

Starmer's Labour won't fight for us Build a new mass workers' party

Come to the National Shop Stewards Network conference 11am – 4.30pm, 24 June at Conway Hall, London Registration fee £6

WHY I'M GOING TO THE NSSN CONFERENCE >>> p6 Q&A: TORY STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL) BILL >>> p4

the **Socialist**

Labour's climate betrayal the Socialist

DAVE MURRAY FASTERN REGION SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY

grim reading.

So bond traders and global inves-

tors cheered to learn that Labour's

shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves,

decided that it is now Labour policy to ignore these warnings. Reeves

has abandoned a 2021 pledge to

invest £28 billion per year in green

projects from year one of a Labour

It was already a retreat from Jer-

emy Corbyn's 2019 manifesto. That

pledged a £250 billion green trans-

formation fund. It also included a

commitment to a publicly owned na-

tional grid, and for at least the supply

arms of the big six energy companies

to be brought into public ownership.

Warnings Incredibly, Reeves describes the de-

cision as a refusal to be reckless. This

in the teeth of warnings from the cli-

mate report that failure to take timely

action will result in "compound and

cascading risks" of "irreversible and abrupt changes" to the systems that

sustain life for billions of humans. In

the UK alone, the daily death toll due

to the July 2022 heatwave was 253

The Labour Party has bowed its

knee to the vulture capitalists of the

global financial sector, who hold 30%

manager of Allianz Global Investors,

government.

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Militan

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

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

borrowing risks another gilt meltdown". This is a mealy-mouthed way of saying that, if a UK government atarch's Intergovernmental tempts to use its position as an issuer Panel on Climate Change of debt and currency to protect peo-(IPCC) report made for ple from climate change, the market makers and financial predators will "Finance flows fall short of the levels unleash their weapons of mass deneeded to meet climate goals." struction and bring it to heel.

As Liz Truss last year, John Major in 1992 and Jim Callaghan in 1976 found out, these financial terrorists are quite prepared to execute their hostages. Who are their hostages? We are.

The £28 billion of green investments would not be enough. According to the Committee on Climate Change, up to 2% of UK GDP would be needed to achieve net zero by 2050 - over £60 billion.

Nationalise

If the working class was in charge of the financial system - through nationalisation of the banks and the institution of capital controls - all this would be possible.

Global climate catastrophe means millions of deaths through famine, plagues and war, which would come in its train. The climate report says massive gains in quality of life are available as part of an equitable programme of adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

"There is sufficient global capital to close the global investment gaps," it says, "but there are barriers to redirect capital to climate actions". The UK's Labour Party is clearly one of them.





'Last Corbynista in power' blocked from standing for Labour

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

among over-65s.

of UK government debt.

TYNE AND WEAR SOCIALIST PARTY

Described as the 'last Corbynista in power', Jamie Driscoll is currently the North of Tyne mayor. He has been blocked by Keir Starmer's Labour Party from being longlisted as a Labour candidate for the new combined North East mayor.

This anti-democratic move had been widely expected. Nonetheless, it still has shocked and angered many in our region and beyond. Right-wing Labour politicians have been wheeled out to try to justify their spurious grounds for blocking Driscoll.

Ken Loach

Driscoll's exclusion has been linked to an on-stage appearance with leftwing film director Ken Loach. Some of his films are set in the north east, including 'I, Daniel Blake'.

Ken Loach is held in high regard. Many are bemused that there is a problem with Driscoll attending such an event.

Starmer's lackeys insinuate Ken Loach has been expelled from the Labour Party because of his views on antisemitism. But Ken Loach wasn't expelled for antisemitism. He was expelled as part of a purge of Jeremy Corbyn supporters.

Unite, currently Labour's biggest union donor, has condemned the move, alongside the Fire Brigades Union and others. Sharon Graham, Unite general secretary, said: "What is emerging from Labour is a pattern of behaviour to literally take out any MP or mayor who backs key manifesto demands on the renationalisation of energy, action on rampant profiteering, and investment in UK steel".

Starmer's Labour

The Labour Party is now firmly back in the hands of the right wing, having sharply veered away from Corbyn's pro-worker policies. There is no room for the left in Starmer's Labour Party.

On Twitter, it has been reported there has been a mass walkout from the Newcastle Labour Party nomination meeting. That's good, so long as they don't walk straight back in when none of this is resolved.

The Socialist Party says this event shows the need to build a new mass workers' party. Driscoll should stand as a mayoral candidate outside the Labour Party, and as part of workers list with Jeremy Corbyn and others in the next general election.



The starting point of their programme could be Corbyn's 2019 manifesto and refusing to implement Tory cuts. The unions who have denounced Labour for blocking Driscoll could look towards financing such candidates.

Any move in this direction would have the potential to light up the sky, acting as a focus for workers and young people who are fed up with the Tories, and increasingly disillusioned with Starmer's Labour

socialistparty.org.uk

BORIS JOHNSON RESIGNATION RE-ESCALATES TORY CIVIL WAR

Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

nite or die" because our party is facing an "existential threat", Rishi Sunak warned the Tories nine

months ago when he first became their leader and therefore - without the electorate being given any say in the matter - prime minister. Compared to the open warfare of the previous months, Sunak did oversee a brief lull in inter-Tory hostilities. But that short period is now a distant memory, and dying, if not immediately, is a far more likely perspective for the Tories than uniting. This should give confidence to all workers that this Tory government can be defeated.

Boris Johnson, prime minister just nine months ago, is no longer even a Tory MP. He resigned with showers of invective against the supposed "witch hunt in revenge for Brexit" by the "kangaroo court" of the Tory-majority Parliamentary Privileges Committee. Its report was clearly going to recommend that he be suspended from parliament for more than ten days, opening the likelihood of a recall petition and Johnson facing a by-election.

Johnson vs Sunak

Most of Johnson's letter, however, was aimed not at the Privileges Committee but Sunak and his cabinet for not being "a properly Conservative government". He has followed up with a broadside against Sunak for "talking rubbish" over just how many of Johnson's cronies should be rewarded for their crimes with a sinecure in the House of Lords. On the other side, Tory MPs have laid into Johnson, accusing him of "mutiny" and demanding he "shut up and go away".

Meanwhile Johnson's resignation - along with two of his closest allies - has left the Tory Party with three parliamentary by-elections and the possibility, given the party's dire poll ratings, that they could lose all of them. The Tories are busy tearing each other to shreds, fighting over who is to blame for the mess they are in, and starting to position themselves for the splits and realignments that will certainly take place beyond the general election, and maybe before.

Every one of the combatants in this war bears responsibility for the crimes of the Tories over the last thirteen years. Johnson's goose was finally cooked by the mass disgust over his partying while the country was in lockdown, and his blatant lies about it. It is not only the Johnson wing of



the Tories, however, that faces public fury for their crimes during the pandemic - from handing out cash to companies run by their mates, to allowing the virus to lay waste to care homes. It is not a coincidence that Johnson made a show of publicly handing over WhatsApp messages to the Covid Inquiry that the Cabinet Office had refused to release: he was deliberately highlighting Sunak's fear of what would come out, including over his 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme.

At root, the Tories growing disintegration is a result of the deep and growing crisis of ailing British capitalism. The result is misery for the big majority of the population and growing hatred of this government. Spending on consumer-facing services is currently 10% below pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a brutal fall in living standards. The Office for Budget Responsibility is now predicting that real household income per head will still be below pre-pandemic levels in 2027-28.

Inflation is the highest of any developed economy except Turkey. The mortgage market is already in turmoil and the value of UK government debt (gilts) this week fell lower than during the Truss fiasco. Meanwhile, the NHS is stretched beyond breaking point. Clearly, Sunak intends the general election to take place on or probably after the May 2024 local elections. Despite his intentions, however, it is not impossible that

coming events could force him to go : PHOTO: NUMBER 10/CC earlier.

It is this reality that will motivate the majority to vote the Tories out of office at the next election, rather than the mantra of 'fiscal responsibility' (in reality doing the bidding of the finance markets) being spouted by the latest incarnation of New Labour. While most of those who vote Labour will be doing so without any enthusiasm, it is a different story for the capitalist elite. The majority of them are now firmly of the view that Starmer's New Labour will be better able to defend the interests of British capitalism than their historic party, the Tories.

Johnson and his allies' Trumpesque right-populist tub thumping damages the institutions of British capitalism without any thought for the consequences for their system. Johnson's attempt to reward his mates with peerages, and the resulting row, has further undermined the authority of the unelected House of Lords, which for the capitalist class is an important tool which could be used to try and block a future democratically elected socialist government.

Tory MP, and previous Tory Chair, Jake Berry tweeted in response to Johnson's resignation: "You voted for Brexit - the establishment blocked it. You voted for @BorisJohnson - the establishment has forced him out. Who is in charge here... The voters or the blob?" By 'the blob' the Johnsonites mean the unelected civil service, another vital tool for the capitalist class in attempting to block a future left government, which Johnson and co. openly undermine.

Of course, Berry is also correct to say that the capitalist establishment want rid of Johnson, because he is such an extremely unreliable representative of their interests. But nor is Sunak, atop a warring and increasingly demoralised parliamentary party, able to consistently put the wider interests of the capitalist system ahead of the sectional concerns of the Tory Party. While he brought a few months of relative calm, he has also been prepared, for example, to risk the Northern Ireland Protocol, and more broadly greater coopera-tion with the EU, by pushing ahead with his government's racist and repressive 'small boats' legislation, which is in conflict with the European Court of Human Rights. He is doing so in order to pacify his own backbenches and in the hope of winning a few more votes.

While no amount of racist rhetoric will prevent electoral disaster for the Tories, it can have an effect on increasing racism. It is clear that an incoming Starmer government will face a right-populist opposition party, possibly more than one. Nigel Farage is already claiming he is in 'talks' with Johnson. No doubt Johnson prefers to dream of a future comeback as Tory leader than bother with the 'small fry' of the Reform Party or its ilk. Whatever happens, there will still be many right-populists inside the parliamentary Tory party after the general election.

