





# UPPORT RAL WORKERS





ADAM HARMSWORTH COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

# rain ticket prices rose 5.9% last year, higher than many workers' wages.

So far this year, passengers have only been promised they won't go up by more than 9%! At the same time, the privatised Train Operating Companies (TOCs) make gigantic profits, funded by us and by attacking rail workers' jobs, pay and conditions. Privatisation been : has

rail bosses who will always put profit over running a decent service. In the first 18 months from the beginning of the Covid pandemic, they made over £300 million while leaving staff and passengers worse off.

Worse still, the Tories funded those profits with our taxes. The government also directly compensates companies for losses from strike action. So far £1 billion has been funnelled to the rail companies to pay them for the ongoing dispute. Rail workers in RMT and Aslef unions continue their determined industrial action on 1 and 2 September respectively.

The recent wretched plans to shut

horrendous for everyone except the inearly every ticket office illustrate how privatisation is running the rail system into the ground. Capitalism's mythical promise is that the market inspires bosses to invest and improve services. Most workers can see this is a blatant lie. The largest poll ever done on the issue shows two thirds support public ownership of the railways.

Such is the failure of privatisation that one third of the TOCs are already back in public ownership but run top-down with bosses still attacking workers. When British Rail was in public ownership in the past, it was run top-down - underfunded and poorly maintained.

Bringing rail into democratic public ownership, run by the working class who actually have an interest in an affordable high-quality rail system, the money currently going to rail company profits and bosses' bloated salaries could be put to good use. We could cut ticket prices, and improve staff wages and conditions including fewer hours with no loss in pay.

By taking into public hands the mega-profits that have been siphoned off by big business bosses, and by nationalising those major companies and banks too, investment can be planned to provide all that we need. That could include :

an expanded public transport system, democratically planned and free to use - along with other measures to tackle the climate crisis.

A socialist rail service under workers' democratic control and management must be the future of railways. The rail unions must demand that an incoming Keir Starmer-led government pledge to nationalise rail immediately, maintaining ticket offices and workers' pay, terms and conditions. And if those pledges aren't made, then prepare to back candidates at a general election that will, independentlv of Labour.

**US: FISSURES PREPARE ERUPTION OF** CRISIS AND STRUGGLE **>>>** p6-7

Militant

Issue 1240

31 August - 6 September 2023

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letters on working-class issues, or

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"The philosophers have only

interpreted the world, in various ways;

the point is to change it.'

Karl Marx

CWIT

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themselves.

meet demand.



for the Socialist.

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DEADLINES

ideas for other articles.

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2

# Wes Streeting the Socialist goes to the opera

socialistparty.org.uk

has been achieved."

welfare system.

creased prices may well agree with

her, but Dorries is no friend of strug-

gling families. Infamous for hiding

her own money on a Channel 4 show

testing if MPs could live on the then-

called Jobseekers Allowance, she has

backed the last decade of Tory aus-

terity measures and attacks on the

Dorries hasn't spoken in the House

of Commons for over 400 days and

only voted six times in that period. Re-

ports that constituents have not been

able contact her to represent them

haven't stopped Dorries continuing

to get her £86,584 salary as an MP.

She might be the only worker in the

country that has gone on strike and,

Socialis Party

MARK BEST

SECRETARY, UNITE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HEALTH BRANCH

Labour's shadow health minister. Wes Streeting, seems to have expensive taste in opera – or he would if he had to pay for his tickets. This summer he was fortunate to get tickets to Glyndebourne opera worth £600, thanks to the generosity of FGS Global.

lic relations company want to help Streeting enjoy a night out? Could it have anything to do with their client, Optum UK - a subsidiary of US giant corporation, United Health?

Optum is taking over EMIS for £1.2 billion. EMIS is a healthcare software system widely used in GP practices, community health services, A&Es and pharmacies. Control of this huge amount of health data could be a very

The Competition and Markets Authority, which has to approve the takeover, has raised a concern so the date for takeover completion has been extended until 30 June 2024 when Streeting may well be Secretary of State for Health!

# JON DALE

Why should a multinational pub-

valuable resource for United Health.



the **Socialist** 

until she formally resigned, her boss-

Nadine Dorries MP PHOTO: DEPARTME

es were unable to stop paying her!

The hundreds of thousands of workers that have been on strike over the past year against the cost-of-living crisis don't have a party that represents them in Parliament, Whether from the increasingly desperate Tories - who can't stop tearing each other to pieces as they approach, in Dorries' own words, an "electoral tsunami" - or from Starmer's Labour, currently watering down its 'New deal for Working People' (see Labour

U-turn on workers' rights pledge or www.socialistparty.org.uk) and penalising MPs like Sam Tarry for attending picket lines.

31 August - 6 September 2023

The Socialist Party fights for building such a party, to represent all those who want to fight back against the misery on offer from the main parties. We fight for unions to be able to back candidates that will fight for their members. We fight for a new mass workers' party, armed with a socialist programme, to offer a real alternative

Join the fightback JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

# Unis: work full-time, study full-time ... at the same time!

nising that the maintenance loan isn't enough to pay students' rents let alone to live on. Have they demanded more money from the government for living grants? Or brought university housing in-house to provide affordable, high-quality accommodation?





# \$7 trillion fossil fuel subsidies nationalise!

dished out in 2022, a rate of \$13 million a minute and equivalent to 7% of global GDP, according to the IMF.

So much for tackling climate change. The G20 nations are responsible for 80% of global carbon emissions, and in 2009 pledged to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. In 2022, the same nations spent a total of \$1.4 trillion.

Huge amounts have been spent on capping the prices of fuel and heating, like the energy price cap in Britain. But these measures don't encroach on the record-high profits of the big fossil fuel companies.

Rather than dishing out cash to go straight into the coffers of the likes of Shell and BP, we say nationalise the

\$7 trillion of fossil fuel subsidies were 🗄 energy industry under democratic working-class control and management. Imagine what \$7 trillion could do if the working class could put it to use developing measures to stop climate change

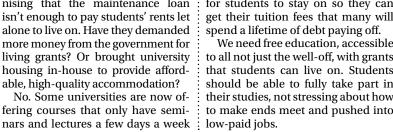


Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT

# Universities have taken action to help $\vdots$ so students can get a job and afford out cash-strapped students, recog- : to study. The universities are keen for students to stay on so they can get their tuition fees that many will spend a lifetime of debt paying off. We need free education, accessible to all not just the well-off, with grants

No. Some universities are now of-

that students can live on. Students should be able to fully take part in their studies, not stressing about how



# Ambulance staff leaving profession **Fight for the resources we need**

7.000 ambulance staff have left the service in the last year, as reported in the Guardian on 22 August, up 51%

Earlier this year, the government launched the Long-Term Workforce Plan - their plan to improve staffing with recruitment and retention across the NHS (see 'Tory fairytale NHS staffing plan' on www.socialist-

But for the ambulance service it's not getting new people in that's the problem, it's keeping them. There is a constant flow of recently graduated, inexperienced staff, with everincreasing responsibility placed on them; including to support and train new starters, while they're brand new

Staff aren't getting support with transitioning from students to clinicians, or for the increasing pressure on the service. Ambulance calls have doubled since 2010, as other parts of the underfunded NHS struggle to

The result is a quick turnover of

## staff. Nobody joined to wait outside hospitals for hours, or to leave patients waiting for hours in pain or for patients who don't need ambulances but can't get routine GP, district nurse or mental health appointments. Nobody joined for patients to die unnecessarily as a result of delayed ambulances, as nearly a third of paramedics in the GMB union believe happened in 2022.

