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the Socialist

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19-25 October 2023

formerly **Militant**

Mass united workers' struggle to

STOP THE WAR ON GAZA!

As we go to press, the death toll in Gaza continues to mount. Latest reports are that over 3,000 Palestinians have been killed and 12,500 wounded.

The Gaza Strip is completely blockaded, with no aid - no food, medicine or fuel - allowed in, and clean water running short. Over a million Gazans have been

'internally displaced', with scores being killed by Israeli bombs as they fled. Israeli troops are massing at the border, and a bloody ground invasion appears imminent.

These events come, of course, after the brutal Hamas attack on Israeli civilians on 7 October. The Socialist Party completely opposes those killings, and all attacks on Israeli civilians. The hypocrisy of the Tory government knows no bounds, however. They condemn the killings of Israelis, but back to the hilt the Israeli state's war on Gaza with the far higher levels of deaths that will result. The Tories are even threatening to criminalise protesters who carry Palestinian flags!

Nor has Keir Starmer's New Labour been any different. The general secretary of the Labour Party wrote to Labour MPs and councillors saying "they must not, under any circumstances" join Palestinian solidarity protests. Even individual Labour Party members were urged not to attend.

Regardless of government intimidation and the Labour leadership's disgraceful role, on Saturday 14 October, more than 100,000 people, mainly young, took to the streets of London and other cities in solidarity with the people of Gaza. They were protesting against the current horrific situation, but also the

brutal occupation and repression suffered by the Palestinians up until now.

The Socialist Party has worked to make the national demonstration in London on Saturday 21 October even bigger than the previous week's protests. We are fighting for the trade union movement to mobilise and add its strength to the march.

Demonstrating, however, is only the first step. Politicians representing the interests of the capitalist elite - whether Tory or New Labour - will never fight for the rights of the Palestinians, nor for working-class Israelis, any more than they

fight in the interests of the working class and oppressed here in Britain. That's why a crucial way to build solidarity with the Palestinians is to fight to build a mass workers' party here in Britain that stands for socialism and internationalism.

If you agree - join the socialists!

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Stop the war on Gaza demonstration

12 noon Saturday 21 October
Marble Arch
London

**MASS STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR AND CAPITALISM ▶▶▶ p3 / HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS MARCH ▶▶▶ p4
TORIES BLOCK STUDENTS DISCUSSING PALESTINE ▶▶▶ p2 / PASS THE MOTION IN YOUR UNION ▶▶▶ p2**

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ANNOUNCED ▶▶▶ p8-9**

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The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

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

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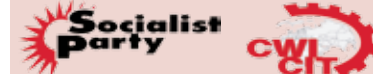
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

SOCIALIST STUDENTS STATEMENT

Tory education secretary Gillian Keegan has called on universities to clamp down on students and student societies seen to express support for Hamas, the party that has positioned itself as leading the resistance to the blockade and occupation in Gaza.

This follows the statement by Tory home secretary Suella Braverman to police chiefs that public flying of the Palestinian flag "may not be legitimate", calling on police officers to use "the full force of the law" against shows of support for Hamas.

Socialist Students defends the right of students to discuss and debate the way forward for Palestinian liberation, without fear of punishment or surveillance. We do not think that a Hamas-led military offensive can be a substitute for the mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, which is necessary to end their oppression. But we think that students should have the right to discuss this question and others.

Why is it acceptable, meanwhile, for pro-capitalist politicians to express support for the Israeli government, which has killed thousands of people in Gaza, in the last weeks, using methods of mass military terror, and has cut off the supply of water, fuel, power, food and medicine to millions of people? The hypocrisy is nauseating.

These are hypocritical and divisive moves by the Tories, designed to suppress criticism of the Israeli state, including its vicious oppression of Palestinians.

Already there have been thousands killed in horrific circumstances on both sides of the border in the last weeks. Socialist Students gives no support to the killing of Israeli civilians. But we must also be clear on the root cause of this bloodshed: the brutal occupation and oppression of Palestinians over generations.

Over two million Palestinians are trapped in the poverty-stricken Gaza strip, suffering regular raids and killings by Israeli forces. They live at the mercy of an Israeli state, with one of the strongest military apparatuses in the world, with the most reactionary government in its history.

We support the right of the Palestinian masses to defend themselves against the brutal onslaught they face, and to struggle for Palestinian liberation. We say that this struggle must be linked to the struggle for



ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

Join the student fightback: join...

socialist students

- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- or call 020 8988 8761
- or text your name and school, college or uni to 07749 379 010

CAPITALISM'S 'DEMOCRATIC' CRISIS - HOW FAR CAN AUTHORITARIANISM GO?

Come and discuss at **socialism 2023**
London, 25-26 November
tickets and info at socialism.org.uk

socialist change within Palestine, Israel and across the Middle East.

Socialist Students will continue to hold meetings in universities around the UK, putting forward what organisation, programme and tactics are really needed to end the exploitation and oppression of the Palestinians, and to fight for socialism in Palestine, Israel and internationally.

• If you are interested, get in touch with your local Socialist Students group via socialiststudents.org.uk

Stop the war on Gaza – pass this motion in your union

This union branch expresses its horror and opposition to the targeting and killing of thousands of civilians on both sides of the Israel/Gaza border.

We condemn the Israeli state's criminal collective punishment of the Palestinians in Gaza including cutting off water, food, power supplies and medicines. We condemn the threat by Israel to millions of Gaza residents told to flee their homes in the north to the south of the Strip ahead of a brutal land invasion. We condemn the Tory government and Keir Starmer's New Labour for their backing for the Israeli state's war on Gaza.

We call for:

- Immediate lifting of the blockade on Gaza
- The immediate withdrawal of the Israeli military from the occupied territories

We also condemn the Tory government's attempts to clamp down on and criminalise the right to protest against the Israeli state's brutal attacks and to show solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians.

We applaud the hundreds of thousands of protesters who have ignored the Tory government threats and marched in London and all over the country in support

of Palestinians. We call on our union leadership to mobilise for future mass protests opposing the war on Gaza.

We note that Starmer's New Labour has written to Labour MPs and councillors saying "they must not, under any circumstance" join Palestinian solidarity protests. We need political representatives who oppose the capitalist elites and stand for the rights of the working class and oppressed here in Britain and internationally. That has to include standing in solidarity with people in Gaza today. We would welcome trade union-backed candidates standing in the general election on

that programme, including Jeremy Corbyn, who has been banned from standing for Labour.

We support mass struggle by the Palestinians for self-determination and their own viable state, which will not be granted by the capitalist elites. Only the struggle for workers' unity, for full national rights and for socialism can remove reactionary elites and lay the basis for an end to oppression and wars, and see Palestinians and Israelis mutually agree their future relations, free of all coercion, and able to live in peace and prosperity.

We agree to circulate this resolution to our members and to our NEC.

For mass struggle against war and capitalism!



100,000 protested in London PAUL MATSSON

CONTINUED FROM FRONT



WHAT WE THINK

The current war is the fifth between the Israeli state and the Hamas-led Gaza authority, but the scale of the horror is unprecedented. As we go to press, US President Biden is heading to Israel. He follows hard on the heels of two US aircraft carriers. Both measures are designed to show the support of US imperialism for the Israeli state but are also a desperate attempt to try and prevent the conflict igniting a wider Middle East war. The horror of a full-scale regional war is not in the interests of any of the major world powers or the regimes in the area, but the brutal attack being prepared on Gaza could nonetheless ignite the tinder box of the Middle East.

Netanyahu

The Netanyahu government's justification for its onslaught on Gaza is the 7 October Hamas assault, which killed the highest number of Jewish people on a single day since the foundation of Israel, plus Israeli

Arabs and others. The attack was a huge shock to Israeli society, shattering the idea that Israel's powerful military can keep the Israeli Jewish population safe. Netanyahu was already very unpopular, but he is now - if anything - even more so, with a majority of Israelis blaming his government for what happened.

Nonetheless, the immediate effects of the Hamas attack in Israeli society, and the horror now being unleashed against Gaza, show why in the Socialist Party we have always warned against the targeting of Israeli civilians in the national conflict, and oppose such attacks. Such acts reinforce fears of being 'driven into the sea' and push Israeli Jewish workers towards supporting brutal retaliation by the Israeli state. However, no matter how extreme the violence meted out against the people of Gaza, it will bring no security for the Israeli population but will only lay the basis for a new round of bloodshed.

Which way forward?