Starmer's Labour

The bosses' newspaper, the Financial Times, recently ran a three-part series of articles praising Starmer's Labour and emphasising how thoroughly he had "consolidated control by sidelining the hard left and taking over party machinery". The final part of the trilogy, however, warned that, unlike Blair in 1997, Starmer would face "a mess" of "high-debt, disappointing growth and struggling public services". Clearly the Financial Times trusts Starmer to act in the interests of their class when dealing with this mess. Conversely, we can be confident he will not act in the interests of our class: the working-class majority. As discontent at Starmer's austerity politics grows under the next government, the populist right will try to make gains.

What is needed to cut across that is for the working class to build its own party, with a socialist programme that fights against racism and in defence of the whole of the working class.

Just four years ago, in 2019, the capitalist elite united behind Johnson putting aside their doubts about him - in order to defeat Jeremy Corbyn and his anti-austerity programme. Four years on, and both Corbyn and Johnson are out of their parliamentary parties. The capitalist class have found a way out of their crisis of political representation, created by the meltdown of their traditional party, by turning to Starmer's New Labour, with its left wing driven out.

That leaves the working class with no political voice and it is urgent that begins to change. A workers' list in the general election, with candidates from across the trade unions that have been involved in strike action, would be an important first step to prepare for what is to come.

The Tories are busy tearing each other to shreds, fighting over who is to

who is to blame for the mess they are in 3

the Socialist

Q&A: Tory Strikes (Minimum Service Level) Bill, and how to fight it

The Tories are bringing in a bill which could force unions and striking workers to implement a 'minimum service level' during industrial action. We spoke to **Rob Williams**, Socialist Party industrial organiser, about what the bill means and how we fight it.

WHAT DOES MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL ACTUALLY MEAN, AND WHAT NEW POWERS WILL THE LAW GIVE THE GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYERS?

The Tories are trying to argue that it will ensure that, in the sectors that they've defined, there will be a minimum level of workers in a workplace during strike action, despite the fact that unions have jumped through the hoops of the most undemocratic and restrictive anti-union legislation in Western Europe already.

They are now trying to argue that it's about service to the public, but actually it's a very serious attack on trade union rights. It means a government minister can use executive powers to set an arbitrary minimum service level in an attempt to undermine strikes.

Employers will be able to issue work notices, detailing which workers need to work during industrial action. Failure to comply with a work notice will leave unions and their members without legal protection from being sued for damages or dismissal.

It will give the employers the opportunity to, in effect, compel unions to organise their own strike-breaking operations. However, while the employer 'may' issue work notices, there is no legal obligation on them to do so.

WHAT SECTORS ARE GOING TO BE COVERED BY IT?

At the moment, the government has stipulated six sectors: health, education, fire and rescue, transport, border security, and nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management services. But obviously, once the precedent is established, then the danger is that the law could be changed in the future to apply to all industrial action. So that's why this is not just an issue for the unions in those individual sectors, but the whole trade union movement.

In Boris Johnson's Queen's Speech, after he won the election in December 2019, he talked about new anti-union laws against transport workers. Since then it's been widened to incorporate more workers, as the Tories desperately looked for ways to hold back workers as the strike wave became more generalised.

WHAT COULD THE CONSEQUENCES BE FOR TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS FALLING FOUL OF THE NEW LEGISLATION?

In the law, failure to "take reasonable steps" to comply with a work notice removes trade unions' protection from being sued for damages and workers' protections from dismissal. That could include, although the legislation does not say so, a union 'advising' a member of a work notice also 'advising' them of their contracted right to self-certify as sick. Ultimately, trade unions could be under the threat of action for damages, fines or sequestration of funds. And that's why, for the trade union movement, the preparations are urgent. That's why the NSSN conference, which is taking place in the middle of all this, is such an important focal point. It will be a major theme of the conference.



11am-4.30pm, Saturday June 24 Conway Hall in London, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL 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



But ultimately, class struggle always decides. We are totally opposed to this and all anti-union legislation. But like everything, what the Tories get away with depends on the movement. We believe that the trade union movement can defeat these laws, they aren't being brought in by a powerful government. This is a weak, divided, and crisis-torn Tory government.

The Tories ability to bring in this law and implement it depends on the capability of the working class and the trade union movement to fight back. The Socialist Party, when we were Militant, played the leading role in defeating the poll tax in the 1990s. It was brought into law by Margaret Thatcher, but defeated by organised mass non-payment.

Ted Heath, former Conservative prime minister, brought in the Industrial Relations Act in the early 1970s. That became law, but was defeated by a mass movement. In reality it was the mass strike action, building towards general strike action by the trade union movement in defence of five London dockers that were jailed in Pentonville Prison, which dealt a fatal blow to that legislation.

AN INCOMING LABOUR GOVERNMENT REPEALED THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT IN THE 1970S. KEIR STARMER HAS PROMISED TO REPEAL THIS LATEST ANTI-TRADE UNION LAW. BUT WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO LABOUR POLITICIANS ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN DO TO BACK UP THE TRADE UNIONS NOW?

Well first of all with Starmer, unsurprisingly a lot of trade union activists will be totally underwhelmed by and suspicious of his promises. This is the man that has retreated on whole parts of Labour policy since replacing Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader.

We believe all anti-union legislation should be repealed by an incoming Labour government, including that which Blair and Brown shamefully left on the statute books for 13 years of New Labour government.

There is already a Labour government in Wales, which has gone on record as saying that it is opposed to this legislation. But that's not good enough. We demand that it publicly announces that, not only is it opposed to the legislation, but it will not enforce the legislation, and not issue work notices. The same goes for other Labour authorities - such as regional transport, fire and local education authorities. And Starmer should guarantee that an incoming Labour government in Westminster would reverse any attacks on unions and workers - fines and dismissals. In fact just these simple acts could make the whole unthought-through minimum services legislation inoperable.

IF A TRADE UNION IS FINED, OR IS TAKEN TO COURT, OR A WORKER IS SACKED, WHAT KIND OF RESPONSE IS NEEDED?

This is the key question because while it's absolutely essential to put demands on Starmer and Labour authorities, governments, and councils, in reality, the trade union movement also has to rely on its own strength. This is a general attack on the whole trade union movement. It might only be six sectors for now but might not be forever.

The whole trade union movement must come to the aid of any union and any worker that is attacked. If a trade union refused to comply with a work notice, and it was taken to court for damages arising from its strike action, we would call for an emergency mass demonstration outside of the court.

Similarly, if any workers are sacked, there should be a demonstration. But that would only be a first step. It would need to be part of a mobilisation for mass coordinated strike action. We would demand an emergency meeting of the TUC general council, discussing strike action, including a 24-hour general strike.

Now, before the law has been applied, there should be a national Saturday demonstration called to make the whole of the trade union movement aware of what is taking place and prepare for the action that will be needed.

Because of the cost-of-living crisis and strike wave, it is apparent to every worker why this legislation is coming in. It is the Tories trying to limit the ability of the working class and trade union movement to fight against the cost-of-living squeeze.

This fight against trade union rights is not in the abstract. It's clear to more and more workers that the right to strike is an absolute necessity to win pay rises to keep the roof over the heads of their families.

The strike wave has shown the working-class movement is back, younger workers are being drawn into the struggle. This is a desperate move by the Tories; actually some of the more farsighted representatives of capitalism, like some in the House of Lords, proposed a number of amendments to take the guts out of the legislation, because they understand the level of anger that this could lead to.

We believe that working-class people are showing us every day of the week that they're prepared to fight. And we don't think that they are just going to accept this brutal legislation, and that they are prepared to fight it.

Homelessness workers vote for indefinite action **Victory to the Mungo's strikers!**



Protests and picket lines LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

UNITE HOUSING WORKERS' BRANCH



omelessness workers at St Mungo's, members of the Unite housing workers branch, are on strike in response to a pitiful 'offer' of

Following an unproductive meeting with the Mungo's CEO on 12 June, a members' meeting attended by a record 276 people voted overwhelmingly to move to indefinite strike action. All members present bar one voted to escalate action, and 70% voted for indefinite action! There is a clear mood and a bitter determination amongst members to see this through to the end.

This places a special responsibility on Unite and other trade unions to enthusiastically back this dispute. It is vital that we link this dispute up with other workers' struggles. A victory would have an extremely positive effect on the whole movement.

Over ten years, frontline workers' pay has fallen by 25%. Meanwhile, senior management's share of the pie has grown. Mungo's executives salaries have risen by 77%. The CEO

strike action was "disproportionate"! Mungo's should pay the 10% increase that workers demand. We say

open the accounts to trade union inspection - no trust in the board's management of our resources.

In fighting for a decent pay rate, Unite members are also fighting to defend homelessness services. Even government figures say homelessness is on the increase, up by 26% over the last year but funding is down. Fight for the public funding the service needs!

Picket lines

Strikers are learning the importance of picket lines to build the strength of the strike among members and win more to the union. Throughout the dispute the number of picket lines has gone up, and the success of those pickets has further boosted confidence of victory.

The escalation of the dispute requires an even more intense effort on the picket line to prevent agency and locum workers from crossing the picket lines.

It also requires a further effort to turn around some workers who may

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN LONDON AND IN : said that she thought Unite's planned : have been sitting on the fence up to : councils fail to fight the Tory governnow.

> One rep described the growth in support at a project he visited: "In the first week, no one was out. By the end of that week, one person was out. Now everyone is out."

> An agency worker discussed with the Unite branch organiser, and as a result told the agency not to send him back to St Mungo's. Picket lines are vital to build the strike and give strikers a forum to discuss tactics. There must be maximum participation of members in discussing tactics and next steps.

> Mungo's projects are located in areas where commissioning authorities are run by the Greens or Labour. These authorities have power. Labour and Green politicians often say that workers should not have to bear the brunt of the cost-of-living crisis.