The Long-Term Workforce Plan covers issues of retention, including pay and lack of support for newly qualified staff. It aims to address these, but does not indicate how How will new staff be better support ed when there are fewer and fewer experienced staff to support them? How will pay concerns be improved when it took weeks of strike action to get a begrudging 5.2% pay rise - a real-terms pay cut?

Until the deliberate, systematic attacks on the NHS are stopped, and it is brought fully back into public ownership, properly staffed and democratically organised by its workers the numbers leaving will only get

# Lucy Letby case – how can our health service be safe?

### STEVE SCORE

SOCIALIST PARTY EAST MIDLANDS SECRETARY

he shocking case of Lucy Letby, the former nurse convicted of murdering seven babies and attempting to murder six more, raises wider questions about the way the NHS is run. NHS staff of all job descriptions are dedicated to saving lives and looking after their patients, often in extremely difficult conditions - underpaid, understaffed, and underfunded. But cases such as this highlight a lack of accountability and democratic control in the NHS.

These horrific crimes happened on neonatal ward at Chester Hospital between June 2015 and June 2016. vet concerns raised by staff about the deaths were not acted on by hospital management over a period of at least seven months

There were other unexplained 'collapses' during that period. Even after Letby was moved from the neonatal ward she was allocated to the 'risk and patient safety office' where she had access to sensitive documents from the neonatal unit. Deaths were apparently not reported appropriately, so the high fatality rate was no picked up by the NHS in the way it should have been

### Unions

Doctors' unions have commented on the failure of management to take warnings seriously. The BMA said it has been "clear that the NHS and the whole healthcare system must have an open culture where doctors are listened to and can be confident in speaking out." The president of the consultants' union HCSA said: "The intolerable cover-up culture by managers that we still see in corners of the NHS is bad for patients and bad for doctors".

The government has announced an independent inquiry following the outcome of the court case, but



# Today's shortages cost lives

not at this stage a statutory one that can make witnesses give evidence, as supported by victims' families. But neither would it give staff as a whole, nor the affected families and users of the NHS, a democratic say over proceedings and decisions that are subsequently made. The Socialist Party also calls for an independent trade union inquiry - a workers' inquiry that could draw in the wider working class with participation from health unions and others, to have a real say in how our health service is run.

# NHS culture

The Health Service Ombudsman pointed out that, although they are very different cases, there are similarities in management actions in several baby death scandals in recent years: Morecambe Bay, Shrewsbury and Telford, East Kent, and Nottingham. He said: "It raises questions yet again about a dysfunctional, adversarial culture in many NHS trusts, sub-optimal methods for reporting and investigating wrongdoing, and unacceptable attitudes to whistleblowing and raising concerns".

The unions have raised the fact that non-clinical managers aren't regulated in the way that clinical staff are in professional bodies. The HCSA is calling for an independent body to be set up outside the NHS to protect

However, would these steps be enough

Whilst the NHS, at least the part that hasn't yet been fully privatised, is publicly owned, the democratic accountability over its management is extremely limited, and has become less so under government changes to its structures.

Decisions of senior trust executives have been concerned with protecting reputational damage. Foundation Trusts, brought in by Blair's New Labour, built on Thatcher's 'internal market' that saw different parts of the NHS as competing rather than collaborating bodies.

The Socialist Party calls for democratic control and management by staff, their trade unions, and the us ers of the NHS. That means elected representatives from all these groups to be involved in non-clinical decision making. Genuine democratic accountability at every level would give all staff the confidence to raise any thing that is going wrong and allow a full debate about how to tackle it.

This would need to go alongside the renationalisation of all those parts of the NHS that have been privatised and outsourced, proper unding so that there is enough equipment and beds, and solving the huge staffing shortages in the NHS, part of which is to give staff a proper and fair pay rise.

# **Nationalise Wilko and** other failing companies to save jobs and shops



# the Socialist

IAIN DALTON LISDAW BROAD LEFT SECRETARY

The 12,400 jobs under threat at Wilko since it has entered administration, with the best-case scenario a seemingly diminishing possibility of someone buying only a small part of the company as a going concern, will be the biggest retail collapse since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Much of the reporting has focused on the company's financial troubles, particularly issues around paying suppliers and the withdrawal of insurance credit. The company had closed 'unprofitable' stores and sacked layers of store management in early 2023. It also sold and leased back the Worksop distribution centre (one of two) to raise £48 million in 2022 (DHL has since sold the lease on the distribution centre in early 2023 to a Canadian private equity firm for £88 million!`

# Maximum profits

But we should be clear the company's management did not suddenly turn to brutally cash-in at the workers' expense - that's how they have always been - it's the logic of capitalism to extract the maximum profits.

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, the company had to scrap a policy to attack workers' sick-nav entitlement, but just one vear later it went ahead and implemented those attacks.

Industrial action had also been due to take place in 2019 ahead of rota changes imposed on warehouse workers to increase weekend shifts, before a partial backdown by the company

A total of £77 million has been paid out in dividends over the last ten years by the company, a bigger sum than the £40 million borrowed by the company from private equity company Hilco.

All retail businesses operate on the basis of a certain amount of credit, such as with suppliers, or in order to expand operations. But with rising inflation, and pessimistic projections for the retail sector as a whole, banks and financiers are both reluctant to lend and demanding higher interest payments. 31 August - 6 September 2023

Additional measures during the pandemic had protected retailers from legal action from suppliers, but these were lifted last year.

# **Retail trends**

But other trends have also had an impact. As retail analysts have pointed out, Wilko has a high proportion of city centre stores compared to rival discount retail chains such as B&M, Home Bargains, and others. During the pandemic, those out-of-town stores in retail parks - with their own car parks and greater space - were used more, cushioning the effect of the pandemic on those companies incomes. Business rates since 2017 have also been generally higher for high street shops as opposed to retail parks.

These problems are far from unique to Wilko, and with the economy heading towards recession, more retail companies will face a similar fate.

With the company in the hands of administrators, they are legally bound to prioritise the interests of creditors first. Like all laws under capitalism, the main purpose of such legislation is to seek to protect the interests of the capitalist class.

It is estimated that, if any rescue deal did come off, as few as 50 out of the 400 stores may be saved, at best An offer to save 200 stores as a going business was rejected by the admin istrators as not in the best interests of the creditors.

Our starting point is demanding to protect the jobs of workers, but rather than canvassing support for a takeover of Wilko by yet another private equity firm, we would instead demand that Wilko is brought into public ownership to save jobs

Discussions could be held with democratically elected representatives of workers, and the wider trade union movement, on the best use of the company's assets with wellpaid, secure jobs for staff being fully funded.

The alternative provided by capitalism's logic is huge swathes of Wilko workers being thrown onto the unemployment scrapheap, and even more empty spaces on our high

# SOCIAL IST PARTY MEMBERS IN PCS

is drawing to a close.

and end the strike levy.

essary to vote 'no'

rebuilt.

