is that he is going to implement austerity and further attacks on the working class, including the pensioners.

The new government will also be likely to stoke the national question. The HDP entered these elections under massive state repression, while their democratically elected mayors and politicians have been debarred from office or even imprisoned. Giv en the predominance of right-wing and far-right parties in the Turkish parliament, there will be questioning amongst the Kurdish people and within the Kurdish movement about what programme and strategy is needed to fight for democratic rights.

The left needs to defend the national and democratic rights of the Kurds, including the right to self-determination. The fight for democratic rights, moreover, must be combined with the fight for socialism.

Although there are still low levels of industrial struggles, at some stage the working class in Turkey - with its rich traditions of struggle and social ism - will stamp its authority on these events. A vital task in this period is rebuilding the organisations of the working class, including the trade unions, in the face of further attacks. and to politically arm the working class. It is on the basis of an independ

ent working-class movement, with a socialist programme, that we can get rid of the likes of Erdogan and begin to transform society along socialist It was also positive that the ilines, to transform the living stand-



ridden system based on the exploitation of the majority of the world's population by a small, superrich 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 workingclass 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 vealth out of the hands of the super-rich and is democratically run by workingclass 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

world. Our demands include

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

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 democration 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

 Replace universal credit and the nunitive 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 socia care and childcare facilities into publi

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 eve 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.

Prioritising major research and

and nuclear power with renewable

energy, and ending the problems of

are designed to 'wear out' and be

replaced - and unrecycled waste.

Nationalisation of the energy

control and management, with

loss of jobs, pay or conditions.

early obsolescence - where products

companies, under democratic workers

compensation paid only on the basis of

proven need, in order to carry out a major

switch to clean, green energy, without any

A democratically planned, massively

expanded, free to use, publicly owned

transport system, as part of an overall

plan against environmental pollution.

insulation and energy transition plan for

democratic public ownership. For a food

workers' control to ensure that standards

are set by consumers, small farmers, and

For a major, publicly funded,

Agribusiness to be taken into

processing and retail industry under

existing housing stock.

investment into replacing fossil fuels

billionaire owners of the media. For the The right to a safe secure home for nationalisation of newspaper printing all. For the mass building of genuinely facilities, radio, TV and social media affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutra platforms. Access to these facilities should council housing. For rent controls that cap be under democratic control, with political the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should parties' coverage being allocated in be made by elected bodies of tenants, proportion to the popular vote at elections housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise

For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people the privately owned large building and activists from workplaces, and companies, land banks and estates community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to

the pro-big business parties.

15

all workers involved in the production

For united working-class struggle to

gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all

other forms of prejudice and oppression.

Repeal the anti-trade union laws

and all others that trample over civi

liberties. For the right to protest and

to strike! End police harassment. For

the police to be accountable to local

• 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

oversight of emergency funding

democratic community control and

resources. No to racist immigration laws.

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,

For proportional representation and the

and to only receive a worker's wage.

For the right of nations to self-

determination. For an independent

socialist Scotland and for a socialist

confederation of Wales, England.

Oppose the dictatorship of the

Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist

right to vote at 16.

Scotland and Ireland.

Expand democracy. For the abolition

committees, made up of democratically

elected representatives of trade unions.

local community organisations and local

end discrimination on the grounds of race.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

authorities.

processing, distribution and retail of food.

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 to 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

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!



8-14 June 2023 Militar Issue 1230

ORGANISE TO DEFEAT TORY ANTI-UNION LAWS nationalshopstewardsn

11am – 4.30pm, 24 June at Conway Hall, London. Registration fee £6

Confirmed speakers so far: NIPSA General Secretary Carmel Gates, BFAWU General Secretary Sarah Woolley, POA General Secretary Steve Gillan, NAPO National Official Annoesjka Valent, GMB Officer Gary Palmer from the victorious #GMBThree

n 21 June it will have been a year since the first national rail strike by RMT members took the already-developing strike wave to the next level. Twelve months on and over 3 million working days have been lost to strikes, according to the government's own figures.

The strike wave has transformed things. Many workers, especially younger workers who have never seen strikes on this scale, are seeing for the first time a means to fight back and it terrifies the Tories.

2016's set of anti-trade union laws were designed to make nationwide strike action more difficult, some hesitant trade union leaders said near-impossible. But in their hundreds of thousands, rank-and-file union members have voted for strikes - smashing through the 50% turnout thresholds. Picket lines, supposedly limited by law to six people, in many cases have swelled to scores and hundreds.

The latest, very serious attack, Rishi Sunak's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, is another attempt by a desperate and divided Tory government to stop strikes. The law, which in a matter of weeks will be rubber stamped by the king, gives employers the power to serve a 'work notice' to identify people required to work to achieve a 'minimum level of service'. Failure to comply by a trade union or worker removes existing protections from being sued for damages or dismissal.

These laws can be resisted and defeated. There is no better time for rank-and-file trade union activists to get together, get organised and develop a fighting strategy to beat back the Tories. This year's National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference comes at a crucial time. Join the discussion in London on 24 June.

• In the pages of the Socialist, workers and activists say why they are coming to this year's NSSN conference. RMT p11 - UCU p4-5 -: Amazon (GMB) p7