> Here is a chance for them to be good to their word, and demand that the workers in services which they commission should receive inflation-based pay increases. We say kick out the chief executive and board run homelessness services as public services under democratic workers' control. But Labour and Green

ment for the funding necessary.

Under Starmer, Labour offers no alternative. Corbyn's supporters and policies are being ruthlessly purged. Starmer doesn't support the strikes, and scrapping Corbyn's manifesto pledges on council housing is disastrous for homelessness. Strikers don't have a political voice.

That's why Socialist Party members are pushing for debates on workers' political representation at this year's trade union conferences. Socialist Party members in Unite are fighting for a rule change to allow the union's funds to be used to back candidates beyond Labour, who back the union's policies. The Socialist Party campaigns for a new mass work ers' party and puts demands on the trade unions to take steps towards its creation.

• Send messages of support and requests for speakers to info@ housingworkers.org.uk

Send union branch donations to the strike fund to Unite Housing Workers LE/1111 Branch, account number 20040626, sort code 60 83 01, reference 'St Mungo's hardship fund'

councils to refuse to implement Tory cuts, and instead pass no-cuts needs budgets.

These events confirm the warning we made prior to the EC elections. These advances are under threat from what constitutes a new right wing in the union.

It is why the Socialist Party has long argued that a new rank-andfile led broad left needs to be built in Unite, to bring together those members determined to fight to maintain Unite as a fighting union.

Read the statement at 'Unite **Executive Council – a warning to** the left' at socialistparty.org.uk.

Cornwall concrete drivers sick of being put through the mixer

5

ROB ROONEY

CORNWALL SOCIALIST PARTY

Readymix concrete drivers, sick of being put through the mixer by an arrogant employer, are striking for union recognition.

The Maen Karne company is a familiar site in Cornwall. Formerly family-owned, it was sold to an outfit called GRS, and the bullying culture and reneging on terms and conditions began.

The ten Readymix drivers, all of whom have given years of service, members of Unite, sought union recognition but, according to one striker, the firm blanked them.

"We approached them about eight months ago for recognition but they completely ignored us. Only two of us have ever been out on strike before but people have had enough. It reached a point where we either put up or shut up.

"In the yard we look at them driving in with their £70-80,000 Jags and BMWs. We've just had a pay rise to £12.50 an hour. We were on £11.56 before, with two bonuses for timekeeping and safe driving worth $\pounds 1.20$ an hour. Now, with the pay rise, they've taken 10p per hour off each bonus so we're paying for our own pay rise.'

The firm has also squeezed sick

pay. This is an important dispute for Cornwall, with Maen Karne bussing in scab drivers, reportedly costing the company £700 a day each. The drivers are six weeks into their action, having struck for 13 days so far. They have another two weeks of strike action lined up from 19 June.

Leeds Sulzer Pumps strike

IAIN DALTON LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Unite members at Sulzer pumps were out in force for the first of a series of Friday strikes until 7 July, called in their dispute over pay with the company. Making high-performance pumps, including for oil rigs, the Leeds site alone is projected to bring in over £20 million in profit this year. Despite this, the company is only

offering a below-inflation 6.5% pay increase and a £275 lump sum. Meanwhile RPI inflation is above 11%

As with many other workplaces, lots of workers had not been on strike before, with the last strike at Sulzer being in the 1980s. Last year the workforce came close to taking strike action over pay, but a further year into the cost-of-living crisis, workers are determined to win a better pay offer

As part of the 'Back to the Workplace' policy of Sharon Graham, the workplace now has its own branch. They had given their support to striking ambulance workers across the road from the factory, and now ambulances tooted support at the Sulzer picket line.

Unite Executive Council – a warning to the left

The Socialist Party has published a statement online by 27 supporters of Unite general secretary Sharon Graham's manifesto, who have been elected on to the union's Executive Council (EC)

It is an explanation of the manoeuvres by the 'Members First' (MF) bloc, which currently holds a tiny majority, at the first meeting of the new EC. They pressed ahead with the election of a chair and membership of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) against the wishes of an almost equal number of

executive councillors. The methods used by the MF group, which includes the misnamed 'United Left', is a further warning that conservative elements in Unite want to row back on the militant industrial strategy that has developed since Sharon Graham's election in 2021. This has seen over 800 disputes across the private and public sectors, of which over 80% have been successful, with £350 million won for members

In addition, MF is aware that the union has also been prepared to challenge Starmer's Labour at national and local level. Sharon has recently demanded that Labour take the energy companies into democratic public ownership.

In 2022, Coventry bin workers faced down the brutal strike-breaking tactics of the Labour council after a seven-month struggle. The first policy conference under Sharon's leadership in 2021 passed a motion, initiated by Socialist Party members, that means that it is official Unite policy to call on Labour

"Every transport worker should attend"

GARY HARBORD LONDON UNDERGROUND RMT MEMBER

6

The NSSN conference is an important event that every transport work-

er should try to attend. At a time when we are facing historic attacks on our pay, terms and conditions, it is vital that the trade union movement steps up to the plate.

RMT members across 14 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) are continuing their battle against job cuts and to secure a decent pay rise.

On London Underground we are preparing to escalate strike action in defence of our pensions and terms and conditions.

The NSSN was initiated by the RMT, and is a vital platform for bringing workers together to discuss and prepare for coordinated action.

At a time when TOCs are paying out hundreds of millions of pounds



11am-4.30pm Attendance fee £6 shopstewards.net



in share dividends, I urge all transport workers to attend the conference and to show solidarity with all striking workers.



T members on strike BRISTOL SOCIALIST PART

"A new layer of militants"

AMANDA Neu member

he recent strike wave has galvanised a new layer of industrial militants. In February this year, 50,000 new members joined my union, the National Education Union. Many people, including myself, have stepped up to become reps.

Support staff in schools have overwhelmingly voted yes to strike

action in their preliminary ballot. Discussing the way forward and coordinating strike action with other unions is crucial. This task is all the more vital, given the need to prepare a fightback against the antiunion laws.

This is why I am attending the NSSN conference: to stand in solidarity with the union struggles taking place across industries, and to discuss how strike action can be coordinated and stepped up.



LAURENCE DUNN STAINES SOCIALIST PARTY

The number of people waiting for NHS care has reached over 7.3 million, the most the NHS has ever had.

A few months ago I was diagnosed, after years of being passed from pillar-to-post, with complex posttraumatic stress. It is hard enough dealing with symptoms, without the added stress of knowing I will not have access to proper treatment for three years, alongside multiple-year waits for other tests.

There are even regular problems in getting medication too. For those of us dealing with these delays to vital care, the prospects can be grim.

Record waiting list - 'I'm waiting three years'

Long waiting lists have contributed to excess deaths. Tory austerity and privatisation have failed.

Privatisation

the **Socialist**

But Wes Streeting, Labour shadow health secretary, said that an inbound Labour government will use privatisation to reduce waiting times. That's a ridiculous remark. Waiting times for treatment at A&E and for ambulances have increased since privatisation was introduced into the NHS.

It is important that service users vocally support striking nurses, doctors, and all workers who participate in the running of the NHS, and their demands. These are the people who provide the service, and without them, there would be no NHS.

Underfunding, and poor wages and conditions are a political choice by the Tory government that impacts the effectiveness of the service, the lives of people working in it and the lives of people who rely on it.

The Socialist Party fights to kick all private companies out of the NHS, and to nationalise the pharmaceutical industry. By creating a socialist NHS that is free at the point of use, democratically managed by workers and service users – we can begin to provide the healthcare that workingclass people deserve and reduce waiting times too.

Private health pays pro-privatisation MPs

IAN HUNTER DERBY SOCIALIST PARTY

EveryDoctor is a doctor-led campaign group fighting for the NHS. It believes that "privatisation harms patients".

The group monitors the effects of privatisation and outsourcing, and also the links between MPs and the private healthcare industry. EveryDoctor has revealed payments to MPs from private healthcare providers.

Conservative MP John Redwood topped the list, receiving almost £700,000 between 2020 and 2023. He receives his money from Charles Stanley Wealth Managers – fund managers and investors in private health providers.

Labour

Several Labour Party MPs also have their snouts in this lucrative trough. Most notably, Yvette Cooper, in receipt of £295,205 during that time.

- Between 2020-2023, the ignoble top comprises:
- John Redwood £699,250,
- ConservativeAndrew Mitchell £395,000,
- Conservative
- Yvette Cooper £295,205, Labour
- John Glen £280,000, Conservative

• Owen Paterson £199,992, Conservative

- Wes Streeting £183,725, Labour
- Keir Starmer £157,500, Labour
- Tom Tugendhat £140,000,
- Conservative
- Dan Jarvis £137,500, Labour

This illustrates the massive conflict of interest from the pro-capitalist MPs, and also the determination of powerful wealthy corporations to continue to plunder and profit from the NHS. Meanwhile, the NHS continues to be a fragmented, underfunded, understaffed and undermined institution. We need our own new mass party to fight for a socialist NHS.

STOP PRESS -School support staff want to fight!

The results are in: in a consultative ballot of 57,000 support staff members of the National Education Union (NEU), 84.9% voted for strike action, with a 61.3% turnout.

With ballots taking place in other support staff unions, a reballot of teachers in the NEU, and ballots in other teaching unions, this is a huge opportunity for a united fightback in schools. Socialist Party members will continue to campaign for maximum unity between all unions in education, and for a bold fighting lead in all those unions.

Radiographers fighting back

Members of the Society of Radiographers (SOR), like other professional health workers, are not used to industrial militancy. Last year, our leadership organised a consultative ballot with little more than a notice on the union website. Unsurprisingly, less than 30% responded, and our members had no opportunity to



demonstrate our anger at the pitiful pay offer.

With regional branches it's not easy for the rank and file to be heard, but pressure from below saw online activist meetings forcing the leadership to hear how we feel. This time round it was clear: the majority rejected the 5% offer for 2023-24, in a consultation which reps organised for. It made the Tory anti-strike 50% turnout threshold.