Increasingly capitalism means war and conflict. And on the basis of capitalism there is no prospect of national liberation for the Palestinians or other oppressed nationalities. Western capitalist governments are backing the Israeli state to the hilt, but nor do the Middle Eastern regimes who claim to support the Palestinians have any interest in defending them. Rather, they are driven by defending the wealth and power of their own rich elites.

Nonetheless, there is a force capable of transforming the situation. While the military strategies of Hamas won't bring about liberation for the Palestinians, decent living standards for them, or an end to the conflict - none of which are possible under capitalism - mass struggle could do so. The way forward for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank will be through democratically organising mass struggle - a socialist intifada - based on the interests of workers and the poor, independent of those of the rich elites.

Revolutions

The demonstrations worldwide over the last week, and especially in the Middle East, show clearly the solidarity with the Palestinians that exists among the working class and poor, and they too are a force capable of transforming the world. Just over a decade ago a revolutionary wave swept the Middle East and North Africa, pointing to the potential power of the working class and poor to overthrow the existing order. Those movements were defeated because the working class of the different countries lacked their own parties with a programme for the socialist transformation of society. The task of building such parties is vital in every country.

In Israel the same fundamental issues are posed. It too had mass demonstrations for social justice back in 2011. More recently, we saw the nine-month-long mass movement

in Israel against the Netanyahu government which included a general strike. It has now been cut across by the events of recent weeks, but it nonetheless gave a glimpse of the possibility of splitting large sections of the Israeli working class away from their ruling class, the only way the grip of the Israeli ruling elite over society can be broken.

Solidarity

Even now, in this highly polarised situation, there have been examples of solidarity between different communities inside Israel. Israeli Palestinians are now facing greater risk of physical attacks, however there have been reports over the last week, for example, of united Jewish-Palestinian action groups in Haifa and Jaffa, to oppose local sectarian clashes between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, pointing to the kind of democratically organised community defence that is needed.

While the enormous wealth of the region is left in the hands of capitalist elites, fermenting divisions to continue their rule, no solution is possible. However, by replacing private ownership of the main corporations with public ownership and democratic control by the working class and poor masses, it would be possible to end shortages and poverty for all, laying the basis for building societies free from war, oppression and national tensions.

Committee for a Workers' International FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD
socialistworld.net

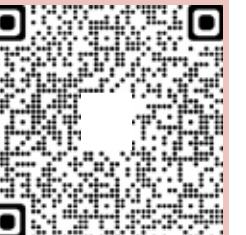
READ:

- Stop the Israel-Gaza war! For workers' unity and struggle against national conflict and oppression
- Israel-Palestine: 30 years since the Oslo accord - will there ever be a Palestinian state?

Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

In the next week, the Socialist Party's regular meetings are discussing how we can end the war on Gaza. If you would like to participate:

- Go to socialistparty.org.uk/join
- To see meetings in your area socialistparty.org.uk/events
- Text 07761 818206 with your name and postcode.
- Or scan the QR code:



Hundreds of thousands march against war on Gaza

● Coventry – tears in their eyes

Hundreds poured into the city centre. The Socialist Party's politics and programme – stop the Israel-Gaza war, for workers' unity and struggle against national conflict and oppression – got the support of many.

Some have friends and family in the strip and region, and fear for their lives and safety. Protesters signed our petition with tears in their eyes, telling us about loved ones trapped in Gaza, or suffering in the West Bank.

Palestinians spoke to the crowd about the atrocities carried out by the Israeli military in the past week, but also through decades of conflict and oppression.

The Socialist Party campaign stalls were swamped at times. Many protesters bought the Socialist newspaper, and gave generous donations to fund our socialist message.

Some also asked about joining the Socialist Party, and getting involved in the fight for a peaceful, democratic, socialist society – filling out one 'join the Socialist Party' card after another. Young protesters in particular asked us about socialism and Marxism.

The protest spontaneously marched, growing as passers-by joined in. The next meetings of both of Coventry's Socialist Students groups are on a socialist programme to win national liberation.

ADAM HARMSWORTH

● Leeds – loud protest, until crowd fell silent

From Briggate to the Art Gallery, chants could be heard loud. Demonstrators were well aware of the lack of coverage the capitalist media has given to the crisis in Gaza.

Palestinians living in England have families directly affected. This is more than an isolated conflict. It affects lives in the Middle East and beyond.

Solemn silence fell when the cries for justice from a 17-year-old Palestinian girl were heard throughout the crowd.

Demonstrators also voiced that their support for Palestine does not equal terrorism, it does not equal antisemitism, but is rooted in support for rights for all.

People said these demonstrations will occur weekly until the inhumane attack on the Palestinian population is ended. Iain Dalton, Yorkshire Socialist Party secretary, also spoke to the crowd.

Iain said the right-wing government in Israel is weak. That government has faced weekly demonstrations for the past six months in Israel (see socialistworld.net). Now that government is preparing a brutal ground invasion of Gaza.

Iain called for a socialist intifada of mass struggle against Israeli



capitalist state oppression. And he called for mass workers' parties.

In the UK, that would be in opposition to the mainstream capitalist parties who defend the bloody assault on Gaza. In Palestine and Israel, it could give a genuine socialist alternative for the masses to the dead end of national conflict and oppression under capitalism.

"1..2..3..4..occupation no more", was another chant by the crowd, and they were right. The occupation must end, and the war on Palestinian lives must end.

JOHN TIVAL

● Leicester – we ran out of leaflets

We set up our Socialist Party campaign stall before the protest started, so were able to get our socialist material out for everyone, as the protest gathered around us.

We ran out of leaflets. Our placards were taken and held up during the rally.

Leicester Socialist Party member Heather Rawling spoke. She stressed the suffering of the Palestinian people, raised the need for international working-class solidarity, including from trade unions.

The Israeli working class has already organised a general strike this year. Heather called for the Israeli working class to overthrow their right-wing government, and fight for socialism. And she called for the same in Gaza.

Heather got cheers and applause. Our working-class approach gets an echo.

There were also coaches going to the London demonstration too. We have a Socialist Party public meeting about Palestine on 24 October.

SAADA MOHAMED

● London – queues at Socialist Party stalls

There was a huge turnout, with a wide range of people demanding an end to violence and oppression. People were queuing up to speak with us in the Socialist Party on our campaign stalls.

Around 1,000 people bought a copy of the Socialist. And people donated over £2,500 to fund our socialist message.

People are desperate for solutions, and they resonated with the Socialist Party's demands. I had to pinch myself at times. It was moving and inspiring

JACK DEACON

● Bradford – youth marched and the march grew

200 mainly young people marched across Bradford, and the numbers grew to 350. Speakers criticised the Labour council, which refused the demonstration access to the town hall steps, usually allowed for demos.

Tory home secretary Suella Braverman said 'it may be illegal to fly the Palestinian flag in Britain'. So 50 people waved them in defiance.

KEVIN PATTISON

● Sheffield – "take it down"

Even more joined the protest when we marched.

There were a lot of young motivated supporters of the cause. Socialist Party posters said: "Build a mass movement to end Israeli state terror".

It was a diverse audience. Full of both young and old, all genders and ethnicities.

Protesters chanted "take it down", referring to the Israeli flag on the town hall. Two protesters climbed the building to take down the flag, replacing it with a Palestinian flag.

RASHA OMER

● Plymouth – "what can I do?"

Many wanted to share their shock and grief with us. There was recognition that both ordinary Palestinians and Israelis are suffering. And disappointment and anger that the Tories, and other capitalist governments, are rushing to wholeheartedly support the right-wing Israeli government.

Palestinians need democratic control of their own state, and independent workers' parties in both states need to be built and work together. This message from the Socialist Party was met with interest and enthusiasm.

People asked: "What can I do? I am only one person". This led to discussions about the power of the working class when we work together for change.

We talked about the ability of unions to demand change when they are united. And the success of seemingly small activities, such as workers refusing to move or handle arms which are going to be used in an unjust war.

ALEX SAMPSON

● York – anger at Tories and Labour

Our Socialist Party campaign stall was busy throughout, with people signing our petition, taking leaflets, and buying the Socialist paper. Huge anger existed towards the leadership of the Tories and Labour for giving the go ahead to the Israeli government to cut off power, water and other supplies to Gaza.

I spoke at the demo, explaining the need for a socialist intifada, a mass struggle of the Palestinian masses against the repression of the Israeli state. After speaking, I was approached by a number of people wanting to discuss the approach of the Socialist Party to Israel-Palestine, and other issues in the Middle East.