# General secretary and AGS election

down

BLN leaflet.

and urgent.

We weren'

# Bin workers' progress – and Labour's shame



# RORFRT CHARLESWORTH

socialistparty.org.uk

UNITE COMMUNITY CUMBRIA AND SOCIALIST PARTY

Allerdale refuse workers, members of Unite the Union, have won pay rises of 8.3% and 13.6%, seven hours off the working week, double pay for working bank holidays, and other improvements. They fought with the backing of their community, and solidarity from other unons. The lesson for other workers in Cumberland is clear: join a unon, get active, and you can improve our lives too.

Allerdale Waste Services (AWS) was created by the district council and employs the workers on worse pay and conditions than the local government national standard. Shamefully, it is being maintained by the Labour-controlled Cumberland County Council, which owns AWS 100%.

The councillors have shown open hostility to the workers' unions and tried, unsuccessfully, to turn the community against them. AWS

claimed in the local press that Unite : down of Labour's promises on workhad "no intention of coming to an agreement to bring the industrial action to a close".

Unite is Labour's biggest donor nationally, but these councillors have treated the bin workers as their enemy. They readily seized on a Tory law change to recruit agency staff as strike breakers against their own workforce.

When this practice was declared illegal, the council tried to get round the High Court ruling by hiring strike breakers on fixed-term contracts.

The Labour county councillors are seen as anti-worker, anti-union strike breakers. If any councillor feels aggrieved by this criticism, then let them finally speak out openly against their council leadership. On whose side did the Labour parliamentary candidates in Cumberland stand - that of the workers or the council? They have allowed a Tory MP to hypocritically pose as a friend of workers.

Unite rejects the recent watering

ers' rights. It also demands that Labour councils pass no-cuts budgets instead of just dumping Tory cuts onto the working class.

The Unite Community Cumbria branch calls on the council to bring AWS services and workforce inhouse on nationally agreed pay and conditions. They should guarantee never to use Tory strikebreaking laws agair

Socialist Party members argue that if councillors are not prepared to make a stand, trade unionists should support candidates that are.



# **PCS: change the leadership! Nominate Marion Lloyd for general** secretary and John Moloney for AGS

As we go to press, the ballot of PCS civil service union members on the future of the national pay campaign

In that ballot, the national leadership asked members: "Do you support PCS strategy to continue the campaign?" Whereas actually the strategy of the national leadership is to do the opposite of that: to cancel the strikes, postpone the reballots,

The PCS Broad Left Network (BLN), the rank-and-file socialist group in which Socialist Party members participate, argued that in order to continue the campaign it was nec

Whatever the outcome of this dishonest and confusing ballot, the national campaign will need to be

Now, PCS members will get the opportunity to nominate and vote for who they want to be general secretary and assistant general secretary of our union. Current general sec retary, Mark Serwotka, is standing

The text below is taken from a

# Marion Lloyd and John Molonev for PCS

The Broad Left Network has joined forces with the Independent Left in this election, and is supporting Marion Lloyd for general secretary and John Moloney for assistant general secretary. Nominations begin at the start of September.

The choice in these elections is simple. If you want more of the same, nominate the candidates from the current leadership. Fran Heathcote and Paul O'Connor. If you want to go for change, nominate Marion Lloyd and John Moloney.

We believe we need to change the leadership and their woeful record in the pay campaign. The dishonest hallot makes that change crucial

# you happy with

# The ballot

The ballot on pay was deliberately confusing. A 'yes' vote was dishonestly described as a vote to continue the pay campaign, when in fact it was actually a vote to end it.

## The campaign

The pay campaign itself lacked any real urgency or determination. Following the 'ves' vote for action

in November 2022, it took the leadership over six weeks to call small-scale targeted strikes. It took them nearly three months to call an all-members national strike.

## The concessions

pressure of our action, and the more extensive strikes across public services, eventually forced the government to make a limited concession. But a nonconsolidated, one-off lump sum of £1,500 (pro-rated) for 2022-23 and a 4.5-5% pay limit for 2023-24. was nowhere near good enough. should have been rejected by the leadership. Instead, when the government blinked, the leadership blinked straight back.

# The strategy

FFICIA

PICKET

The whole approach of the current leadership now is to end the pay campaign while pretending to continue it. This is so their candidates can claim "we are still in dispute" even though they have called off strike action, reballots and the levy, and instructed employee groups to negotiate pay settlements within the government pay limit! This is a betrayal of members' interests.

Marion on the picket line (3rd from right) in the national campaign SOCIALIST PARTY

Marion Llovd and John Molonev campaigned for a 'no' vote in the pay ballot. They argued for an escalation of the action to keep up the pressure for pay increases to match the cost-of-living crisis. They stand for 'Action not Words'.

## What to do

Make sure your branch has a meeting to nominate for general secretary and assistant general secretary (AGS) Nominate Marion Lloyd for general secretary and John Moloney for AGS

Huge 95% vote for strike action by Unite members at **Barts Health Trust** 

## I FN HOCKEY

INITE BARTS HEALTH BRANCH SECRETARY

Workers at Barts Health Trust hospitals, who are members of Unite, have voted overwhelmingly for strike action against the government's imposed real-terms pay cut for health workers. This represents a decisive rejection of the Tories' policy of running health services into the ground, and lays a marker for the upcoming pay round that workers will not countenance more attacks on wages and patient care.

One theatre member told me this week that since the 5% rise was put into workers' wages in June, he was now taking home less money when factoring increases in pension contributions.

Former Serco workers, now returned to the trust following our landmark victory in 2022, are livid at the trust's decision not to pay them the £1.655 lump-sum payment that other colleagues have received.

Quite rightly, these domestic and catering members, who made up the majority of ex-Serco staff, are asking why - when they were also exposed in the pandemic to Covid and suffered its effects - they are being denied this

payment. My branch - unlike an other union in the trust, which consulted its members on whether they were prepared to accept £725, less than half the amount - is demanding equality and the full lump-sum pay ment for our members.

Among other issues in the ballot was the trust's failure to take length of service into consideration at the point of assimilation to an Agenda for Change (AFC) pay point. Also, their refusal to provide assurance in the review that they would no cut rates for workers employed or 'bank' terms (not on contracts). And the demand that these rates be uplifted in line with the national rates so that workers undertaking extra hours or shifts as overtime get the AFC rates.

Additional issues include failure to increase pay for members on old terms and conditions (frozen AFC), and cuts to the branch secretary' union facility time.

Unite members at Guys and St Thomas' trust have already taken strike action and we will now be coordinating our campaign with them and members at the East London and Barking, Havering and Redbridge Trusts

# St Mungo's: 13-week strike wins improved offer



### HELEN PATTISON ONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Striking workers at St Mungo's homelessness charity have voted to accept an offer after 13 weeks of continuous strike

They managed to secure an increase which Unite the Union says works out at 10.74% based on the median wage at the charity or £3,125 in cash terms, which includes a £700 lump sum and the national NJC award now being negotiated. Workers have also won agreements to curtail further in creases in management pay, and extra holiday for staff.