Going into a formal ballot, ending 28 June, we are getting concrete support from the national leadership, with the clear message to reject and to take strike action.

But this is not just about pay, it's

about job retention and the recruitment crisis. With better pay we could attract staff to fill the 10%-plus staffing gap. And with more staff we could make a big dent in the waiting lists both for long-awaited operations and urgent diagnostic tests.

I'm encouraging our new reps to come to the National Shop Stewards Network conference, because together we can defeat this hated government and start rebuilding our NHS. **SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS REP**



15-21 June 2023

the **Socialist**

Abortion is not a crime! For the right to choose



HEATHER RAWLING LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

his is the 21st century yet, outrageously, a 44-year-old mother of three has been sentenced to more than two years in prison for an illegal abortion. This is not only cruel, but a threat to all women seeking abortion.

My mother's generation endured backstreet abortions which threatened their lives. Others were maimed for life. We cannot and will not allow those days to return!

In Britain, abortion is only allowed up to 24 weeks if a woman can obtain the signatures of two doctors, who can refuse to sign on grounds of conscience. And everyone knows how difficult it is to get a GP appointment these days.

Dire

The woman in question discovered she was pregnant in December 2019, just before the outbreak of Covid. I find it hard to believe that any woman who believed she was 24 weeks pregnant when asking for the abortion pill would do so without being in dire circumstances.

However, whatever the individual circumstances, unfortunately, this case is not an isolated one. In fact, the number of women and girls facing police investigations and the threat of life imprisonment under abortion laws has risen over the past three years, according to the British

Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS). In the ten years to April 2022, police in England and Wales recorded 67 cases of procuring an illegal abortion.

When the 1967 Abortion Act was passed, allowing abortion up to 24 weeks, the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act remained in force, under which it is illegal to "administer poison with intent to procure a miscarriage" outside the parameters of the 'exceptions' of the 1967 Act. The maximum sentence is life imprisonment. It was under the 1861 Act that the woman was jailed. Recently, a 15-year-old girl was investigated because of an 'unexplained' stillbirth. The 1861 Act should be scrapped and abortion completely decriminalised

Cuts and closures

Women should be able to control their own fertility. We cannot separate the demand for the right to choose when and whether to have children from the crisis in the NHS. Women who require surgical abortions often have to travel many miles because facilities are not locally available. Because of the cost-ofliving crisis, and difficulty in accessing contraception due to cuts and closures to clinics and the GP crisis, the number of women seeking an abortion is increasing but the services are not. 99% of abortions are funded by the NHS but performed by private providers. Facilities should

be adequately funded and integrated into the NHS.

We need a fully funded NHS to enable free access to contraception, abortion and fertility services. But many women are forced into seeking an abortion because of the cost of raising children, the costs of childcare, and suitable housing, for example.

Real choice

So we need to fight for a programme that also includes the right to a minimum wage of £15 an hour linked to inflation, access to free, good-quality childcare, a massive programme of council house building, and services that will allow women to have real choice.

- Repeal the Offences against the Person Act. Scrap the two-doctor rule. Decriminalise abortion
- Defend access to telemedicine
- services and abortion pills by post
 A massive increase in spending on the NHS. Fully fund abortion
- facilities as part of the NHSNo to cuts and privatisation.
- Full public funding of sexual and reproductive health services

• A £15 an-hour minimum wage, a flexible network of free, high quality, publicly provided childcare and increased spending on the services we need to bring up children free from poverty

• Build a mass movement to fight for the right to choose, including a new mass workers' party armed with a socialist programme



Six years since Grenfell – Fight for fire safety just as vital now

PAULA MITCHELL WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

ix years ago, 72 people died in a horrific fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington, west London. It was a tower block lived in by working-class, mainly Black, Asian and migrant people, in the richest borough of London.

Profit-hungry companies had put their own riches before human life. Cheap flammable cladding had been attached to the tower, to give wealthy neighbours a more pleasant view.

Each year we say, the fight goes on for safe homes. What has changed?

Virtually nothing. But one change as a result of the Grenfell inquiry is the recommendation that tower blocks should have more than one staircase.

Sadiq Khan

In February, London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan ordered that all planning applications for residential blocks over 30 metres must now include a second staircase. Khan has chosen to fall in with the Tories' proposal rather than that of fire chiefs, who call for that rule to apply over 18 metres.

But what about those already with planning permission, but not yet built, like the enormous 36and 26-storey blocks planned for Walthamstow Town Square, with only one staircase? As things stand, Waltham Forest Labour council is allowing this obscene development to go ahead! We have to fight for a moratorium on all new developments until they are safe. But mostly we have to fight for safe, good-quality council housing, with secure tenancies and low rents.

The privatised model of housing, pursued by Tories and Blairite Labour alike, has been an utter disaster. Selling off council housing, and selling off public land to private property developers to build blocks of tiny, expensive flats, has made a handful of people rich. For working-clas people, it has meant homelessness, overcrowding, appalling housing conditions, sky-high rents and death.

Our own party

That means we also have to fight for political representatives in the interests of working-class people – a new mass workers' party. We say that because it is clear where Keir Starmer's Labour Party stands on these questions.

Emma Dent Coad was elected as Labour MP for Kensington in the 2017 general election, just days before the Grenfell fire. She championed campaigns of the Grenfell survivors, and supported Jeremy Corbyn's call for council house building. She was barred from even the long-list to be selected as a Labour candidate for the next general election.

• Save our Square campaign in Waltham Forest has a gathering in the square on 17 June at 1.30pm to remember Grenfell, and call for a halt to the building of the unsafe 'monster' blocks HOUSING

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the Socialist

15-21 June 2023



RYAN ALDRED

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

iving in mouldy, squalid and overcrowded conditions. transferring ever-increasing sums into the landlord's bank account for the pleasure, is

the grim reality for millions of renters in the private sector. The number of households renting privately has more than doubled since 2000 to 4.6 million.

Many renters will be familiar with the feeling of not wanting to do anything to remind their landlord of their existence for fear of a rent increase or eviction. Increasing numbers of people find themselves without a home - unable to pay rising rents or, after a tenancy comes to an end, unable to finance a deposit and convince another landlord to let them move in

271,000 people are recorded as homeless in England, including 123,000 children, according to Shelter. In London it is as many as one in 58 people.

Most private-sector renters will start their tenancy with an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST), usually lasting six months or a year. Many will then move onto rolling, periodic, weekly or monthly contracts.

The end of an AST was the reason nearly half of homeless households with children became homeless, according to government statistics which cover until the end of 2022. Councils have seen a 25% increase in households with children seeking assistance.

A fixed-term AST might bake-in rent at a certain level during its term, although many landlords will put in a 'rent review clause'. Nothing, however, stops the landlord increasing the rent at the end of the contract period. or using a 'section 13' notice once a vear.

And if they want to force you out, using a 'section 21' notice, landlords don't need a legal justification to carrv out an eviction

Renters' reform, but in whose

The Tories' Renters (Reform) Bill, moving through the House of Commons, includes a ban on these 'section 21' no-fault eviction notices. In introducing the bill, housing secretary Michael Gove acknowledged: "Too many renters are living in damp, unsafe, cold homes, powerless to put things right, and with the threat of sudden eviction hanging over them." Readers will be less than surprised that Gove hasn't suddenly happened upon a social conscience, for in the verv next breath he reveals: "Our new laws introduced to Parliament [last month] will support the vast majority of responsible landlords who provide quality homes to their tenants."

So, the Renters (Reform) Bill would appear to be a bit of a misnomer. While it does grant tenants the right to request a pet, and intends to protect potential tenants with children being discriminated against, the bill will actually strengthen the hand of landlords to evict 'problem' tenants.

According to the government website: "The new bill also protects over two million landlords, making it easier for them to recover properties when they need to - so they can sell their property if they want to, move in a close family member, or when tenants wilfully do not pay rent. Notice periods will also be reduced where tenants have been irresponsible - for example breaching their tenancy agreement or causing damage to the property."

The government website also claims the bill will increase protections against backdoor evictions by ensuring tenants can appeal against excessive rent rises. Tenants already have the right to go to tribunal, where a court will decide whether or not your landlord is charging above the market rate. With prices rising across the board, this offers little consolation.

Instagram

A shortage of homes

The number of homes on the rental market fell by a third in the 18 months to March. This helped drive rents for new tenants up 11%. More people than ever are looking to rent privately, unable to afford to buy and unable to access social housing.

In its attempt to rein in doubledigit inflation, the Bank of England has ratcheted up interest rates to their highest level since before the global financial crash of 2007-09. Yestervear's aspiring buy-to-let landlords are quickly looking to jump ship before they are shipwrecked by spiralling mortgage rates. In its current form, the Renters (Reform) Bill seeks to protect these landlords looking to sell up far more than the tenants who would be forced to vacate as their home is put on the market.

A number of banks such as Santander, TSB and the Coventry Building Society have recently made changes to their mortgage rates, which will lead to a squeeze on 100,000 mortgage holders. What measures will prevent these extra costs from simply being passed on to tenants in the form of rent rises?

The bill will make it easier for landlords to evict tenants in rent arrears by reducing the notice period required. This will penalise those in financial hardship, and be used as a stick to beat those who withhold rent or go on rent strike.

There are simply not enough homes for people to live in. According to the Economist magazine, England has 434 homes per 1,000 people, comparing badly with France which has 590 per 1,000. Added to this, with lack of investment in infrastructure, the Economist reports that new house builds are becoming harder to accommodate into the existing National Grid, which is further exacerbated by the increasing necessity and speed of rollout of charging ports for electric vehicles.

The housing question cannot simply be addressed by building more houses alone. It requires proper investment

and planning of necessary infrastructure and public services.

"If you want to be an open, trading, free-market economy, you cannot leave your housing system, your land market to the open market. Because if you do, the property market will basically swallow your economy." This is a quote from Toby Lloyd, once special advisor to Prime Minister Theresa May, in an interview for the BBC Radio 4 series Rental Health. What is this, if not an effective admission that the market economy is woefully illequipped to deal with the question of housing?