This included the revolt against the Assad regime in Syria from 2011 onwards, the impossibility of a solution under capitalism to the national question, and why the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) – the international the Socialist Party is part of – calls for a socialist Palestine, alongside a socialist Israel, with two capitals in Jerusalem.

IAIN DALTON

● Worcester – Socialist paper held high

Everyone was very friendly towards us in the Socialist Party. Some of the Palestinians who bought the Socialist paper held it up for press and photographers.

RUTHIE MCNALLY

● Newcastle – indiscriminate and barbaric

Hundreds gathered to stop the indiscriminate and barbaric bombing of Gaza. Our Socialist Party petition – calling to stop the Israel-Gaza war, and for a socialist intifada – had a lot of people interested.

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

HOW CAN A PALESTINIAN STATE BE ACHIEVED?

Come and discuss at

SOCIALISM 2023

London, 25-26 November
tickets and info at socialism.org.uk



Interest rates set - but not in our interests!

Speaking to the BBC, Dr Swati Dhingra, who sits on the Bank of England's rate-setting 'Monetary Policy Committee', admitted that high interest rates would hit young workers and people on low incomes hardest.

High interest rates are already impacting people trying to find somewhere they can live and not pay sky-high rents. When businesses go under as they no longer have access to cheap credit, who pays the price? Wilko's owners paid shareholders millions of pounds of dividends despite making losses and running into financial difficulties. Now

thousands of shop workers are out of a job, something that will be repeated as other so-called 'zombie companies' fail.

And the problem that interest rate rises are supposed to 'fix' - inflation - hits workers hardest as prices go up and, unless we fight back, our pay packets shrink in comparison.

Capitalism, built on the exploitation of workers, will always try to make us pay for its crises, not the bosses. That's why we need to take the banks and big businesses into our hands to run society democratically for the good of us all, not for the bosses!



Bank of England PHOTO: VALENTIN POLEAC/CC



HS2 rail replacement travel investments already derailed

Prime minister Rishi Sunak, in an attempt to get his leadership of the Tory party back on track, announced the scrapping of the northern leg of the HS2 high speed rail project. His big speech at Conservative Party conference boasted of investing £36 billion in hundreds of other transport projects. Reeling off a list to applause, this was probably the first time the AI was met with whoops!

But like when the consequences of a privatised, underfunded rail service catch up with your journey, many of these projects on the government's

website have come up 'cancelled' or taken off the boards without a word. In one instance, a tramline that has been open since 2015 was included on the list of future projects!

Quicker than you can travel from London to Birmingham, the list was deleted from the government's website. The announced transport projects were actually just "examples" of what sort of projects could be funded, according to transport secretary Mark Harper.

Please mind the gap between Sunak's promises and reality.

Labour plan for the NHS not adequate to save health service

Fully funded pay rises now!



HOLLY JOHNSTON
NURSE AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

The NHS is in the middle of a staffing crisis, a bed shortage and a waiting list of 7.7 million patients! The Tory government has blamed health strikes for the crisis yet still refuses to meaningfully address the recruitment and retention of staff in the NHS. Applications to nursing courses have declined by 18.5% in the last year alone, staff continue to leave the NHS at an alarming rate and seek alternative employment outside of the NHS for better rates of pay, less stress, less workload intensity and a better work-life balance.

205 new medical school places next year

At this year's Labour Party conference, Wes Streeting, shadow health secretary, announced his party's plans for the NHS. He confirmed plans to invest £1.1 billion into the health service, provide two million more appointments each year through evening and weekend clinics, and double the number of NHS scanners to diagnose and treat patients earlier. Labour intends to pay already overworked staff overtime to work additional evening and weekend shifts to carry out extra procedures to reduce the waiting list. Funding for these changes would be paid for by abolishing the 'non-dom' tax status. According to Labour, all this will enable the NHS to provide an extra 2 million operations, scans and appointments in the first year of a Labour government.

These announcements have not been well received by healthcare workers. With an estimated 125,000

vacancies in the NHS and lack of investment, we cannot keep pace with demand for services and work through the waiting lists without a fully staffed workforce.

The Royal College of Nursing, whose members took strike action earlier this year for pay rises, responded: "Any Labour government would likely take office at a time of record unfilled nurse jobs. The long-term answer is, of course, to have more staff overall. When many nurses already work additional days to make ends meet financially, extra capacity is urgently required."

The Society of Radiographers, whose members are also striking for fair pay, has said: "Any investment in new equipment must go hand in hand with measures to recruit and retain more radiographers. Our members talk about brand new MRI scanners standing unused for all but a few hours a week, because they did not come with a matching budget for radiography professionals to deliver patient care."

Staffing crisis

As part of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, the Tory government will expand medical school places, but with just 205 new ones next year! Labour, on the other hand, has said it plans to double the number of medical school places. Expanding the number of training places does not, however, make the problem go away on its own. We need to see the abolition of fees and student debt. To meaningfully address recruitment and retention of NHS staff we need pay restoration. One-off non-consolidated lump sums and measly, below-inflation pay offers won't fix the staffing crisis.

NHS staff are already working overtime, evenings and weekends to make ends meet and to help meet the demands of our services. Staff are already burnt out and on the verge

of, or already, leaving. The fight for the NHS and our pay isn't over - the problems haven't gone away.

Health unions are getting ready to enter negotiations for next year's pay rounds. Unions should co-ordinate with each other to fight for pay we deserve, safe staffing and for a fully funded, publicly owned NHS.

125,000

estimated vacancies in the NHS

In order to rebuild our NHS and its workforce, we need a service that is fully funded by the government, publicly owned and free from profiteers and privatisation. When Streeting spoke at Labour conference on the need to use 'new technology' in the NHS, if this is code for further privatisation then we will need to fight against it.

If Labour won't deliver on the pay and funding the NHS needs, then we need a new mass workers' party that would. That's why the Socialist Party is fighting for a trade union-backed workers' list of candidates at the general election, to help with the development of such a party.

CAN OUR NHS SURVIVE THE TORIES? ... AND STARMER'S LABOUR?



Come and discuss at **SOCIALISM 2023**

London, 25-26 November tickets and info at socialism.org.uk

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

• editors@socialistparty.org.uk

or, if you're not online, write to the Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT

Notts bins 'good result'

The Socialist has been reporting on the strike of GMB members working for Veolia in Nottinghamshire. A GMB member spoke to Jon Dale.

"We've had a resolution. Members on strike have started back at work. We came away with a £500 cost-of-living payment that is to be paid in January 2024, our slates wiped clean with Veolia, the bullying to be looked into, and hopefully an earlier start to 2024 pay talks. It's been very hard doing what we've done over the last three weeks. Like many of us, I have never been on strike. But I think we've all come through this now with a good result. More would have been better, but we could have held out forever and ended up with nothing! "I would just like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and all GMB union members, to say a very big thank you to all the Socialist members for all your help and support."

Newcastle Rail Gourmet workers' 'Friday 13th' strike



NORMAN HALL SOUTH TYNE AND WEARSIDE SOCIALIST PARTY

Members of the RMT rail union employed by the Rail Gourmet company, which is sub-contracted by TransPennine Express to provide catering services on its trains, once again took to the picket lines. Despite Rail Gourmet making £1.4 million in profit in the year to September 2022, the company continues to refuse to match the pay or terms and conditions available to people in the same roles on trains run by other operators. The mood of the strikers remains solid. Even though talks with ACAS are due within the next week, there is no support for cancelling further action while in discussions. This is the seventh occasion the workers have taken action and, unless Rail Gourmet starts to make serious offers in the face of the continued cost-of-living crisis, it won't be the last. If you would like to donate or support the strike, please visit: tinyurl.com/kcjr5faj

Napo AGM: Fight the looming crisis in probation and family courts

ADAM HARMSWORTH NAPO NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Napo's 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) comes at the most critical time for the probation and family courts union since the nightmare of 'Transforming Rehabilitation', the part-privatisation of probation. Members in probation are facing down a blatant cost-cutting measure called 'One HMPPS'. This is an ill-conceived programme that threatens to assimilate probation into the prison service. Probation workers have already been through two huge reorganisations in a decade, thanks to the Tories. In 2014, probation areas were carved up to private companies, then in 2021 those companies had their contracts cut short and probation was reorganised again into the National Probation Service. This new shake-up will only disrupt probation officers' work, and totally ignores the biggest issues for the



Napo members fighting privatisation in 2014. PAUL MATTSOON

service: a decade of pay erosion and grossly unsafe workloads. In response, the unions have lodged a dispute and launched a workload campaign named 'Operation Protect'. This is a good start, but will have to be escalated to challenge the workload crisis driven by Tory cuts.