They should return to work with their heads held high and on a good basis to continue to build the union. The strike has aided a new generation of trade union activists in learning how to build and maintain a strike across small projects and against a difficult management.

No doubt many workers, particularly in the charity sector, will be emboldened by their fight and victory.

the Socialist

# ISE FISSIRES PREPA **ERUPTION OF POLITICAL CRISIS AND WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE**

### LENNY SHAIL SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6

he latest indictment of Donald Trump, his fourth criminal case this year, marks another new stage in the dysfunctional, chaotic, fractured currentday USA. "America is history's most successful failing state", the Financial Times put it last year.

This time Trump faces a 'RICO' charge, originally brought out to convict mafia and organised crime figures. Ironically, taking on mafia bosses with RICO charges is how Trump's ex-lawyer Rudy Giuliani made his name in New York City. Now it's him facing the charges!

The US finds itself at a crossroads. Domestically it has aspects of extreme social polarisation - riddled by division and debt - and a society rayaged with increasing inequality and poverty.

Still the world's biggest economy and in decline, the US is no longer the single dominant force with the ability to set the framework for world capitalism - stoking further economic fracturing, conflict and war, and a decline in capitalist cooperation and globalisation

# China

US protectionist policies go further under loe Biden than they did under Trump. 20 years ago when China ioined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the US complained China had protectionist chip policies. Now its China reporting the US!

The US and China are trapped in a 'toxic relationship' - reliant on each other economically but also in competition and provoking each other. Both nations have huge underlying economic problems domestically and internationally that could open up new economic crises with huge effects on the wider world economy.

Biden's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the CHIPS and Science still in place, are limiting the export of high-tech microchips to China. squeezing the Chinese economy.

But it's not only China that is angered. Sections of US big business see the Acts as an attack on the free market. American greed and the interests of some sections of US capitalism are running into conflict with American 'security values' being pursued by Biden and a section of the US capitalist class.

China's reliance on imported equipment is aggravated by US imperialism. Simultaneously, China is retaliating with export restrictions on important minerals for semiconduc tor production.

At the same time, the US's increasing protectionist measures have inevitably been met with steps in the same direction by other trading blocs. Biden's IRA, aiming to encourage US green tech investment - giving \$369 billion in subsidies to US industry - is in effect part of its trade war against China, and it is attempting to draw Western allies behind it.

But economic pressures limit agreement on China policy. Germany is twice as reliant on China as the US Japan and the EU announced similar plans to subsidise their own industries in response to the IRA. Today there are around 35,000 protectionist measures in place globally, up from 9,000 ten years ago.

The dollar still reigns supreme as the lender of last resort but China is increasingly trying to edge itself in as an alternative. Since 2008, \$240 billion has been used to bailout banks and sovereign nations around the world.

# **Doom loop**

There are elements of a doom loop for US capitalism - the international and domestic political situation provoking economic crisis and fracturing, triggering a worsening political situation in turn.

This year has seen the secondthird- and fourth-biggest bank failures in US history. In effect, all were bailed out either by arrangement with the Federal Reserve or privately by the biggest banks.

But none of the underlying issues have been dealt with. Silicon Vallev Bank failed because it owned too much of what should be on paper the safest asset to have - long-term US Treasury Bonds. But that US govern-Act. alongside Trump's tariffs that are : ment debt has dropped massively in value due to the record interest rate rises to try to combat inflation. There is the potential for further outbreaks and failures, as we have already seen this year but also for a crisis on the scale of, or even greater than, 2008.

None of the systemic issues of 2008 have been dealt with. Instead, the US relied on Quantitative Easing, the use of China as a cheap mass manufacturer of goods, and taking on huge levels of debt

# **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.

Today US banks are still sitting on : over \$650 billion of unrealised losses in the form of US long-dated bonds. Already many are resorting to emergency short-term borrowing to meet depositors' cash demands.

US capitalism is riddled with debt throughout, a legacy of the previous period of 'cheap money'. Federal debt stands at \$32 trillion, close to 130% of GDP, ordinary Americans hold \$17 trillion of household debt and there is around \$20 trillion of corporate debt.

Record-rate interest rate rises have exposed fractures and fault lines in all corners of the US and world economy, with more still to surface. 'Zombie companies' and commercial real estate owners exist only able to pay interest on their loans. They are increasingly unable to afford even that. And then there are the knock-on ef-

fects on the holders of these debts. In 2008, it took around only 5% of subprime mortgages to bring the towers of mortgage bonds tumbling down.

Recession is still on the cards, and a prolonged period of stagflationary debt crisis could see a rapid rise of unemployment, pay cuts and further intense rises in poverty.

But like in 2008, and has already been shown again this year, the capitalist class will go to huge lengths to try to avoid a new spiralling crisis - of course, on the backs of the working class.

Eventually Congress agreed to lift the debt ceiling this Spring. But Biden and Congress are heading for a possible government shutdown in September before a deal gets done on the budget. Debt levels are set to increase further, as will interest payments.

Already over \$1 trillion of debt has been sold since the debt ceiling was lifted. But increasingly the question will be raised - who's going to buy it?

The fact that the US government came so close to default is just the latest example of its dysfunctional nature - it erodes the stability of US capitalism and confidence in its institutions further.

The emergency use of a trillion dollar coin is the go-to headline grabber when different scenarios to avoid a default are discussed by commentators. But other tools such as perpetual or consul bonds (bonds with no maturity date), or the use of the fourteenth amendment (a post-civil war law that demands US government always pays its debts) can't be ruled out in the future. That would further widen the extreme social polarisation and divisions that have opened up in all aspects of society and in the institutions of the state.

Within the Republican Party, in the Senate, House of Representatives, state by state, and within states and cities, fault lines are deepening. It took 16 votes for Republican Kevin McCarthy to be elected speaker of the house by his own party, such are the divisions between the many wings of Trump's supporters and the 'traditional' Republican bloc.

## Roe vs Wade

Currently no US generals are being appointed because one senator from Alabama is refusing to give his vote to the ceremonial 'unanimous' vote required to appoint them, in protest at the Pentagon allowing female members of the military to access abortions in whatever state they may



live after the removal of Roe vs Wade. Not that the Pentagon has suddenly become the bastion of women's rights!

But the historic attack on women's rights by the Supreme Court, in removing Roe vs Wade, has further exposed the divisions within the US. The Economist front cover around the time of the Supreme Court's actions last year: "How to save the Supreme Court," gave a hint of the panic and concern about the weakening confidence in the institution by huge sections of ordinary people, and the dilemma it presents for the American ruling class.

Earlier this year, a federal court in Texas passed a verdict banning abortion pills. About 20 minutes or so later, a Washington federal judge passed a law affirming the legality of abortion pills. Such conflicting policies and decisions are now the norm within the

# **Splintering**

A piece in the Economist last year headlined "American policy is splitting, state by state, into two blocs". summed up the situation perfectly, highlighting the completely opposite directions of travel on policy between California and Mississippi on all manner of issues from abortion, the environment, education, healthcare, employment rights, and immigration.

Next year's presidential elections are likely to see a further hardening of one-party states, federal states where one party has complete control. The number currently stands at 37 - the highest ever. Divisions are not only state by state but within states and cities as well.