THE 1% www.socialistparty.org.uk PHOTOS: PAUL MATTSON (RIGHT MTAYLOR848/CC (ABOVE)

over 30 in every region of England, reflecting young people's financial inproperty ladder.

HOUSING

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FAR FROM THE SOCIALIST POLICIES **NEEDED TO SOLVE THE HOUSING CRISIS**

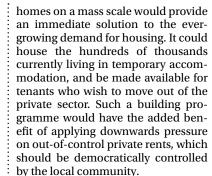
'Affordable' or council housing? The government's so-called 'afford-

able' housing scheme builds properties to sell at 80% of market value. These houses are still unaffordable to the majority of young people, and do little to check speculative housing developers. With the jobs market saturated with zero-hour gig-economy jobs, home ownership is increasingly out of reach for young people. The average age of first-time buyers is now security and inability to get a footing on even the first rung of the

Housing available at 'social rent, linked to local wage levels, is shrinking. In the year 2020-21, there was a net loss of 15,000, according to Shelter.

Getting a council home is simply not an option for all but a few of those in the most severe need. And many of those can spend years in temporary accommodation, often whole families in single hotel rooms.

The building of new, high-quality



New council homes could be built to incorporate climate-friendly technology, using the best methods of home insulation, heat-pump boilers and solar panels fitted as standard.

A council with the political will to do so could start to implement such a council house building programme immediately, choosing to use its borrowing capacity to invest in meeting the needs of its people. In the 1980s, Liverpool's Labour council, led by Militant (the Socialist Party's predecessor), was elected promising to build thousands of council homes. And that it did – with front and back gardens and community leisure facilities - mobilising thousands of working-class people to support it and winning millions of pounds from council : Thatcher's government.

Fighting for renters' rights

Tenants have some limited existing legal rights; however many workingclass people cannot afford to exercise them. Restoring full legal aid to all those who need it would be a step in the right direction, giving tenants a fighting chance at challenging landlords.

Similarly, scrapping ASTs, brought in by Thatcher in 1989, and reintroducing Regulated Tenancies with muchbetter security of tenure, would give tenants some more much-needed stability.

The planned han on no-fault evictions should be extended to include a ban on evictions for those unable to pay due to the effects of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

A mass council house building programme and democratic rent controls, which cap rents at a level agreed by elected committees of tenants and trade unionists, would end rip-off rents.

Local authorities could set up a compulsory register for landlords, holding them accountable for repairs, safety and conditions. Council-employed housing officers could inspect properties to uphold standards. Landlords that refuse to comply could have their properties put up for compulsory purchase by the council. These are all measures which Labour councils could implement now.

In some areas, tenants are already getting organised to fight collectively for their rights. Campaign groups such as Acorn and London Renters' Union are campaigning on tenant rights. The Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC), set up to bring together social housing tenants and housing workers in the trade unions, has organised numerous rent and service charge strikes Communities can get organised to collectively resist evictions, like the 'Butterfields Won't Budge' campaigners in Walthamstow in 2016.

Students learned valuable lessons during the pandemic, taking collective rent strike action and forcing serious concessions from some universities and private student accommodation providers.

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 postcode.
- Or scan the QR code:



A political alternative

If the ban on no-fault evictions does make it onto the statute books, the pressure on many renters might be released slightly. But the pressure of rising rents and awful conditions will remain. The Tories, acting in the interests of big business, will not introduce policies that seriously threaten profits.

In 2019, Labour under Jeremy Corbyn went into the general election with a manifesto pledging 100,000 new council homes a year. It promised: "We will take urgent action to protect private renters through rent controls open-ended tenancies, and new, binding minimum standards".

Though not enough, if implemented these policies would have made a difference. Now, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer says the slate is wiped clean and has abandoned the pledges included in that manifesto.

Renters and working-class people need a party that is prepared to carry out policies in the interests of the working class and renters, and is prepared to seriously hit the profits of big business, the property speculators and the banks. A party that is prepared to build council homes to meet need and to introduce rent controls at a truly affordable level. Socialist Party members stood as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in this May's local elections, fighting for policies like these. We campaign for a new mass workers' party, with mass organisations of the working class, the trade unions, at its core - fighting for socialist policies.

And for the next general election whenever it is called, we call for the trade unions to back a workers' list of candidates that could include Jeremy Corbyn and others barred from standing for Labour or deselected. Such a stand, or if one is not brought together in time, a number of TUSC candidates standing, could fight for socialist policies to deal with the housing question at the next general election.

Currently the banks and big business profit from the shortage of housing and sky-high rents. Thousands of homes lie empty as investment portfolios for the super-rich, and only the most profitable homes for sale and rent are built. Building homes for need not profit, on the scale needed, means bringing the big building developers and banks into democratic public ownership - so building can be planned and financed accordingly.

Ultimately, a fundamental break from the chaos of free-market capitalism, with a move to a democratically planned, socialist economy is what is needed. This will ensure that we are able to eradicate homelessness and squalor permanently, at the same time paving the way for decent quality, cheap, green housing benefiting all, not just the richest.

'Time For Real Change' loses majority control of Unison NEC - But no shift to the right among membership



SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN UNISON

2021, the left won a majority on Unison's National Executive Council (NEC) for the first time n the union's history, with the 'Time For Real Change' (TFRC) grouping in the leadership. They have lost their majority on the NEC just two years later.

Given the strike wave, particularly in the public sector, a growing militancy of Unison members and a willingness to take on the Tories, this will come as a surprise to many. But this electoral setback doesn't signify a shift to the right amongst members

As is the case in most trade unions there continues to be a very low turnout in national executive elections - in this case, 5%. Battling every day with the reality of the cost-of-living crisis, cuts and privatisation, only a small layer of members are engaged in the need to vote in national elections, and many of those who do vote are already supporters of a particular set of candidates, so a small shift in seats can have a big impact.

Right has not won back its măjority

While the Labour Starmerite right, fighting under the banner of 'Unison Unity, will be celebrating the setback for TFRC and the left, they cannot claim to have won back the majority they had previously. Unison Unity took 29 of the 67 NEC seats, and will be hoping to rely on all five of the socalled independent NEC members to allow them to try to control the NEC by just one vote.

Shocked at their loss of the leadership two years ago, the right were determined to try and take back the control they had for 28 years. In this

election, they no doubt worked harder than before

With the general secretary and union officialdom still in the hands of the right wing, from the beginning the question had been immediately posed: who runs Unison, the elected left NEC or the paid officials? The right spent the last two years

acting as a disruptive force, trying at every turn, with the backing of the officialdom, to undermine the left leadership

Mistaken

However they were aided by mistaken tactics and strategy of the leaders of TFRC, who concentrated on what were seen by many as internal matters.

Their refusal to take seriously the Kirklees 15 complaints against the long-standing NEC member and Kirklees branch secretary Paul Holmes, a position they have now been forced into a U-turn on, was used by the right wing to attack all of the left. Despite having done nothing about the complaints themselves for over a year, the right painted the left as antidemocratic and protecting a bully.

The Socialist Party consistently ar gued that the complaints of mainly women members must be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly, both for the benefit of the complainants and those they complained about.

Socialist Party members have consistently argued that the left leadership needed a clear strategy to fight in the interests of members on pay, jobs, cuts and privatisation, so that members could see the difference a left leadership would make. The TFRC leaders didn't sufficiently differentiate themselves from the right wing on the key industrial and political issues. Instead they covered over : gramme to take on the Tories, their

differences with the right with talk of 'unity'

Starmer

This included no more than protest statements against Keir Starmer in his ruthless campaign to drive out all remnants of Corbyn's anti-austerity programme and Corbyn himself from the Labour Party, even when the Labour Party leadership witchhunted TFRC Unison president Andrea Egan, and when the Unison reps on Labour's NEC abstained on the vote to bar Corbyn.

This mistaken approach has been a massive lost opportunity and has damaged all of the left in the union, including the Socialist Party. Unfortunately we lost three of the seats held by Socialist Party members on the NEC, although April Ashley was re-elected to an NEC Black members' seat with over 26,000 votes.

Despite attempts by the Socialist Party to seek a joint slate on all seats. this was rejected by the TFRC leaders. Although they did not oppose the sitting Socialist Party NEC members, they campaigned only for their own candidates.

At this stage it is not clear how the votes will fall at the first new NEC meeting, due to take place on Friday 16 June, which will elect the presidential team. However, no matter how the fight for positions on the NEC pans out, it is clear that none of the issues facing members have gone away on pay, cuts, privatisation and the anti-union laws.

Whoever takes control of union. they will face the wrath of the membership if they fail to offer a clear industrial and political strategy. That is why it is vital for the left on the NEC to draw up a clear fighting pro-

continued austerity agenda, and their new anti-union laws. This is the best way to expose the right wing to the members and show why the union needs a fighting left leadership.

Fighting strategy needed

The new NEC will be in office at the time of the next general election, with the likely election of a Starmerled government. Starmer is making it clear on a daily basis that he is a safe pair of hands for British capitalism, and is determined to expunge any vestige of Corbynism and left opposition in the Labour Party.

Both the right and TFRC have unfortunately continued to tie themselves to the Labour Party wagon, including refusing to demand that cutting Labour councils stop passing on Tory cuts.

However, this position will increasingly not hold, as members will rightly demand pay rises from a Labour government, a return of all that has been stolen off them in the last decade or more, and for fully funded publicly owned services. This will mean an inevitable clash with a Labour government, and any leadership that seeks to cover for them will not be forgiven.

Members will not only demand a fighting union to take on such a government, but will also demand we use our weight and political funds to defend and speak for Unison members. That should include branches having the right to democratically decide to support candidates that support us, and debating how to build genuine political representation for working-class people.

The Socialist Party in Unison will continue to seek to work with all those who genuinely want to win a fighting and democratic union.