Tory attacks

Industrial action must be on the table. Two motions going to AGM on workloads call for industrial action. If they pass, and the government doesn't improve workloads immediately, the Napo leadership shouldn't hesitate to ballot. Napo members in Cafcass (family courts) have voted in a consultative ballot on an insulting 4% pay offer. The results are not yet public, but it is clear to most, if not all, Napo members in Cafcass that below-inflation pay rises must be challenged. Socialist Party members will be approaching Napo AGM to encourage probation and family court workers

to push back against the onslaught by the Tory government. Probation is back in-house, but this alone hasn't improved members' pay or workloads. The three-year pay deal for probation was reluctantly accepted by many members, but since then inflation has risen sharply. Napo should start campaigning now for better pay, involving as many members as possible in a serious pay campaign. When the next pay offer arrives from HMPPS, Napo must be fully prepared to strike if it is inadequate. Probation is still starved of the resources needed to function properly. It is likely a general election will see Starmer's Labour come to power. Napo should pressure the Labour Party now to commit to fully fund probation and Cafcass. However, Labour has already reneged on promises it made just months ago. Napo must also prepare to fight a Starmer-led Labour government if it will not meet our demands.

Go North East bus workers continue their strike for fair pay

ELAINE BRUNSKILL NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST PARTY

our own pay rise by attacking our terms and conditions." This would include shorter meal breaks, unpaid checks on vehicles, and unpaid time travelling from when they clock on at the depot to wherever the bus needs picking up from. Unite points out that the latest accounts of the Go-Ahead Group show profits of almost £85 million. Another issue which is causing huge concern is a massive increase in anti-social behaviour against drivers. One driver was even shot in the eye with a frozen 'gel gun' pellet. Strikers feel that the company doesn't take these concerns seriously. Fuel trucks, delivery drivers, and security guards arriving to pick up money have all refused to cross the picket line. One of the strikers was looking at the article in the Socialist which featured their strike and spotted the adjacent article on Aslef's rail strike - his partner was on that strike! It seems that amid a cost-of-living crisis everyone knows someone who is striking for better wages and conditions.

There was a real buzz on the picket line as Ratty, the giant inflatable rat, joined Unite strikers from Go North East. Across the north east, over 1,300 Unite members are taking a further week of strike action, and this is set to be followed by an all-out strike if bosses continue to refuse to deliver a fair pay deal. One of the drivers commented: "We are undervalued, underpaid, and angry that in such a high-pressure job, bosses still want to cut our terms and conditions". Other drivers gathered around to show me two job adverts from the Go-Ahead group (the Go North East parent company). Go North East is offering almost £5 an hour less than one of its other companies, just 150 miles away! The strikers emphasised that so far they have only been offered a derisory, below-inflation pay offer. But to add insult to injury, strikers told us that bosses "are wanting us to fund

negotiate and imposed this deal, membership of PCS has risen sharply, doubling since the strike began. Members are particularly angry over the £1.5 million bonus pot which senior management are dishing out, mainly to themselves, while the lowest paid get very little. It has shocked everyone. Further action is set for the following two weeks. Workers here play a critical role in investigating and monitoring pension scheme management and fraud. This work will form part of the government's Autumn Statement, and strike action is certain to leave the chancellor with some blank pages. Some who have worked for TPR for over 20 years report that their pay has fallen in real terms by 30% since 2010. Actuaries, lawyers and admin workers are standing together. Strikers said: "We love our work. We think what we do is important. Management need to come back with a serious offer. All the management-speak of 'TPR department ethos', to encourage management and worker cooperation, is completely missing here. It shows a lot of hypocrisy. This is our first time on strike and a big leap for us, which shows the strength of feeling"

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Go North East bus strikers ELAINE BRUNSKILL

Reading Trades Union Council marches against anti-union laws



Reading TUC on the march READING SP

ADAM GILLMAN SOCIALIST PARTY AND READING TRADES COUNCIL YOUTH OFFICER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

On Saturday 14 October, Reading Trades Union Council organised a march and rally against all the anti-trade union laws but specifically against the minimum service levels act. This means that a government minister can set an arbitrary minimum service level in an attempt to undermine strikes, despite not being able to deliver minimum service levels even when there isn't a strike on! The event started with trade unionists gathering in Forbury Gardens. We got interviewed by BBC South. Then we marched through the Forbury with trade union, Youth Fight for Jobs, and trades council banners all displayed.

I spoke on the need to get more young people in trade unions, and called for trade unions to support election candidates who support union policies, and stand candidates of their own. Then Steve from Aslef spoke about the rail dispute. Socialist Party member Melanie spoke about the need for coordinated action among the unions. Chloe made a powerful speech about her experience with capitalism and fighting for her son, calling for funding for services that are democratically controlled by trade unions, workers and the service users. We also heard from the president of Reading NEU, Unison, and John Moloney, PCS assistant general secretary (running alongside Marion Lloyd in the PCS elections, see page 7).

NEU needs a bold leadership N nominate Sheila Caffrey for Vice-President



Sheila addressing the crowd on the 1 Feb NEU strike SOUTH WEST SP

SHEILA CAFFREY SAYS, IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY:

"Even though we all know that the Tories aren't to be trusted as far as you can throw them, I am still amazed at how low they will stoop! "They offered nowhere near enough funding this year to cover the 6.5% teachers' pay offer (a rise that is still well below inflation and has done nothing for the last decade of attacks on our pay and pensions), just enough for next year and nothing extra for all the additional needs we have in our schools, colleges and nurseries. And now they say they made an error and there's £370 million less. "This means there'll be fewer supply teachers, there'll be 'natural wastage', and a higher workload for those remaining. The workers who will bear the brunt of job cuts will be support staff. "This is not what NEU members voted to accept. Socialist Party members on the NEU national executive argued at the NEC meeting on 12 October that we shouldn't wait to fight. We should use the union's existing strike mandate and name strike dates for after half term, if the government doesn't find this money again. But that was voted against 32-16. Now we will wait for the Tories'

Autumn Statement and then discuss potentially having an indicative ballot after Christmas, on pay and funding for next year. "The NEC debate made it clear that in the upcoming vice-president elections we need to elect leaders who will give a fighting lead to members - and who are prepared to campaign and fight in the interests of members, no matter who is in government. "We must show that we won't accept this lying down. And that we are prepared to campaign nationally, not just fight school by school."

• Nominations for vice-president open 1 November. Sheila and Socialist Party members in the NEU will work alongside anyone who wants to campaign for a fighting union that leads from the front as well as building from below



Further Education colleges ready to strike

DUNCAN MOORE PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY AND UCU MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

University and College Union (UCU) members in 32 further education (FE) colleges across England have voted to strike over pay and conditions. This builds on the action taken last year by 26 colleges, and points the way to an aggregate ballot of all FE staff in the near future. 90% of UCU members who voted in the ballot favoured strike action; however at 43 colleges, the turnout did not meet the legal 50% minimum threshold required by the Tories'

anti-democratic 2016 Trade Union Act. Members at 13 colleges have voted to settle their disputes, after college principals offered pay rises of 6.5% or above. This is in line with the pay deal National Education Union (NEU) members accepted from the government in August, following the recommendation of their union's National Executive Committee. Socialist Party members in the NEU campaigned to reject the 6.5% pay deal for school staff and to press ahead for more, to address the 20% cut in real wages since 2010, as well as for full funding.