# **Donald Trump**

Trump appears to be on his way to being the Republican candidate. a nightmare scenario for the stability of US capitalism, and it cannot be ruled out he wins - even with fewer votes given the Electoral College system. This would further weaken the already feeble credibility of capitalist democratic process in the US.

The election is likely to see even more intense battles and disputes over votes, reflecting the hardening of fractured political blocs. Even today many electoral officials, from state attorneys to lower-down electoral workers, believe Trump won the last election. More scenes of the character of the 6 January coup attempt cannot be ruled out.

At this stage, there is no mass political voice for the working class. In June, well-known activist Cornel West declared an independent left challenge for the presidency in 2024. West's declaration is a welcome initial step forward. The Democratic Socialists of America remain completely at tached to the Democrats.

The capitalist class is united in fearing the working class reacting to their dysfunctional system by finding its own voice. Even in response to Trump's 2020 coup attempt there were discussions in the trade unions on a general strike. The Socialist Party's sister organisation in the US Independent Socialist Group (ISG), continues to fight for every gain possible for the working class, and to build forces struggling for socialist change wherever we can.

Part of that struggle is raising the need for, and fighting for, a mass workers' party. A party democratically

workers, unions, youth, socialists and grassroots campaigns, not corporations. That would give an organised political voice and tool to working people's fight against capitalist exploitation and oppression.

## Workers fighting back

Despite no political vehicle to express its increasingly desperate conditions, the American working class has begun to flex some of its huge potential force, albeit on a limited scale at this stage.

The 'Striketober' movement of 2021, that saw over 25,000 workers on strike, was a small glimpse of a developing mood. Since, there have been important industrial strikes, mainly at local level. Nationally, union recruitment and recognition drives, such as at Amazon. Starbucks and numerous sections of education workers, have gained huge attention but, as with many of the strikes and disputes that have developed, have often been limited by the union bureaucracies and anti-union laws and legislations.

However, many of these movements have still acted as a pole of attraction, particularly Amazon, in sparking growing support for workers' rights and union solidarity

Throughout the major cities, there will be some sort of 'event' organised by a union or union activists daily, be it a strike, stunt or protest - such is the growing discontent.

Railroad workers and, most recently, UPS workers are two powerful groups of workers that came within a whisker of a national strike that would have seen US capitalism come to a standstill, and could have had a huge effect on the outlook of millions. Last-minute agreements, aggressively pushed through by union bureaucracies, stopped both struggles developing after they had barely got started.

Both sets of workers could have won far more and, with a fighting programme of action and organisation, could have won exactly what they demanded. However, in both cases the bosses and ruling class had to act desperately to avert strike action, fearing the impact of a strike on their profits.

Biden had to step in to impose a contract on the tens of thousands of rail workers in the four unions that had voted no to the tentative agreement. Both parties acted within 72 hours including self-identified 'progressives' in the Democratic Party like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Congress : is what ISG and CWI are fighting for.

organised, funded and controlled by : has the power to force a contract on the railroad unions due to the antiunion Railway Labor Act.

7

UPS bosses had to concede and rush last-minute deals through to ge the Teamster leadership on board 'They blinked: UPS call led to \$30 billion Teamsters win", a Bloomberg headline read.

New Teamsters union leader representing UPS workers, Sean O'Brian, has had to talk left and militant since his election, despite himself having come from a split with the old bureau cracy. However, despite his rhetoric, both pay disputes highlight the important work ISG and the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) conduct around the world to transform unions into fighting democratic organisations that can lead and organise struggle.

# **Discontent heating up**

But, like the economic issues that have been kicked down the road by the US capitalist class, the rising workingclass discontent won't be put to bed by any number of concession stitch-ur deals. The rising heat under the surface is getting hotter and hotter. The United Auto Workers union has just voted to strike across the major US car makers, over 150 000 workers in total. if no new deal is agreed by 15 September.

Co-leader of the Russian Revolution Leon Trotsky, in his writings on Britain, commented that the roots and foundations of the 1926 general strike were inherent within the situation in Britain through the years after World War One. In many ways, a similar situation exists in the USA today. Huge and decisive strike action and movements of the working class have not yet been sparked or found an expression But the many fractures and potential crises that could explode, could guite quickly spur the gigantic US working class into life on a mass scale.

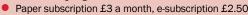
One of the mistakes the British capi talist class made in 1926 was to mistake the timid weakness and unwillingness to fight of the right-wing trade union leaders as representative of the British working class who, in contrast, were determined and willing to strike and to rock the foundations of capitalist rule The US ruling class has shown hints of similar errors, as has much of the socalled left.

Massive battles are brewing in the US. Historic opportunities and possibilities are opening up to build support for revolutionary socialist ideas amongst the US working class, which

SOCIALISM TODAY Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party ber issue includes

- World economy the end of golden eras Under siege - the crisis of capitalist democracy
- The tragedy of Chile 1973.

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onto her lips.

players' union.

David de Gea.

Strike

Vilda

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SEPTEMBER

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SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

he appalling actions of the

president of Spain's football

body, Louis Rubiales, after

the team won the women's

football World Cup, have

highlighted aspects of women's

It was not a kiss. Rubiales sexually

assaulted Jenni Hermoso by grab-

bing her head and forcing his mouth

Federation has outrageously threat-

ened to take legal action against

her. But millions of football fans wit-

nessed this attack, and are outraged.

And people are fighting back. Her-

moso has been backed by Futpro, the

81 women players, so far, have said

they will not play for Spain until Ru-

biales is sacked and action is taken.

This includes every single member of

Players from the men's game have

protested against Rubiales's actions

and in support of Hermoso too, like

veteran goalkeepers Iker Casillas and

Borja Iglesias has refused to play for

Spain's men's team until action is

taken. And every coach from Spain's

women's team has resigned in pro-

test too, except head coach Jorge

15 players from Spain's women's

team had already refused to play in

2022, because of unacceptable be-

haviour and bizarre rules imposed

on them by Vilda. Rubiales respond-

In 2015, a previous Spain coach

ed by calling the players "brats".

Spain's World Cup-winning squad.

What's more, the Spanish Football

in Spain, football and society

**Outpouring of opposition to sexism** 

Mass mobilisation and solidarity is

Racism in football also has a long

and inglorious history, which is

now massively rejected by the vast

majority of football fans. And there

have been some steps in tackling

But, within capitalism, these ideas

Football cannot escape the domi-

nant capitalist ideology in society.

We need to unite and oppose all

Rubiales's outrageous behaviour

claim this beautiful game.

community

enforced.

homophobia.

can reemerge.

misconduct.

forms of oppression.

Harassment

# HELEN PATTISON

FOOTBALL FAN

new level in many countries.

profit interests first.

Just look at last year's men's Champions League final in Paris - huge problems with the treatment of fans getting into the stadium (see 'Evewitness: Champions League final - lying Uefa, politicians and brutal police to blame' at socialistparty.org.uk). Or the controversy around the 2022 men's World Cup being awarded to Oatar (see 'FIFA can't stop World Cup politics seeping through' at socialistparty.org.uk).

the game. her consent.

opposite).