It is vital for the left on the NEC to draw up a clear fighting programme to take on the Tories and their continued austerity agenda, and their new antiunion laws. This is the best way to expose the right wing

Join the fightback **JOIN THE SOCIALISTS**

Visit socialistpartv.org.uk/ioi • or call 020 8988 8777 • or text your name and postcode to 07761 818 206 to find out more todav!

Unison local government conference **Starmer's Labour spells out** how it won't answer Unison members' demands



MARK FVANS PERSONAL CAPACITY

Conference.

We didn't have to wait long for the response. Lisa Nandy, Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up. Housing and Communities, addressed conference as guest speaker. While not mentioning our pay claim. she said that it would be 'easy to say that the cavalry is coming with a new Labour government'. She went on to say, regarding the cuts to council funding under the Tories, 'we can't promise to fix that overnight'.

British capitalism is in crisis and shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves is constantly reiterating that a Labour government would be 'fiscally responsible'. Nandy let the cat out of the bag when she said that a Labour government would 'ask more of you

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE

Unison's local government conference took place on 11-12 June, before the start of the National Delegate

Many motions at conference called for 'Labour Link' to call on the Labour Party to change its policies on various issues, and to support Unison's demands on pay and fighting cuts. Labour Link is the section of Unison's political fund where Unison members are members of the Labour

April Ashley, Socialist Party member re-elected to Unison's NEC, had an enthusiastic response from conference. She said: "The Tories lost a thousand council seats. The Local Government Association is now in the hands of Labour. We must : politically

demand they support our pay claim for above-inflation rises. If strike-shv Starmer is not supporting us, why are we supporting them?'

Labour councils

A number of Socialist Party members made contributions which called out cutting Labour councils. They reminded delegates that this year is the 40th anniversary of the Liverpool City Council battle, when a Labour council led by socialists refused to pass on Tory cuts and mobilised the workforce and community against Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher

In the same debate, Hackney Unison branch chair Brian Debus described how the union-busting Labour council had attacked him and his fellow library workers, who had taken strike action to defend their jobs and library services.

The Socialist Party calls for a debate in the union as a whole - not confined just to Labour Link members - about how we can win genuine political representation for Unison members and all workers.

Speaking on pay, Brian outlined how much local government pay has declined. But he warned that the pay strike ballot timescale means we would be taking strike action five months after our pay claim had been submitted. He said we should be ready for action in April, when our pay claim is due to be paid.

The local government conference set the scene for the national conference to follow: we need a democratic union that fights industrially and

GMB congress Members are fighting back - but we need a national strategy

KIM HENDRY

GMB ACTIVIST. PERSONAL CAPACITY

eneral union GMB members have been part of the strike wave, winning some huge pay victories, recognition campaigns and even in-sourcing battles. Members have taken local and national action in the NHS and local councils, sometimes alongside other unions. The developing strikes at Amazon are bringing a whole new, previously unorganised layer of workers into struggle.

General secretary Gary Smith opened the annual congress with talk about the "transformative change" his leadership is achieving, citing growing membership (he said GMB has almost 580,000 members) in response to industrial militancy.

One thing that hasn't changed s the GMB leadership's support for right-wing Labour. The union, which supported Owen Smith's candidature against Jeremy Corbyn, is also the union whose delegates on the Labour NEC this year voted for Corbyn to be banned from standing as a Labour MP in the next general election

Starme

Starmer addressed congress and offered nothing new to GMB delegates. He repeated existing pledges about a 'new deal for working people', including banning zero-hour contracts, and making 'fire and rehire' unlawful.

While that is welcome, when asked about Labour's promise to oversee the "biggest insourcing in a generation". his response was that Labour would reinstate the 'two-tier code' scrapped by the Tory government in 2010. But the two-tier code was about maintaining some parity between public sector workers and : GMB leadership supports fracking,

their outsourced colleagues to protect the latter's pay and conditions. When pressed about the promise to bring outsourced work back inhouse, all he could say was: "Please keep working with Angela Rayner or that"

Council cuts

Motion 151 demanded GMB implement existing policy, agreed in 2016. which commits it to campaigning for Labour councils to set no cuts, needs-based budgets, as part of a mass campaign with trade unions and communities to win back funding from the Tory government. The leadership made a qualification which misrepresents the situation to imply that such a demand may not be achievable, 'taking account of changes to legislation since the 1980s that can allow central government to appoint commissioners to impose cuts without any democratic accountability'.

This was a red herring. The government cannot just send commissioners in at will. And councils can use reserves and borrowing powers to set no-cuts budgets, while building a campaign to defeat this weak, divided Tory government. The Tories could be forced to retreat - especially if Starmer was pledging that an incoming Labour government would give the funding back to councils.

Clearly, a Labour government led by Starmer has no intention of offering solutions to the poverty inequality and public services crisis that GMB members face. That is why GMB members in the Socialist Party call for a proper debate in the union on how to win real political representation.

Another key issue for GMB is on

and opposes a number of other policies that are raised as ways of reaching net zero by 2050, framing the issue in terms of jobs versu climate

11

Socialist just transition

In his speech, Gary Smith sent a mes sage to Sellafield nuclear workers and the submarine site in Barrow "Whilst other unions might wobble your union is unwavering in its commitment to you, your communities and the fight for jobs and a future' The Socialist Party argues for a proworker, socialist 'just transition' to environmental sustainability, which, on the basis of taking these industries into socialist public ownership can develop a plan which guarantees workers' jobs, pay and pensions.

GMB members are at the sharp end of the cost-of-living and public services crises But there's a disconnect between the rank-and-file solidarity with workers in struggle (standing ovation after standing ovation for fel low GMB members fighting) and the lack of a national strategy which can defeat the Tory cuts. There were no motions for a coordinated approach with other unions.

And while there are militant industrial tactics in some areas, at the other end of the scale the GMB leadership arranged for Deliveroo to host an official fringe meeting on 'distinguishing good from bad in a modern gig economy', following up its cosy platform chat with full-time officers last vear.

This is why Socialist Party mem bers argue for the building of an organised, democratic, socialist rank-and-file broad left in the GMB to hold the leadership to account and campaign for a fighting union with a the climate crisis and energy. The E clear national strategy to take on the government – whoever is in power.



socialistparty.org.uk



SCOTT HUNTER SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

KATE FLANNERY

SECRETARY

On Sunday 11 June, Socialist Party members attended a demonstration in support of LGBTQ+ rights in Swin-

don town centre. Swindon's Wyvern theatre hosted Drag Queen Story Hour – an all-ages show where drag queens read children's stories. Far-right group Patriotic Alternative had announced their intention to protest against the event and, in response, local groups in Swindon organised a counter-demonstration to support the show and those families attending, as well as to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights.

Happily, our numbers on the day

ORGREAVE TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Cam-

paign was launched over ten years

ago to call for an inquiry to get justice

for picketing miners striking for the

right to work, and to ensure the true

narrative of what really happened

throughout the 1984-85 miners'

Miners were ambushed and bru-

talised by a state-directed para-

military police force at the Orgreave

coking plant on 18 June 1984. 95

miners were arrested and charged

with either riot (with the potential of

a life sentence) or unlawful assem-

bly. Almost a year later, when the

cases went to court, all miners were

strike is in the public domain.

far outweighed the far-right. Socialist Party members put forward a programme that links the fight for LGBTQ+ liberation to a broader socialist programme for the transformation of society. This met with a good response from the other demonstrators who know too well that the progress made in LGBTQ+ acceptance over recent decades is in danger of being ripped away as the capitalists seek scapegoats for their crises. The Tories' 'culture wars' stoke division while Starmer's Labour doesn't offer much of an alternative. We distributed dozens of leaflets. sold copies of the Socialist newspaper and received donations to our fighting fund. People gave us their

refused to hold any kind of inquiry

into their role and the actions of the

The 84-85 miners' strike was a

turning point in our trade union his-

tory. The Tory Thatcher government

mobilised unprecedented resources

to demonise and criminalise the

powerful National Union of Mine-

destroy the trade union movement

to advance their neoliberal agenda

- the mass privatisation of public

services and nationalised industries

and the erosion of civil liberties.

They used the full force of the state

against the miners and our com-

munities who were fighting against

the Tory plan for mass pit closures.

workers (NUM). The Tories tried to

police

details to find out more about joining the Socialist Party

As we prepare to launch a new Socialist Party branch in Swindon on 19 June, after 18 months of regular work to build, finding an echo for our ideas at this protest has confirmed my confidence that the branch will win more people to socialist ideas.

You can order a copy of the newly reprinted Socialist Party LGBTQ+ charter by going to leftbooks. co.uk or by scanning the QR code.

industrial relations and the policing

Fast forward to Tory Britain today

with a ferocious free market, public

sector cuts, poverty wages, soaring

food and energy bills, and draco-

nian policing laws. The Tory neo-

liberal plans have come to fruition.

However, we currently see hun

dreds of thousands of workers fight-

ing back and striking on a massive

scale for better services, jobs, pay

and conditions. Our campaign has

amassed incredible support and is

creating awareness amongst young-

er generations who see that the in-

justices they campaign against have

many similarities with the miners'

This year our annual march and

rally, to mark the anniversary of Or-

June at 1pm in Barkers Pool, Shef-

field. Come along and join us along-

side a line-up of impressive speakers

and demand truth and justice.

greave, takes place on Saturday 17

struggle.

of strikes and protest in Britain.

ever been held to account for the strikers and protesters. The outcome

violence and lies. The Tories have of the miners' strike set the tone for

the Socialis

Protest for increased support for child services in Sefton

CONOR O'NEILL

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members attended a demonstration outside Sefton Town Hall in Bootle on 6 June. The protest took place during a meeting of the children's overview and scrutiny committee. People protested against the poor and inadequate state of children's services, and because of a desperate need for "further support in educational services as well as with SEN children" across Sefton. The protest was well attended by local activists as well as parents involved in the campaign, who voiced their concerns about their vile treatment at the hands of the local children's services.