For a fighting PCS general secretary

Nominations have closed in the PCS union general secretary and assistant general secretary elections. It is clear that Marion Lloyd's demand for change in PCS has won support from across the union, from different groups, regions and nations. Socialist Party member Marion is the candidate backed by the PCS Broad Left Network (BLN), and is running on a joint ticket with Independent Left-supported AGS candidate John Moloney. The final tally of nominations for Marion and John, and for their opponents Fran Heathcote and Paul O'Connor, who are the candidates supported by the current leading group in the union, will be announced later. Marion has won every hustings she was invited to. Members and activists have expressed their frustration at the closing down of the national campaign on pay and pensions, at the lack of support for reps and centralisation of democracy, and the deaf ear shown by the current

leadership when concerns are raised. Marion has convinced members with a fighting programme. She has experience as a campaigner and organiser across all areas of the union, and has committed to stay on her current civil service wage and donate the rest of the general secretary salary back to the union's campaigns. Now the campaign to win a fighting, democratic general secretary, who leads a serious fight and builds the confidence of members, begins in earnest! Voting opens in a postal ballot on 9 November. If you would like to help distribute leaflets, get in touch! The Broad Left Network brings together socialists and activists across all departments and groups, committed to building the strength of the union against government attacks. To change the union needs members to get organised and campaign for that fighting programme at all levels of the union. ● Get involved - and follow the latest news in the election - at bln.org.uk



Marion supporting PCS strikers at ISS HELEN PATTSOON



PHOTO: NICK CHAFFEY

PCS Pension Regulator strike: 'Our first time on strike'

NICK CHAFFEY SOUTHERN AND SOUTH EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

PCS union members at The Pensions Regulator (TPR) were offered a derisory 3% pay increase, instead of the 4.5-5% across the civil service. Some are getting as little as 1.5%, depending on their pay scale. After management failed to

negotiate and imposed this deal, membership of PCS has risen sharply, doubling since the strike began. Members are particularly angry over the £1.5 million bonus pot which senior management are dishing out, mainly to themselves, while the lowest paid get very little. It has shocked everyone. Further action is set for the following two weeks. Workers here play a critical role in investigating and monitoring pension scheme management and fraud. This work will form part of the government's Autumn Statement, and strike action is certain to leave the chancellor with some blank pages. Some who have worked for TPR for over 20 years report that their pay has fallen in real terms by 30% since 2010. Actuaries, lawyers and admin workers are standing together. Strikers said: "We love our work. We think what we do is important. Management need to come back with a serious offer. All the management-speak of 'TPR department ethos', to encourage management and worker cooperation, is completely missing here. It shows a lot of hypocrisy. This is our first time on strike and a big leap for us, which shows the strength of feeling"

we need a fighting leadership. UCU members in Higher Education (HE) have won a victory on pensions, but in the HE pay battle the campaign has been fraught with delays and retreats from the national leadership. Lessons must be learned in FE: we need a clear and escalating strategy that builds confidence and strengthens the union, so that we can win. National executive and general secretary elections are scheduled to start on 9 November. UCU members have an opportunity to vote for an NEC which will fight for them, and a general secretary who will serve that NEC and give us the leadership we need. ● Duncan is seeking nomination to stand for a Further Education seat on the NEC

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

A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSING MARXISM!

Programme of workshops can be subject to change

Theme	Saturday 11.30am-1.30pm	Saturday 2.30pm-4.30pm	Sunday 10am-12noon	Sunday 1pm-2.45pm
Revolution and counter revolution	Germany 1923: challenges of a revolutionary period	Building Marxism in the trade unions and workplaces	Chile 1970-73: socialism is possible - but heroism is not enough	What is communism?
Fighting for a workers' voice	The post-2007 generation: whatever happened to the 'new left' parties?	Liverpool 1983: lessons for Birmingham 2023?	DEBATE: how should revolutionary students prepare for the General Election?	Can Labour be a vehicle for socialism? Invite to a re-match with columnist Owen Jones
Where is Britain going?	How radical really is the Green Party?	Preparing for a Starmer government	How can the anti-union Minimum Services legislation be defeated?	Why can't the post-war boom be repeated?
Getting to grips with Marxism	Marxist theory of the state: spycops and Met Police scandals	Is there still value in Marxist economics?	Historical materialism - a tool for changing the world	Understanding change - dialectical materialism
Bolshevism and Trotskyism		Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism 100 years since the launch of the Left Opposition	What is a revolutionary party? 120 years since the formation of the Bolsheviks	Is Trotsky's idea of the 'transitional programme' still relevant?
Working class fighting back	Housing: translating socialist ideas into bricks and mortar	Can our NHS survive the Tories? ...and Starmer's Labour?	40 years since the miners' strike - lessons for today	Fighting for a socialist education system
Capitalist crisis		US v China: Where are the growing tensions going?	Global debt and inflation crisis - developing a socialist programme	Capitalism's 'democratic' crisis - how far can authoritarianism go?
Big issues	AI - will it threaten or advance humanity?	The Ukraine-Russia war - fighting for workers' unity to end the horror of war	Is there still time to stop catastrophic climate change?	Prospects for Scotland under New Labour #2
World struggle		30 years since the Oslo accords: will a Palestinian state be achieved?	Can Africa break the chains of imperialism?	Will India be a new China? The ramifications in a fragmented multipolar world and for working-class struggle
Our rights under attack		How far can the backlash against women's rights go?	Why are the Tories obsessed with trans rights?	Class and identity What kind of movement and ideas are needed to end women's oppression?
Fighting racism and fascism	Reparations or revolution?	From Windrush to hostile environment: fighting racism	Combating Tory divide and rule: defend the right to asylum	Fascism: what it is and how to fight it
Working class life	Sport: plaything of big business or a right for all?	A graphic history of Militant and the Socialist Party		

SOCIALISM 2023



25 & 26 November
Institute of Education, London
20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL

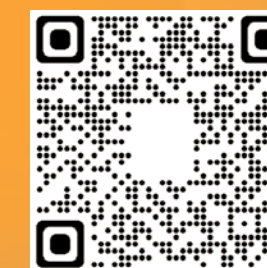
Tickets include the Saturday night Rally for Socialism 5.30-7.30pm.

Tories on the way out... Capitalism in crisis What's the alternative? FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD!

Two closing rallies Sunday 3-4pm

Committee for a Workers' International
rally for a socialist world

Socialist Students
fightback rally



For more info and tickets:
socialism.org.uk

Hosted by the
Socialist Party
socialistparty.org.uk



For rent control and council homes...

- **Vote Annoesjka Valent for Hackney mayor**
- **Join the London march against the housing crisis**



Welshpool House, Hackney DANNY ROBINSON/CC

ROB THOMAS
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

The housing crisis in the London Borough of Hackney is a similar story to that found across London, and throughout Britain. The large majority of housing is concentrated in the hands of private landlords and competition is intense.

Searching for somewhere to live is almost like a full-time job - constantly reviewing sites for new listings and arranging bookings as soon as possible. Tenants are now expected to bid against one another. One listing we saw when looking to move asked for "offers over..." There have even been reports of tenants being charged viewing fees, just for the privilege of viewing a property.

When I listed the room I used to rent, it became apparent just how desperate the situation is. Within one hour I had received 30 applications, by the end of the day the total passed 100, and over the weekend the number of applications rose well over 300.

The marketisation of renting - a massive shift away from council housing to private rip-offs - has resulted in crisis. There is no

affordable housing for private renters today and, after years of austerity - a further transfer of wealth to the richest in society - our services are also at breaking point. Housing is insecure, ridiculously expensive and conditions are dangerous for many.



The marketisation of renting - a massive shift away from council housing to private rip-offs - has resulted in crisis

It is clear that drastic change is needed to secure safe, affordable housing for all. The Socialist Party demands rent controls now as an immediate emergency measure. And for councils to use their powers to register and license landlords to enforce decent housing standards. Hackney Council closed its (very limited) licensing scheme at the start of this month!

We need mass council house building now, and for the thousands of properties in London kept empty as investments for the super-rich to be taken over for use as council homes. After a decade of meekly accepting Tory austerity, Labour Hackney council and others say there is no money to spend.

Socialist Party member Annoesjka Valent is standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in the upcoming Hackney mayoral by-election - making the case that the council should spend the money now to meet need, and demand that an incoming Labour government reimburse the funding by taking the cash off the super-rich.

On Saturday 28 October, the Socialist Party is organising a protest against London's housing crisis. Starting at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, we will march to Trafalgar Square, bringing together trade unionists and housing campaigners in what will be the start of a long campaign against predatory landlordism and profiteering. We will continue to struggle for decent housing, a new mass working-class party to fight for it, and for the socialist transformation of society.

The Socialist Party demands:

- **Slash the rents - introduce rent controls now!**
- **Compulsory licensing of all landlords to ensure decent housing standards**
- **A mass programme of council home building. Councils should fight the cuts, by setting no-cuts, needs-based budgets as part of building a mass campaign for the funding they need**
- **Nationalise the large building companies, land and banks, under democratic workers' control and public ownership, to ensure enough good-quality council housing and cheap mortgages**
- **For socialist planning to end the housing crisis and ensure a decent future for all!**

• Rats and mould: taking on negligent landlords in court

My partner spent two years previously living in an unlicensed 'house in multiple occupation' (HMO) with significant black mould and rat infestation problems. She is now involved in a court case against the landlord for a 'rent repayment order'.