And there was the cringe-worthy speech by the president of football's governing body Fifa, Gianni Infantino. He told women to pick the right battles - i.e don't put demands on : up. the extremely wealthy Fifa, which is also mired in corruption scandals. Football authorities have not only failed to support the development of the women's game. They, at times, actively blocked it. Women's football was banned in Britain by the Football Association between 1921-71

land banks and estates.

# **ENVIRONMENT**

• Prioritising major research and and unrecycled waste.

Nationalisation of the energy control and management, with loss of jobs, pay or conditions. A democratically planned, massively • For a major, publicly funded,

# Sexism

We need to fight for an end to capitalism. And struggle to build a socialist world, based on equality and solidarity, that could democratically organise public services to help free women from their double oppression

We can do that by uniting our opposition to capitalism, with the working class rising as a class to overthrow this cruel and exploitative system.

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

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

man" and "you need a chilli up your needed to turn the potential power of players, staff and the fans in football into action. Football's governing bodies need to be run democratically for the working class to start to re-Big business and the drive for profit has corrupted football. Club boards should be democratically elected, with clubs being owned by the players, staff, fans and the wider We must campaign against sexual harassment. And adequate procedures to deal with these issues should be democratically agreed and

about gender dominance. subordina-

The media are saying this is a 'Me-Too' moment - when famous actors spoke publicly about rape and sexual harassment committed by powerful, rich men in the film industry - with

It may be a transformational moment. But it isn't over until we overthrow the economic system that survives on creating divisions and



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

The Socialist Party organises 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 linge

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 sociallyuseful small businesses.

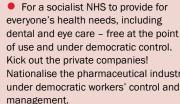
For trade unions independent of the capitalist state. with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage. Reduce the state retirement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

• Replace universal credit and the benefits for all who need them.

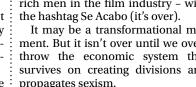
services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.

committed to opposing austerity and

all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and



tion, power and control, feeds sexual abuse and violence against women. and perpetuates inequalities.

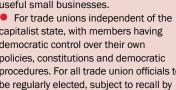


## is not an isolated case. Women in the workplace and elsewhere face sexism and misogyny regularly. The trade union movement must defend members against bullying and sexual All allegations of violence against

women should be taken extremely seriously, and investigated thoroughly - in a way that is sympathetic towards those making the accusation. But there is a bigger battle to be won. Capitalism is incapable of overcoming the sexism, and other forms

of oppression, that's built into its dations. Centuries-old ideas

was forced to resign after an open letter by players accusing him of pinching their bottoms, and makng remarks like "you need a macho



pension age to 55. For decent living

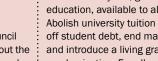
pensions.

punitive benefit system with living

PUBLIC SERVICES

• A massive expansion of public

For local councillors who are



# Kick out big business and let women's football thrive

WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY AND WOMEN'S

This World Cup was a turning point for women's football. By the end of the quarter finals, all previous World Cup winners had been ousted - evidence that the game is reaching a

But like all sporting events run for profit, different companies put their

During a women's World Cup, other topics get discussed too - sexism, harassment and proper support for

The winners, Spain, have made headlines. Not just because of their skills on the pitch, but because the president of Spain's football body, Luis Rubiales, grabbed a player's face and kissed her on the lips without

Both women and men from the game have protested and gone on strike against Rubiales's actions (see

Shots of the audience during Infantino's speech show a number of women looking stony-faced, after decades of fighting for the funding and support their sport needs.

The women's game is in transition The World Cup broke records, and not just for women's football.

England's Mary Earps became the second-ever goalkeeper to save a penalty, in regular time, in a World Cup final. This shows the potential of plavers.

Yet, football kit manufacturer Nike refused throughout the tournament to make replica shirts for any of the keepers. It was only after Earps won the golden glove, and a huge petition piled on the pressure, that Nike has now made a U-turn.

This is despite record-breaking sales. More 'Matilda' shirts have been sold this year than of the Australian men's team during the Qatar World Cup.

# Profit

Decisions about printing shirts, which stadiums games are played in, sponsorship deals, and wages, are all made on the basis of companies wanting to ensure easy and maximum profits.

Capitalism, as a system, perpetuates sexism, oppression and inequality. Big business will also exploit opportunities to profit from the women's game. And it can't offer us any arena, sporting or otherwise, which won't also be impacted by sexist ideas

That said, there is clearly renewed vigour among women's football fans to fight for recognition, funding and support. As well as challenging sexism and harassment when it comes

Just six months ago, the government was forced by campaigning sports field won't fix the problem. from players and fans to commit to ensuring equal access to football for to sport in education is linked to both boys and girls in schools. But this same Tory government has stood over a growing economic crisis and imposed mass austerity

> • For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.

which expects schools to run on a

shoestring to now give any child de-

cent access to sports? Any pay rise

that education workers need, for ex-

ample, is supposed to come out of

Girls and boys equally being al-

lowed to kick a ball on a neglected

That's why even the issue of access

fighting for an independent working-

class political alternative to both the

Tories and pro-austerity Labour un-

der Keir Starmer, and for socialism.

existing budgets.

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.

where women's football is heading.

The men's game has its own contro-

versy - ticket prices soar, and work-

No doubt, many fans of the England

men's team feel that Gareth South-

gate's £5 million package is worth

every penny, if it means a chance of

power out of the hands of fans, sup-

porters and the community, and

ensure genuine access

given it to the profiteers.

winning. But profit has also taken

ing-class fans are priced out.

Fans

То

# 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

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football, for kids at school, to lifelone fans, and everything in between means we have to fight to reclaim the game. We need democratic control of football clubs by trade unions, fans and the wider community.

And we need to fight for more resources too, so we can ensure access to pitches and other sporting facilities. As well as ensuring the games themselves are accessible to all who want to attend.

Big business has no interest in this. By kicking big business out of sport, these steps can be taken, and women's football can thrive

management. Compensation to be paid

only on the basis of proven need, not to

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,

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

expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock. Agribusiness to be taken into

democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and all workers involved in the production. processing, distribution and retail of food.

# DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

• For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression • Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For

the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions. local community organisations and local authorities.

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

• 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

the fat cats.

talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.



# **Stockwell, south London: Meeting** young people wanting to fight back



### **OSCAR PARRY** SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

When we were campaigning in Stockwell, south London, we met new people interested in joining the Socialist Party. These were mainly young people, who want to get more politically active, but weren't sure what they could do until they met us on the streets fighting back against austerity

Somebody from Chile made a donation, saying: "I will never forgot what the socialists managed to do under Allende in 1973" – referring to the Chilean president's nationalisation of parts of the Chilean economy, and providing of subsidised food to the poorest people too. This was before he was violently killed in a

CIA-backed coup.

Linking the fight for socialism in Britain to the international struggle is always important. We are planning on bringing international papers from our sister parties in Ireland and Nigeria to our next campaign stall.