When asked for comment, one of the mothers on the demonstration described the Labour council as



Fund a party that will fight all the Tories **Orgreave - justice delayed is justice denied** CHRIS NEWBY

OCIALIST PARTY FINANCE DEPARTMENT

"We must understand now what an earthquake we have created. The way in which we have changed the political map of this country." These were the words of Boris Johnson following the Tory general election victory in 2019. These sentiments were echoed by the vast majority of commentators and political activists at the time. predicting many more years of uninterrupted Conservative government. But as the current Tory bloodbath gathers apace with Johnson, Nadine Dorries and Nigel Adams all resigning their seats, how hollow these words now sound.

You would get a different view from the pages of the Socialist newspaper. We explained how weak that Tory government was, despite its 80seat majority. In our general election special produced the morning after the Tory victory, we wrote:

"But Johnson's attacks on trade whole can be defeated. The seeming

strength of Johnson's government will be shattered by coming events". Throughout Covid and the costof-living crisis the Socialist has consistently put a clear strategy of how

these crises can be overcome. But we can only to continue to produce the Socialist, our leaflets and posters by continuing donations from our readers and supporters. Our current fighting fund campaign ends on 2 July so we urge as many of you as possible to send in your donations today to make sure we smash through our target.

Many of our Socialist Party branches are also making the most of the good weather with successful campaign stalls. In Newport, South Wales. £48 fighting fund was raised, followed by £57 at a stall in Caerphilly. In Coventry, campaigning against hospital parking charges our Socialist Party stall raised £30.51 and, in Norris Green, Liverpoo raised £30

85% of the fighting target has been unions and the working class as a paid in so far. All donations help us in reaching this target.



acquitted when it became clear the Many have raw memories and phys-

police had falsified evidence. No ical and emotional scars because

one in the police or government has $\frac{1}{2}$ of the injustices meted out against

For more background on the niners' strike read '1984-85 miners' strike: Coordination and fighting union leaders would have been decisive' on www.socialistparty.org.uk

Or buy: 'A Civil War Without Guns: The Lessons of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike' at www. eftbooks.co.uk

"pointless". In her view, Sefton council was "failing in its duty of care for

15-21 June 2023

families and children". Labour councillor Judy Hardman was sent out as a representative of the scrutiny committee to engage with protesters. Socialist Party members questioned why she had chosen to vote though millions in cuts to public services, despite the council having over £20 million in usable reserves. Councillor Hardman avoided the question, and said that her aim was to ensure a Labour government at the next election. Socialist Party members fight for the election of real socialist councillors, as part of a new mass workers' party, who will oppose all spending cuts. We fight for a mass working-class movement to demand the funding stolen by the government to restore our services, including children's services

15-21 June 2023

ADAM POWELL-DAVIES SOCIALIST STUDENTS NATIONAL ORGANISER

In April. the University and College country

their exam results until October.



Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY • Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate or call 020 8988 8777

 or make cheques payable to Socialist Party. PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT







UNI MARKING BOYCOTT

13

Marking and assessment boycott – students stand with staff **Fight for free education**

Union (UCU) launched a marking and assessment boycott at 145 universities across the UK. University staff are striking for pay amidst the cost-of-living crisis, and to defend terms and conditions as university bosses try to squeeze as much as possible from them. And the quality of our education has suffered as a result. Socialist Students supports the strike and has shown solidarity at picket lines up and down the

University students now have a clearer picture of how the boycott impacts us. At Durham University. hundreds of students have been told that they won't progress to their next vear of study. Oueen's University Belfast has announced that 1.200 students may not be awarded degrees this summer. And at the University of Cambridge, hundreds of politics and sociology students won't receive

Many students affected by the boycott have been left frustrated and demoralised. As things stand, thou-

from moving on to the next stage in their life, such as the next year of $\frac{1}{2}$ have finally been forced to admit the their course, a job or internship, or graduate study.

While university managements have been eager to blame striking staff for the disruption to students lives, some students speaking on social media and in the national press have challenged this narrative. They have correctly pointed out that the onus is on the employers' association, UCEA, to meet UCU's demands on pay and conditions, and end the current dispute.

Any university that claims it can't afford these demands should open its books to inspection by the campus trade unions and democratically elected worker and student representatives. If a university genuinely can't afford to give its staff at least what the UCU demands, then the government should step in to make up the difference, with money given to universities under trade union oversight

At a few universities, vice-chancel lors have joined students and staff in calling on UCEA to re-enter negotiations with the UCU nationally. This shows that the marking and assesssands of students could be prevented i ment boycott is having an effect.

Although many vice-chancellors 'broken' nature of university funding, none have come out and called for what is necessary: fully funded. free, higher education.

Meanwhile, at most other uni versities, managements have dug in and cobbled together a whole range of 'mitigations' aimed at allowing students to progress without the usual assessment-based checks and balances.

No doubt, some students will be grateful for these measures. But we say it should be university un ions who should hold the decision making powers over mitigations, in discussion with elected student representatives. Mitigations shouldn't be left in the hands of the bosses. who are attempting to drive a wedge between students and staff.

As the marking and assessment boycott continues, many students will feel caught in the middle between the UCU and the university bosses. That's why Socialist Students says that students have to get organised ourselves, to unite with staff in a mass campaign to fully fund our universities and win free education



University of Bristol: PhD students – back the boycott



BRISTOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

University of Bristol Socialist Students Society has been made aware of attempts by university management to undermine the University and College Union (UCU)'s marking and assessment boycott. PhD students have been offered £18.85 per hour to mark first and second-year undergraduate assessments, almost double the rate of pay usually offered to PhD students who undertake teaching and marking duties alongside their studies.

Bristol Socialist Students wholeheartedly condemns this latest move by university management to both undercut the ongoing industrial action being taken by staff in UCU and to drive a wedge between staff and students. We call on PhD students at the University of Bristol to refuse to take part in any marking whilst the boycott is ongoing. Instead, they should join UCU, which PhD students can do for free, and stand in solidarity with striking staff on the next day of strike action on Friday 16 June.

We also recognise that this is an attempt to persuade striking PhD students, who are among some of the lowest-paid staff at the University and are employed often on shortterm, unstable contracts, to break the hovcott

As students ourselves, we understand the impact a marking and assessment boycott has on undergraduate students. However, we recognise that this disruption is due, not to those members of staff exercising their democratic right, but to the fail ure of Bristol university managemen

and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association to properly and sincerely negotiate with the UCU over pay and working conditions.

However, we also recognise that even if the current UCU dispute is settled soon, it won't mark the end of the disruption to our higher education. Students at every level are feeling the sharp end of the cost-ofliving crisis. The Office for National Statistics found last year that 40% of students are studying at home more to save money. A fifth are attending lectures remotely. An additional survey by the Sutton Trust found that 18% of students have avoided buying educational resources needed for their courses. But it isn't only in the realm of study that students are feeling the cost-of-living squeeze. 11% of students now use food banks. 28% reported skipping meals to save on food costs, 47% are going out less with friends, and 14% are travelling to campus for free energy use.

So for students, while building support for the current UCU and Unison strikes on the university campuses is vital, this must be linked to a mass campaign against the student cost-of-living crisis and the fight for free education for all - for publicly funded universities and an end to marketisation

Socialist Students

• Support the UCU marking and assessment boycott - PhD students should not undertake any marking whilst the boycott i ongoing

No punitive pay deductions for staff taking part in the boycott

Organise ioint student-staff meetings on campus to discuss how we fight the attacks on ou universities – and where next for our common struggle against the cost-of-living crisis?

Fight for the funding ou universities need to end disruption to students' and workers' lives. Fight for high-quality, free education – scrap fees, cance student debt, and replace loans with living grants rising with inflation

Build a new mass workers' party to coordinate the struggles of students and workers in one fight against the bosses and thei politicians

Fight for socialist change – for democratic public ownership of the banks, monopolies and major ndustry to provide us with a future



Socialist Darty **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

apitalism is an ailing, crisis 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 wealth 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 is a world system. the struggle for socialism must also

be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International which organises across the world. Our demands include:

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

• A £15-an-hour minimum wage for all, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.

Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.

All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights. • No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for

socially-useful small businesses. For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage

Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.

Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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. The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates

FNVIRONMENT

Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence - where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced - and unrecycled waste. Nationalisation of the energy

companies, under democratic workers control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any

loss of jobs, pay or conditions. A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

For a major, publicly funded. insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.

• Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and \vdots socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join

• or call 020 8988 8777

• or text your name and

to find out more today

postcode to 07761 818 206

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Theatre review



DAVE REID 27 IAW YTRAP T2I IAI OO2

ocialist Out miners' co-operative.

in struggle.

mittee after the buy-out.

coalfield was on strike."

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

• For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race. gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.

Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions. local community organisations and local authorities.

• For the right to choose when and whether to have children - for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.

democratic community control and

oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.

Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.

For the right of nations to selfdetermination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.

• Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections • For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM No to imperialist wars and occupations!

Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats • A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment. No 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

socialistparty.org.uk

Mother. In 1905, a Russian woman dis-

> Bertolt Brecht was a revolutionary, involved in the Munich uprising of 1919, who turned his talent to socialist theatre. Brecht broke with many of the conventions of establishment audiences about politics, and help them realise the necessity of revolu-

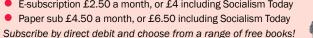
Brecht followed the mistaken Stalinist line of the German Communist Party on many crucial issues, though he was no toady of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and he admired Trotsky's

'lehrstücke' - plays written to educate and to entertain.

the 1905 revolution until February 1917, during which time the character Pelagea encounters trade union bureaucrats, the intelligentsia, strike breakers, and finally other workingclass mothers queuing to donate to the World War One effort.

Each time she uses her intuition. experience and instinctive political be selling the Socialist newspaper on nous to win them to the side of the the door - and it also features in the Bolsheviks. play as a prop!