With no access to legal aid, cut through austerity, she is using 'no win, no fee' Justice for Tenants as her legal counsel:

"We were told that we have to prove that he was a bad landlord to improve our chances of winning and so we collectively spent weeks compiling emails, photos, and writing witness statements to prove we in fact lived in the house, were not related, and that the landlord didn't fix what he needed to.

"I had a series of emails with the council's environmental health department as we tried to get help with our black mould and rat infestations over years. I quite literally had to beg them for help. An officer came

to inspect the property, filed a report saying we indeed had serious black mould and rodent problems, and ordered the landlord to fix them. When he did not, they never spoke on the issue again.

"I filed a complaint. Luckily this is good evidence now for our HMO case, but it didn't help us at the time. The council report also found the landlord had not installed proper fire protection.

"I also did digging on the council's website and found that some incredibly invasive building works the landlord was doing on the house during Covid lockdown restrictions were done without planning permission. This included workers drilling out front, bursting a water pipe, and coming into the house to use the electricity and bathroom facilities.

"I was originally under the impression that this would be a simple tribunal decision and there would not be a court date. But I've now been told I'll need to head to court in person in January to give my statement and evidence in order to maximise our chances of the decision going in our favour."

We have no idea about the other tenants in the flats above. Both families squeezed into small flats.

Socialist challenge to cost-of-living crisis in Hackney mayoral election

The working class in Hackney will have the option of voting for a 100% anti-austerity fighter in the east London borough's mayoral by-election on 9 November. The Socialist spoke to Annoesjka Valent, a Socialist Party member and trade union organiser, who is standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

"Working-class and young people in Hackney have been let down. Mayors and councillors from all the main parties choose to pass on Tory government cuts rather than fight for us. They have slashed over £200 million of jobs and services in real terms since 2009!

"That amounts to hundreds of jobs slashed across the whole council workforce, the latest being in libraries where the council faced down a strike by Unison union members this year. It is also why Hackney's youth centres have vanished, and schools are closing.

"Landlord licensing has stopped,

and housing offices closed. Cuts have created backlogs of repairs and casework, with black mould running rampant in many council homes. And this council keeps on approving developments of unaffordable private flats, and bringing in new punitive fees and fines!

"This mayoral election will decide who negotiates for our borough with both the present government, and the next one. I worked for the council for around seven years in community safety.

"I was a local shop steward for council staff, and since moving on I am still involved in local struggles against all cuts. As mayor I would be a shop steward fighting for the residents and workers of Hackney, not a manager passing down austerity from the Tories or Starmer's Labour.

"That means starting to rebuild the jobs and homes we need - and sending the bill to Number 10. Hackney council has over £345 million in 'usable' reserves to kick things off. Most importantly, it has the platform to build a mass campaign of workers, unions and the community to win more resources from government and the super-rich."

Hackney council censors TUSC mayoral address

TUSC had its original mayoral election address censored twice before being accepted by the council's legal department. This is a scandal!

The changes removed reference to the Labour Party and their candidate Caroline Woodley's leading role in trying to close Fernbank and Hillside children's centres - defeated by a community campaign including the Socialist Party.

We are not only having to fight the establishment candidate, but the council apparatus that has enacted these attacks. If you want change, vote for a candidate who will fight the Tory government cuts - cuts that all the other parties in this election have failed to mount a real challenge against.

BRIAN DEBUS
HACKNEY TUSC CONVENOR

Labour housing policy doesn't measure up to scale of crisis

PAUL KERSHAW
ENFIELD AND LEE VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY AND
CHAIR, UNITE HOUSING BRANCH

Despite headlines coming out of the Labour Party conference about the biggest boost to building affordable homes in a generation, it failed to measure up to Britain's housing emergency.

It agreed a target of building 300,000 homes per year, but also specifically pledged not to invest in building new houses because of Labour's self-imposed 'iron-clad fiscal rules'. Given the scale of the crisis, the overall target is inadequate. Just last year about 233,000 houses were built - the target represents an increase of less than 60,000 homes. But it is not just the number built; crucially they need to be affordable. Government investment would be essential in order to build genuinely affordable council homes at social

rent. No wonder there is no target for how many of the new homes would be 'affordable'.



Labour's pro-big business policies will continue the developer-friendly policies of the Tories and offer no hope to working-class communities or young people

Inside Housing magazine is campaigning for the construction of 90,000 social rent homes per year, but Labour shadow housing minister



Hackney library workers on strike to save jobs BRIAN DEBUS

Our demands include:

- **Mass construction of council homes, and rent controls in the private sector**
- **Save our services! Reverse all austerity cuts and privatisation, including youth centres and library jobs**
- **Stop the school closures! Reduce class sizes to improve education instead**
- **Child Q - never again. Replace the punitive culture the council has allowed in schools with a pastoral culture. School unions, students, parents and the community must be in charge**
- **Fight pollution, not the poor! Fight for a free-to-use, publicly owned, expanded public transport system. For genuine, democratic consultation with communities, workers and surrounding areas on changes to roads**
- **Invest in socially useful job creation on real living wages, without youth exemption, and trade union conditions**

Matthew Pennycook specifically rejected this modest figure. A study from University College London estimates that investing in social housing could actually save £1.5 billion per year in costs linked to homelessness. But evidently big business has more influence with Labour than academics, think tanks or people struggling to pay their rent!

Rents have never been higher and would-be renters face fierce competition to find a home. The Tory benefit cap means that rents are unaffordable for many families, meaning children go without the basics. Sir Keir Starmer has earned the title 'Kid Starver' after refusing to lift the cap.

No wonder new research found that renting, as opposed to home-owning, accelerates biological aging. The impact of private renting is greater than the impact of experiencing unemployment or being a former

smoker vs a never smoker. Yet the Labour leadership has firmly opposed rent controls.

Starmer has said he will back developers against planning restrictions. A Guardian columnist commented that this policy seemed to be the "result of a good lunch with the construction lobby." Developers want to build wherever they can to get the biggest-possible profit without having to pay for infrastructure or meeting social need.

More than twice as many big business representatives were present compared to last year; the Financial Times jokingly dubbed Labour conference the 'Liverpool Davos'. Business leaders have welcomed Labour's housing proposals.

Labour's pro-big business policies will continue the developer-friendly policies of the Tories and offer no hope to working-class communities or young people.

Tenants across the country are organising against bad conditions and rent and service charge increases. In some cases, housing association residents have refused to pay these increases and won reductions. A new mass workers' party could make the case for a socialist housing policy including a mass programme of building truly affordable, high-quality and sustainable council homes at the next general election. Its clear none of the establishment parties will!

HOUSING - TRANSLATING
SOCIALIST IDEAS INTO
BRICKS AND MORTAR

Come and discuss at
SOCIALISM 2023
London, 25-26 November
tickets and info at socialism.org.uk



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Llanelli hotel: Setting the record straight



EXTRACTS FROM CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY UNISON STATEMENT

Our Unison branch has been criticised in the Socialist Worker newspaper, regarding our position on the Tories' proposal to use Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli to house asylum seekers.

Whilst 99.9% of our members will not have read this scurrilous article, to set the record straight, we take this opportunity to respond to this criticism and restate our branch's position, especially considering the Home Office's decision to scrap its plans.

Carmarthenshire County Unison supports Unison's position that all refugees have a right to safe, humane, and clean accommodation that is suitable to their needs, and we have a proud record of opposing racism both in the workplace and in our communities.

Our branch and its members have, over decades, attended almost every anti-racist/fascist/far-right event in west Wales and beyond. We have also been to the fore in Wales in opposing council cuts, defending our member's interests and fighting for resources for all - the council workforce, working-class communities in Carmarthenshire, and refugees and migrant workers.

We stand for and organise trade unions and working-class unity against the far-right and the Tories who attempt to use racism to divide us.

Our branch has been actively involved from the beginning, when the Home Office first announced its plans to use Stradey Park Hotel to house refugees, and we have encouraged other trade unions to get involved.

The approach of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is that, if you don't agree with their slogans and demands, then you are branded a racist or Nazi! This has unnecessarily polarised the situation and made some protesters outside the hotel more susceptible to the poison of the far right.