The Socialist Party has been out campaigning for proper funding for the NHS, and supporting the junior doctors' strikes, outside the station. We link this to the need for a workers' alternative to Tory prime minister Rishi Sunak and Labour under Starmer - both have promised increased privatisation

Being able to advertise a national event like Socialism 2023 (see page 8) was a big help. It proved we are a serious organisation

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# Why I joined the Socialist Party **Poverty, housing, insecure work – its** not just me, but almost all young people

the **Socialist** 

HARRISON BOX RIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

socialistparty.org.uk

icture this. You're interested in politics at an early age, you are filled with passion. dedication and curiosity, you want to help make society a better place for the majority

You do everything right. You work hard, you get the grades, you get the degree. Now, you can go and contribute to society, to make a change, and to start a life

You live in a country where you will be worse off than your parents. Where you are stuck renting in insecure housing, giving upwards of 50% of your income on rent, where the cost of existing is borderline unbearable.

The added shock on your face when you see that the global pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in this country to a level not seen since World War Two. The rich have profited, while young people are faced with the prospect of 'generation rent, low wages and insecure work. Where 10% of households hold 42% of the wealth

The Tories and the capitalist press then tell us that we just have too many Netflix subscriptions, avocado on toast, or Starbucks coffee. That we should be focused on issues of identity, culture, on what you choose to

And then, to add insult to injury. the party founded by trade unions -Labour – the party originally built by the working class, now instead appeals to the ultra-rich. The party you



had believed in, and the party that with Jeremy Corbyn as leader, gave hope.

The person in this story is me, but it is not a unique story, it is one of thousands of young people in this country. Despite their passion and optimism, they are now being faced with the death of their political spirit. If this sounds like you, or someone you know, consider getting involved with a local Socialist Party branch. Leave this world better than you found it

# Join the fightback JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

costs of members who travelled to

the CWI event, and £36.01 for the So-

The number of people joining the

Socialist Party across the East Mid-

lands has increased over the past

year. So it was a fantastic opportunity

for members old and new to meet

and discuss as we enter a new era of

**Socialist Party** 

meeting near you

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• Or text 07761 818206 with

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The Socialist Party has regular

meetings in towns and cities

across the country.

cialist Party fighting fund.

capitalism in crisis

Come to a

Prigozhin's death, including even western states.

# Ukraine war

Prigozhin was a key figure in the Ukraine war after his Wagner para military force played a leading role in some of the fighting, including a months-long battle for the city of Bakhmut. He had risen from

# Fundraising – can you help us hit our target?

# ISAI MARI IFRI A

SOCIAL IST PARTY TREASLIRER

Every quarter we have a target of £25,000, so we can produce the leaflets and material we need for campaigning. We want to thank everyone who has made a donation. Particularly now with increasing costs.

Socialist Party branches across the country have been campaignstreets, communities and workplac- : BBO social. es. And, as part of these activities in spreading socialist ideas, our members also collect donations to fund

our work. Recently, Stevenage Socialist Party raised £263.69 through donations for no-longer-needed summer camp equipment. Leeds collected £109.39 at Durham Miners' Gala, from local Socialist Party stalls campaigning ing throughout the summer in the : against ticket office closures, and a

**SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND** ARFA & RECEIVED & TARGET 02-3: APRII-SEPTEMBER 2020 DEADLINE: 2 OCTOBER 2023 South West 1,976 2,100 94% Southern & SE 2,102 2,400 88% Eastern 1,017 1,300 Wales 1,516 2,400 63% 42% London 2.094 5.000 39% North West 462 1.200 Northern 291 800 36% East Midlands 557 2,050 27% 20% **Vorkshire** 531 2.650 West Midlands 383 2,700 14% Other 825 2.400 TOTAL 11,754 25,000

Putting forward a socialist message to unite workers to fight oppression. we raised £109 at Swindon Pride, and £100 at Black Pride in London (see 'LGBTO+ vouth angry about every thing' at socialistparty.org.uk).

Caerphilly collected £24.69 on So cialist Party stalls to save our NHS. And Oxford £36.

Leicester raised £36.01 from sandwiches and cakes supplied by members at an East Midlands Socialist Party meeting (see right). The Socialist Party branches in Waltham Forest and Enfield and Lea Valley hosted a clothes swap, and raised £60. While Bristol raised £135 at a car boot sale.

So far this quarter we have raised £11,598, 46% of our target. The quarter ends on 2 October. Help us to reach our target by making a donation at socialistparty.org.uk/donate.

Help fund the fightback

DONATE

# **East Midlands Socialist Party** discuss global capitalist turmoil

AI FX GILLHAM LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Members from the Leicester. Nottingham. Northampton and Mansfield attended a Socialist Party meeting on 20 August. John Dale, Heather Rawling, Seamus Smyth and others reported from the successful summer event in Berlin, hosted by the Committee for a Workers' Inter national (CWI) - to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

We heard from sessions on 'Global capitalist turmoil – revolution and counter-revolution, '50th anniversary of Pinochet's coup in Chile, and more. This led to an enthusiastic discussion about what the Socialist Party can do today, and the lessons that can be taken from the brutal attack on Allende's popular leftist government in the 1970s.

A fantastic financial appeal by Ben Edge from the Northampton branch, and refreshments helped the region aise £234.14 to cover some of the

31 August - 6 September 2023



# NIALL MULHOLLAND

sian state

on board the aircraft.

Russian president Vladimir Putin has denied any responsibility for the deaths of Prigozhin and the others on the plane.

While Prigozhin was the main fundraiser and public face of the Wagner group, its key military organiser was the Wagner founder Dmitry Utkin, a neo-Nazi sympathiser who sported SS tattoos on his shoulders. He was also killed in the plane crash.

# **PRIGOZHIN DEATH INTENSIFIES TENSIONS IN RUSSIA**

# COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

he death of the Russian warlord Yevgeny Prigozhin and other leaders of the Wagner group in an aircraft crash has intensified the tensions inside Vladimir Putin's regime and the Rus-

So far, it is not clear what caused the aircraft crash. US intelligence has said that it was not due to anti-air craft gunfire from the ground, as first reported in the West, and asserted that it may have been due to a bomb

Although Putin would appear the chief suspect to many people, sending a 'message' to the rival factions within the ruling capitalist elite that he is in control after taking retribution against Prigozhin for his armed revolt earlier this summer, the plane crash may have been due to the actions of other sections of the state. without Putin's prior knowledge.

Certainly Prigozhin did not lack enemies. The Russian military high command, in particular, was incensed by Prigozhin's many verbal tirades against their mishandling of the Ukraine war, which began with a failed attempted assault on Kviv. And the deaths of dozens of Russian troops at the hands of Wagner forces, when they rebelled earlier this summer, was an unpardonable event that demanded revenge, in some military circles. Some commentators in Russia and elsewhere have speculated that other 'third parties' may be responsible for

Whatever the truth of the matter, the death of Prigozhin and key figures in his Wagner group has intensified the sense of internal crisis within the Putin administration and the military. However, in the short term, Putin's position may have been strengthened by Prigozhin's demise In this way of thinking. Putin has sen a strong message to the various factions in the state and military that he is prepared to act with deadly decisiveness to impose his rule and the conduct of the war in Ukraine, and that no 'betrayal' will be tolerated.