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a working-class, widowed mother, who is worn down from a cost-ofliving crisis, and is struggling to put food on the table. While she is worried about her son's involvement in upcoming strikes, she is also shocked by the reaction of the authorities. the police brutality and the authorities collusion with big business. The play is asking how can individuals respond in the face of injustice, what is our responsibility, and how can we

The Wheel Theatre company in Plymouth is performing Brecht's The Mother at the Plymouth Barbican Theatre on the 16 and 17 June, and at the Exeter Cygnet on the 22, 23 and Duncan Moore plays The Teacher and members of the Plymouth and

would go down to picket.

"When women at the Hoover factory demanded equal pay, Tower NUM gave them full support and opened the Tower canteen to them for meals. They occupied Aberdare and Rhydlafar Hospitals to save them and, along with others, took strike action in support of nurses." In 1992 the Tories announced

What is The Mother about? Brecht was inspired by Maxim Gorky's novel The Mother to write a play of the same name. It tells the story of a working-class mother who is drawn into the struggle for Bolshevik revolution, and shows her jour-

activism.

affect change

24 June

CO-DIRECTOR AMANDA COLLINS SPOKE TO THE

ney from hopelessness and apathy to

Why did you decide to do this play at this time? What is its

The play feels incredibly relevant to

today. It opens in Russia in 1905 dur-

ing a time of protest, strikes and civil

unrest. Our protagonist, Pelagea, is

Devon Socialist Party branches will

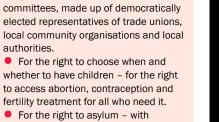
son's behalf to protect him from arrest, leaflets which she can't read herself. She becomes a revolutionary organiser, learning to read and write Bolshevik papers, collecting

party.

tionary change

writings The Mother is one of Brecht's

The play follows 'The Mother' from



A Brecht play about Socialist!

PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Protest, strikes and revolution are portraved in Bertolt Brecht's The

tributes leaflets to strikers on her

subs, and recruiting workers to the theatre, writing plays to teach his

THE MOTHER

revolution, featuring the

DUNCAN MOORI

leader in South Wales



Party members in South Wales were saddened to learn of the death of Tyrone O'Sullivan, lodge secretary at Tower Colliery National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a Militant activist in the South Wales area of the NUM, and leader of the Tower Employees Buy

Tyrone was elected as NUM lodge secretary at Tower Colliery aged just 23 and played an outstanding role fighting for his members, mobilising the rest of the South Wales NUM and campaigning for other workers

"Tyrone was great company and he loved the life of the pit, the comradery and the joking. But his family always came first and, despite his ease with people, he was at heart a very private individual", explains Mariam Kamish, who served on the Tower Lodge Com-

It's no exaggeration to say that Tyrone and the Tower lodge were responsible for the mobilisation of pickets in South Wales to bring out the South Wales miners at the beginning of the great Miners' Strike of 1984-85. "In March 1984, Tower voted solidly for strike action to stop the closure of Cortonwood in Yorkshire, but only a handful of the 28 South Wales pits had done the same. Tyrone coordinated to put on coaches to these other pits. As each pit was picketed out, they joined in picketing the next. By the end of the week, the whole

But under Tyrone's leadership Tower did more than just spearhead the South Wales NUM's own struggles in 1969, 72, 74, 81 and 84-85. Tower mobilised to support a host of workers' struggles. "Any workforce in dispute would ring up - and miners

the closure and sell-off of the few : archive/70/towe

remaining pits in Britain. Tower miners voted again and again against the closure of the colliery, but eventually Tyrone came to the conclusion that the pit would be closed anyway and sold to a private anti-union mining company. So he led the campaign for the Tower miners to put their redundancy money together and cam paign to force the Tories to sell the pit to the workforce. A massive cam paign was launched to demand the right for Tower miners to buy the pit

Tyrone never changed his support for the renationalisation of the industry, but he believed the employee buy-out of the colliery saved hundreds of well-paid jobs in the Cynon Valley, including new apprenticeships for young people in the area "Many played their role in the fight to save Tower, but without Tyrone's un shakeable confidence and drive - his talents for leadership and building a movement - that fight would never have succeeded." Inevitably, as the Socialist Party

warned, there was always a tension between workers' control of the pit and the demands of the market, but Tower remained a source of solidar ity and comradeship for all workers in struggle, with regular delegations of strikers from all over the UK and the world visiting Tyrone and Tower, where they would receive warm support, solidarity, strike fund donations and invaluable advice.

Tyrone was a staunch socialist all his life, but refused to give up on the Labour Party, even when the situation became hopeless. He was a firm supporter of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party and opposed the move to the right following Corbyn's removal.

Tower survived until 2008 when the colliery was eventually closed and Tyrone retired. But his example of militant solidarity and a steadfast support for socialism remains. "It's always worth fighting." That's what he lived by, that's what he taught. That is his legacy.

More at socialistpartywales.org.uk • See the review of Tyrone's book 'Tower of Strength: The story of Tyrone O'Sullivan and Tower Colliery' from 2002 in Socialism Today at socialismtoday.org/

Obituary: Tyrone O'Sullivan | Nigeria: Calls for resistance **1945-2023 Militant miners'** against petrol price hike



n 12 June, members of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) - CWI Nigeria held different activities across four states to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1993 presidential election, whose annulment triggered a struggle against military rule and eventually led to the restoration of civil rule in 1999.

The advent of so-called democracy has not mitigated attacks on democratic rights or guaranteed better live ing standards for the vast majority. So it is not accidental that this anniversarv comes at the same time as the government has criminally hiked the price of petrol, under the guise of subsidy removal, by over 200% from N185 per litre to as high as N577. The government has also planned to unleash other anti-poor policies like devalua tion of the currency and high increas es in the fees of public universities.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Nigeria's main trade union federation, backed down from the general strike against the netrol price hike it had called

So the central materials for the DSM's activities on this day were a special leaflet, which calls for mass resistance against the petrol price hike, and the current edition of the DSM paper, whose lead article articulates what should be done by working people and youth to fight the anti-poor policies of the new Tinubu government

See reports and analysis at socialistnigeria.org and socialistworld.net

Book review: 'It's OK to Be Angry About Capitalism', by Bernie Sanders

At a time of increasing turmoil in the US and globally, Bernie Sanders has produced a devastating critique of capitalism, argues Peter Taaffe. But unfortunately, not with a clear path to a real socialist and democratic alternative

Read more at socialismtoday.org





June issue

mplosion



75 years since Windrush

- Why India is not China
- Does LGBTO+ equal radical?
- Peter Taaffe on Bernie Sanders socialismtoday.org/subscribe 020 8988 8777
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South Gloucestershire bin workers and social workers strike

TOM BALDWIN SOUTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

Refuse workers in South Glouces tershire began their first week of strike action over pay on 12 June. Their counterparts in Bristol and North Somerset are also balloting for action.

Suez, the private company that is contracted to handle waste in South Gloucestershire, made a profit of over £80 million in 2021 and vet they are handing their workers a real-terms pay cut. Unite members overwhelmingly rejected the deal and have announced three weeks of strikes.

Picket lines at two sites both num bered around 50 workers, a large ma jority of those out on strike. Unite rep Tom Jones said: "We're striking for fair pay. We're looking for 10%, we know the company's got a lot more money than that." The dispute had made workers determined to stand their ground, with new members joining on the first day of the strike. Tom himself had only become a union rep this vear, inspired by the strikes of other workers. He said: "We're all the same, we're all workers and we all deserve a rise. Collective action is how we're going to win it and that's what I'm trying to build here.



Later in the day we were given an example of that spirit of solidarity as refuse workers joined social workers at a rally. Adult social workers in Unison were taking their sixth day of strike action after South Gloucestershire council naid a £3,000 retention bonus to child social workers but left them with nothing.

The rally at the Civic Centre in Kingswood was planned to coincide with a meeting of the new council ber) Dan Smart told the crowd that : avoid a 'stinky summer

the cabinet had pushed their meeting back and had ignored the invitation from the two unions to come down and speak to them. For those hoping the new Lib Dem and Labour administration would mark a clear change of direction after years of Tory rule, this was an inauspicious start.

It was a strong start to the strike action though and a determined display of union power. The ball is now cabinet. However, Unison branch : in the court of the council and the secretary (and Socialist Party mem- : employer to settle the disputes and



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e need to carry on striking, because something needs to change. **Otherwise junior** doctors will continue to move abroad to better pay, or into career paths with less stress or better working environments and more respect. The current state of the NHS

disincentivises the next generation of students from becoming doctors."

Those are the words of a recently qualified junior doctor, ahead of the latest 72-hour strike by junior doctor members of the British Medical Association (BMA), starting on 14 June. This latest strike comes a week after Royal College of Nursing (RCN) members walked out again in Wales on 6-7 June, and a week before RCN members in England find out the result of their latest strike vote on 23 June, this time on an aggregated basis. 71% of junior doctors in Scotland

have voted to reject an offer of 14.5% over two years from the Scottish government and will strike on 12 and 15 July if an improved offer isn't made.

Ambulance workers in Unite working for West Midlands Ambulance Service took strike action on 12 June, and Yorkshire ambulance workers will strike on 23 and 26 June.

Health-worker anger is not abating, and neither is the level of crisis in the NHS. Waiting lists continue to grow (see page 6), and more workers yet to have taken part in the strike wave could still join. Society of Radiographers members are voting on whether to strike in a ballot closing 28 June (see page 6). The strike wave in the health

service, like elsewhere, is far from over. And the Tory government is more weak and divided than ever.

What better time for rank-and-file workers, from across the trade unions, to come together and discuss a strategy for the strikes going forward? To plan what is needed to win fully funded inflation-proof pay rises and a fighting response to the incoming new anti-trade union laws.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on 24 June in London will bring together hundreds of fighting trade unionists from the strike wave. Be part of those discussions. Register to attend on the day or in advance by visiting tinyurl.com/5n8jj2wf