The article went on to say: "Some unions have opposed the racists, but others have used mealy-mouthed excuses to oppose them (asylum seekers) coming to Llanelli. The local Unison branch said housing the asylum seekers at the hotel would put significant pressure on council and

health services locally that have been cut to the bone and underfunded for many years."

The method of housing asylum seekers, decided by the Tory government, was both deliberately provocative, designed to stir up racism (as it has been in other locations across the country), and to the detriment of the refugees themselves, housing them in overcrowded numbers, with inadequate services. SUTR itself stated that it opposed the use of the hotel for similar reasons!

This is not making a concession to the racists; we raised these concerns before the far-right raised their heads, and it is a genuine concern of residents that our branch shares.

On 9 June, our branch published a press release that again clearly laid out our position regarding Stradey Park Hotel and the Home Office wanting to place refugees there. We stated we are in favour of the council's policy of housing asylum seekers across the wider community. We stated that the Tory government wanted to create a hostile environment for asylum seekers by placing them at the hotel which resulted in the loss of 95 jobs.

We agree the far right has intervened and has been a presence outside the hotel for many months - they have had some influence with some protesters. But the tactics of SUTR, branding everyone as racist on the protests, is wrong and has been an obstacle to achieving unity and stopping this happening.

We supported and participated in the Furnace Action Committee's 9 June demonstration to save the 95 hotel jobs, which was addressed by the Plaid Cymru leader of the council and the grateful hotel workers.

SUTR/SWP boycotted the demo, claiming it was a racist protest, even though the handful of right-wingers present, who tried to disrupt the speeches, were challenged by us, but also shouted down and shown the door by the one hundred-strong protesters! We attended a protest against the far right when we were told they were mobilising outside the hotel.

The hotel failed a fire inspection recently and the Home Office now claims its plans to house asylum seekers there have been scrapped.

MARK EVANS
BRANCH SECRETARY ON BEHALF OF
CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY UNISON BRANCH
COMMITTEE



Socialist Party members on the protest LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Save Liverpool Women's Hospital march on Labour conference

LEWIS MELVILLE
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

The show of solidarity from the Liverpool community on 8 October to 'Save Liverpool Women's Hospital' was immense. The march brought together many different people: trade unionists from the British Medical Association, Royal College of Nursing, and Fire Brigades Union, and members of the Socialist Party. The Katumba band lifted the spirits of the crowd.

Hundreds flocked to join the march down to the Pier Head to stand outside the Labour Party conference, demanding that local Labour councillors and the Labour Party nationally should stand up and resist the persistent budget cuts which have fallen on the workers, healthcare, and people of Liverpool.

Liverpool Women's Hospital has stood as a bastion of health and support for over 100 years, providing vital maternity care and keeping women safe. However, austerity measures by the Tory government in 2015 and continuing to the present have seen attempts to merge the Women's Hospital with the Royal Hospital nearby, diluting the maternity services and inclusive environment that is vital to women's health during pregnancy.

Previous attempts at privatising services have seen workers campaigning and fighting back, making calls for an increase in funding, improvements to working conditions, and for all aspects of the NHS to be permanently renationalised.

The Liverpool Women's Hospital has stood strong for over a century, we will not stand by and let it crumble and erode.

Surrey – cuts like never before, but we're fighting back

'SAVE OUR SERVICES IN SURREY' STATEMENT

Woking council is in crisis, and is looking at massive cuts to services. Guildford council says it is not far behind. Surrey Heath and Spelthorne have massive debts.

The next few months will see cuts in public services like never before in Surrey, and Save Our Services in Surrey want to have our say in fighting back.

We produced an excellent manifesto (see sosis.org.uk) earlier this year, which pledged to fight against all cuts in services, and to call on candidates for council office to refuse to make cuts.

This is our opportunity to turn those words into a reality by coming

together as a community and making a stand.

We are also supporters of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), which organised a public meeting on 8 October in Guildford - 'How can trade unionists prepare for the battles ahead?'

And we are holding a public, open, meeting in November to plan our campaign, with the possibility of a major lobby of the council meeting in February, where the full extent of the budget cuts will be known.

'Councils in crisis - fight back against the cuts'

• Wednesday 15 November, 7:30pm, Maybury Centre, Board School Road, Woking GU21 5HD

A REVOLUTIONARY'S MEMOIR

From Socialist Fight to Militant and the Socialist Party

by Keith Dickenson

Coming soon!

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A long list of capitalism's failures - why I joined the Socialist Party



William (second left), campaigning with other Socialist Party members BIRMINGHAM SP

WILLIAM DOWNS
BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL SOCIALIST PARTY

After attending various Socialist Party Scotland meetings at university, and coming into contact with members canvassing for a 'Yes' vote in the Scottish Independence Referendum (indyref), I eventually decided to join the Socialist Party after being given a leaflet during a Black Lives Matter demo in Birmingham.

I had become disillusioned with mainstream politics over a long period of time: Blair's illegal war in Iraq; the false promises for more devolution from Cameron, Miliband and Clegg just before indyref, which were trashed by Cameron the morning after the result; workers being forced to bail out the banking system during the 2007-08 global financial crisis; Corbyn's treatment by Labour; the

growing inequality witnessed during Covid; all pointed to a broken capitalist system.

For me, the most pressing political concern is the environment. The environmental destruction brought upon the planet will not be solved in a capitalist system. BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips, as well as the American Petroleum Institute, knew that using their products led to climate change, but then spent decades misleading the public.

This crisis cannot be left to market forces. Instead, climate catastrophe can only be averted by socialist policies to nationalise the big energy companies and industry under democratic working-class control and management.

The Socialist Party's core values align with my own, most importantly, that socialism must be realised

on an international basis. By joining the Socialist Party you will meet like-minded people who believe in fighting for an economic system that will provide peace, justice, and a prosperous future for generations to come. To reach these goals, inaction and apathy are not an option. Join the Socialist Party today.

Join the fightback

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Braverman to face protests

DONNA DEE
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members in Southampton will be supporting the protest organised by trans rights activists against Tory home secretary Suella Braverman, outside the Conservative offices in her Fareham constituency on 21 October.

Braverman and other Tories used their party conference at the start of October to continue to attack trans, intersex and non-binary people.

Rather than working to actively address existing inequalities so that trans people are safe to live their authentic lives as valued and respected members of society, this government chooses to see the community as a convenient polarising social issue rather than as people.

These attacks suggest to some that it is legitimate and appropriate to undertake harassment of trans, intersex and non-binary people.

In addition to denying the existence of trans people in his conference speech, leaked footage has also shown prime minister Rishi Sunak appearing to openly ridicule trans people. Trans, intersex and non-binary people are being used in the so-called culture war - mocked and inaccurately portrayed as a threat to others. Furthermore, people who support trans people as friends, colleagues and family members are called 'bullies', and those questioning the government's new narrative in this area are removed from conversations.

If the government can target one group of innocent people, devaluing

their rights, then it can do the same to anyone else. The Tories are manufacturing a moral panic against one of the most marginalised communities in our society, putting their health, safety, and lives at risk. It is a sign of the Tories' weakness, not strength.

Part of the fight for trans rights is the fight to build a new workers' party which unites working-class people and campaigns for: fully funded services, a mass programme of council house building, a £15-an-hour minimum wage and benefits that people can actually afford to live on. It means taking on capitalism itself, with its greed, poverty, and oppression - and fighting for a socialist future.

• Support the protest at midday, Saturday 21 October. Conservative Association, 14 East Street, Fareham, PO16 0BN

50 years on: The 1963 Bristol bus boycott that won equal rights for black workers



A mural celebrating Roy Hackett and the Bristol bus boycott

ROGER THOMAS
PRESIDENT, BRISTOL TRADES UNION COUNCIL
AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

This year marks 60 years since a group of committed activists from Bristol's 3,000-strong Black community launched a striking, and ultimately successful, campaign to break the colour bar on the city's buses.

On a spring afternoon in 1963, Guy Bailey arrived for his job interview. He was qualified for the job and a colleague had rung ahead to check that vacancies still existed. The receptionist told the manager that the 2pm appointment was here, and he's Black. The manager responded, without leaving his office, "Tell him the vacancies are full". The manager continued: "There's no point having an interview. Guy still refused to leave the office and was told, "We don't employ Black people".

Discrimination was rife at the time, signs in some windows proclaiming "No blacks or Irish here". Young Black men on a night out would face racism and harassment.