Earlier on the day of the plane crash, it was reported that General Sergei Surovikin lost his post as air force chief. For several months, General Surovikin, who was known to have good relations with Prigozhin was in charge of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but he has not been seen since the Wagner mutiny in June



Prigozhin in 'happier times' PHOTO: GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION/CC

his youth, serving time in prison in the 1990s for robbery, to building up a food business, and cultivating relations with the city's mayor and later Russian president, Vladimir Putin,

Like Putin, Prigozhin was a product of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, and the introduction of a form of gangster capitalism. Prigozhin grew very rich not just from his catering business but also by providing military forces for the Putin administration - a link denied officially by the Kremlin right up until the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

Prigozhin's Wagner group has also intervened in the conflicts in Libya, Syria, and other parts of the Middle East and Africa, acting as an unofficial force for the Kremlin.

Often Prigozhin would spout populist, 'anti-colonialist' rhetoric to justify Wagner's operations. While the Wagner group's brutality is often cited by Western politicians and much of the mass media, they tend to be quiet about the huge growth of 'military contractors' in the West. These 'privatised forces' were used by the Western occupiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and deployed since in other spheres of conflict around the world.

Prigozhin and Putin fell out spectacularly two months ago when Wagner staged a revolt against the Russian military generals and, de facto the Putin administration. Plans to merge

criminal life in Saint Petersburg in : Russian armed forces seemed to be the spark for the rebellion. had Prigozhin

played a useful rule for Putin, with his private army, made up of former regular ssian soldiers, mercenaries, and released prisoners, in the conflict

Ukraine. However, Prigozhin's increasingly belligerent verbal sallies against the incompetence and corruption of the Russian army brass saw moves to bring Wagner into more direct army control. Prigozhin's short-lived revolt was a humiliation for Putin. and exposed some of the weaknesses of the state and military. The Wagner forces were able to march largely unimpeded over significant territory.

After the intervention of the Belarus president, Alexander Lukashenko, a deal was made between Prigozhin and Putin, whereby the Wagner group would cease its attacks, and largely relocate to Georgia. However, Prigozhin continued to criss-cross Russia in his private iet and also made visits to Africa to further the interests of the Wagner group. Prigozhin's links to several dictatorships in Africa, and access to precious minerals, enriched him and his acolytes further. It also proved a very lucrative channel for the Russian state and economy, helping to the Wagner group with the regular : overcome the effects of the West's

economic sanctions, which imposed after Russian troops went into Ukraine. However, Prigozhin's flagrant actions may have proved too provocative for Putin or sections of he Russian state and military. Lukashenko said he had "categorically warned" both Prigozhin and Utkin that they were in danger.

Whether Putin was behind the as sassination of Prigozhin or not, the plane crash adds a new twist to the problems facing the Kremlin. The Ukraine conflict is bogged down in the Donbas region, as the Ukraine forces, with Nato backing, unsuccessfully, so far, attempt to punch through Russian defences. The death toll on both sides is reportedly in the many tens of thousands.

Without its figurehead and some of its key personnel, the Kremlin may attempt to integrate the Wagner forc es firmly into the Russian army. And the group may come under more direct Russian military command dur ing its operations in parts of Africa.

Putin signed a decree last weekend, ordering all members of forces like Wagner, to swear allegiance to Russia, which is a formal oath made by regular soldiers.

Whether the rank-and-file Wagner forces will attempt to resist such moves remains to be seen, as do the consequences in African states in which they operate.

The working class of Russia has nothing to gain from the internecine conflict taking place within the Russian state and military. While Prigozhin and Putin, and all the oli garchs, have been enriching them

selves, the masses have gone through the deep trauma of so-called shock therapy capitalism. This led to a dramatic collapse of living standards in the 1990s, and the imposition of a series of conflicts, and the drawn-out war in Ukraine, which demands that they serve up their sons for the 'meat grinder'.

The Committee for a Workers'

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

untries across the planet. We work to unite

against capitalism, and to fight for a

socialist world. socialistworld.net

the working class and oppressed peoples

International (CWI) is the internation

A movement of working-class people is urgently needed in Russia to oppose

the bloody military adventure and also the rule of the oligarchs The Russian working class has much more in common with the masses of Ukraine than it will ever have with Putin and thugs like Prigozhin. Similarly, the working class and young people of Ukraine have much more in common with their Russian counterparts than President Zelensky with his right-wing policies and the interests of Nato and western imperialism. Ukrainian working people and the Russian masses are small change to the reactionary elites of both countries.

Only a return to the ideas of Lenin Trotsky and the Bolsheviks - not their Stalinist caricature - can see a way out of poverty and war. Building independent political parties of the working class, with a socialist programme, can show the way forward to end wars and exploitation in the region by breaking with capitalism and creating a genuine workers' democracy



# tionalshopstewardsnetwork LOBBY THE TUC IGHT THE AN **DEFEND JOBS AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

1pm, Sunday 10 September Premier Meetings, Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AD

### MICK WHALE HULL SOCIALIST PARTY

ver the last year or so, up and down the country, Socialist Party members have stood in solidarity with strikers on picket lines. In Hull and the East Riding one question has been raised on every picket line and demonstration: "Why isn't the TUC (Trades Union Congress) coordinating the strikes to make them more effective"?

When the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) called a lobby of the TUC conference in Liverpool, it was a no-brainer that we needed to be there to support it. Hull and District Trades Council voted unanimously to both support the lobby and send a coach.

The NSSN lobby is focusing on the need to coordinate a fightback against the latest Tory anti-trade union 'minimum service level' laws. If we don't stop them, bosses will be able to decide who is allowed to strike and who has to go into work.

What hypocrites these Tories are! They have been happily cutting public services for the last decade and their cuts have forced dangerously low levels of care provision. The British Medical Association (BMA – which organises doctors) points out that over seven million people are now waiting for treatment. It is not strikes to blame for this mess, it is the Tories and their rotten system that puts profit before need.

The TUC has got to get its act together and organise a clear response to defend workers' rights. TUC conference has to agree that a coordinated fightback be planned, publicised and organised. Such a strategy should include generalised strike action. The stakes are too high not to use strike action if the Tories try and implement their plans.

This lobby is a chance for grassroots union members to put pressure on union leaders to make a stand. Make sure you're there on 10 September.

# Why we are going on the lobby

# JOYCE MARSHALL, HULL AND DISTRICT UNITY SHOP COORDINATOR AND UNITE ACTIVIST

"I am going because I see the devastation that this government has caused to working and unemployed people. Our food bank is doing the best it can but we need a change in government. The TUC has to play its role in pulling workers together to stop the Tories."

# STEVE SCOTT, EAST RIDING NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION

"It's critical that we keep up the pressure on the TUC to ensure they perform the role they should in uniting workers against this government."

# MIKE HIRST, UNITE MEMBER

"My branch (Unite NEsec2) agreed to support the NSSN lobby. It will be good to hear Sharon Graham, our general secretary, speak at the rally. I hope the TUC will organise a campaign to stop the anti-trade union laws."

# MATT, NHS NURSE IN UNISON, IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY

"The Tories are trying to use safe staffing levels against the trade unions but it is the trade unions that have fought and campaigned to stop the destruction of the NHS. We must stand together to defend all public services and the organisations with the potential to do that are the trade unions. I'm going to Liverpool on 10 September to make sure that message is taken on board by every delegate to the conference."

• To see the list of trade union bodies that are supporting the lobby of the TUC, and to add your branch or trades council, go to shopstewards.net



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ► ► ► see column on page 8