And on the buses, there was a colour bar. Prospective Black employees were refused jobs as bus crew but could be employed in the company's garages and staff canteens. Bristol Omnibus Company was part of the nationalised Transport Holding Company and was partly owned by the local council. There was a reported labour shortage and an annual turnover of over a third of the 1,500 bus crew. Pay was low and workers relied heavily on overtime to get a wage they could live on. The bosses relied on divide-and-rule tactics to institutionalise the culture of low pay and hostility to what they perceived as outsiders.

Ian Patey, the Company General Manager, a former army colonel, disgracefully said explicitly of the ban: "In London coloured men have

become arrogant and rude after they have been employed for several months". Elsewhere he stated that he had "factual evidence that the introduction of mixed crews in other cities downgraded the job and caused existing white staff to go elsewhere". A position that the council endorsed at a meeting of the Joint Transport Committee which oversaw the operation of the buses.

The company also hid behind the fact that in 1955 the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) bus branch had passed a motion to exclude Black workers from the buses.

In the early months of 1963, four young men, Roy Hackett, Owen Henry, Audley Evans and Prince Brown, came together to form an action group. Their spokesperson was Paul Stephenson. The initial problem was to prove that the colour bar existed, and that was where Guy Bailey came in, a Black Boys Brigade officer.

Inspired by the politics of Martin Luther King and the American civil rights movement, particularly Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, it came to Stephenson that a bus boycott would be a good campaign.

The boycott was launched at a press conference on 29 April. By the next day they claimed that none of the city's West Indian population was using the buses and that many white people were supporting them. On 1 May, students from Bristol University held a protest march against the colour bar which went to the bus station and then on to the office of the union. The local Labour MP Tony Benn expressed his support for the boycott: "I shall stay off the buses even if I have to find a bike". Benn contacted Labour leader Harold Wilson and he spoke out against the colour bar at an anti-Apartheid rally in London.

On 2 May, local Labour Alderman Henry Hennessy spoke of the collusion between the company, the council and the local leadership

of the union. The next day he was threatened with expulsion from the ruling Labour group. At the May Day rally on 6 May, organised by Bristol Trades Council, the TGWU was criticised by other unions for resisting apartheid but its collusion locally in a colour bar. This forced the union into a negotiating stance with the company, something it had previously avoided doing. On the same day over 100 Black residents of St Paul's marched to St Mary Radcliffe Church, to voice their anger.

The cricket match between Gloucestershire and the West Indies was leafleted by the campaign against racial discrimination, and Learie Constantine, the high commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago, wrote to the bus company, and while the West Indies team refused to comment on the boycott, pressure was clearly rising in the city.

The TGWU called for quiet negotiations, the regional secretary calling Stephenson "dishonest and irresponsible." But over the summer the pressure began to pay off. Leaders from the local churches and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament joined the campaign, and left wingers in the union and the Labour Party agitated for change. A petition was raised from the huge working-class estate of Hartcliffe by a local youth worker.

Negotiations finally started between the union and the company, brokered by Constantine, which culminated in a mass meeting of 500 bus workers on 27 August voting to end the colour bar. On 28 August, Ian Patey announced there would be no further discrimination in employing bus crews. On 17 September, Raghbir Singh became Bristol's first non-white bus conductor; a few days later, two Jamaican and two Pakistani men joined the company.

There was some suspicion that the

company maintained a quota as two years after there were only 39 non-white conductors and four drivers in a crew of around 2,000. However, the boycott campaign had been a huge victory, bringing together a determined community campaign and intense negotiating within the labour movement. Labour leader Harold Wilson, soon to be prime minister, called it the last example of the colour bar in Britain.

Wilson's incoming government, in its 1965 Race Relations Act, legislated to end the colour bar, and in 1968 it was extended to outlaw discrimination in housing and employment in general. In 2013 Unite, the successor of the TGWU, issued an apology through regional secretary Laurence Faircloth, describing the union's stance at the time as unacceptable: "I can well accept the sense of injustice and pain that has been because of what happened in Bristol all those years ago".

Bristol Trades Union Council continues to fight in the city today for united workers' struggle against racist discrimination.

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October issue

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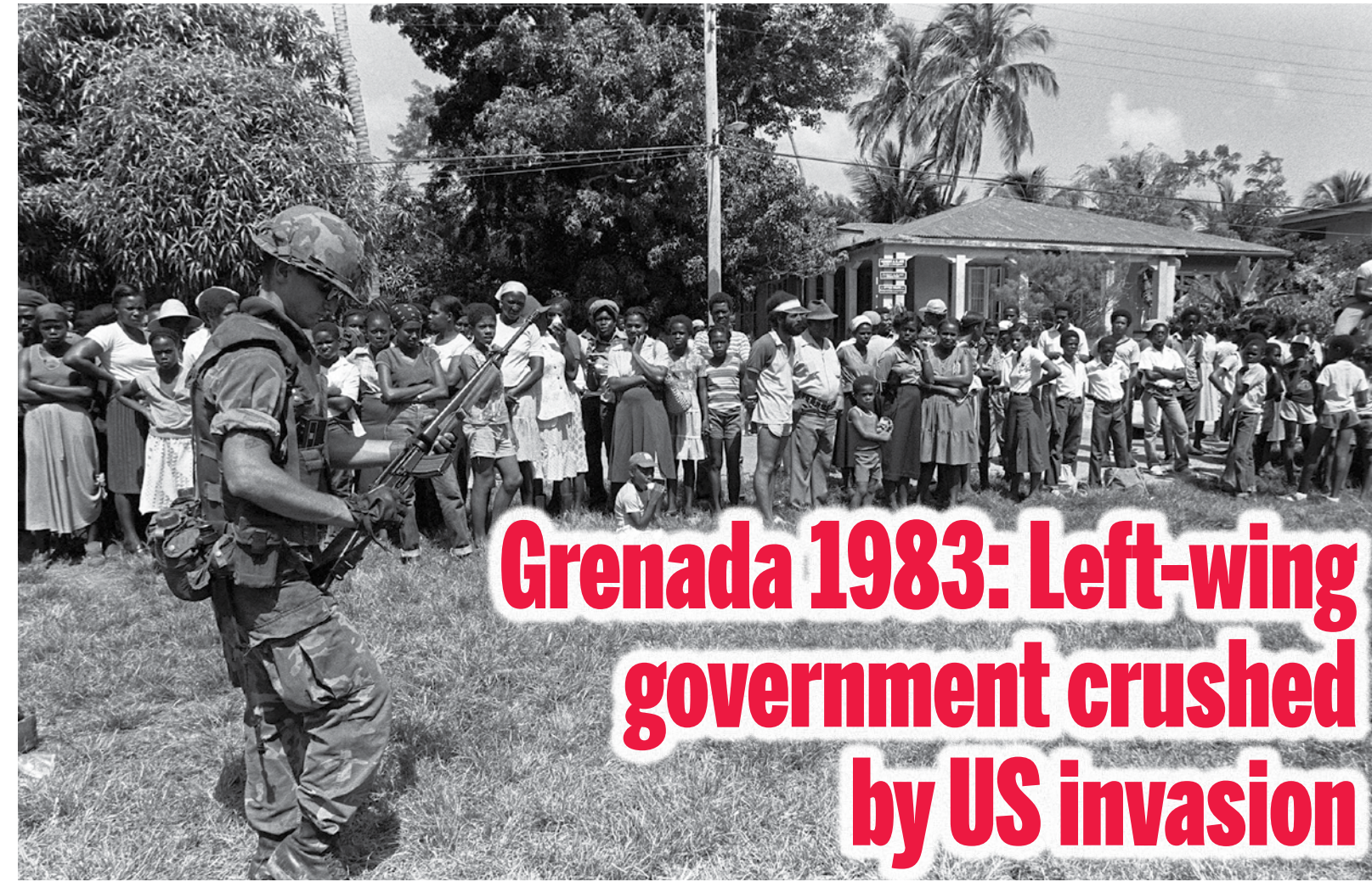
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PHOTO: HARRY MITCHELL/CC



Grenada 1983: Left-wing government crushed by US invasion

SCOTT JONES

The peaceful picture postcard white sands and turquoise seas of Caribbean island nation Grenada were dramatically disrupted 40 years ago on the morning of 25 October 1983, when US troops invaded.

Grenada, known for its spice plantations, and sitting off the coast of Venezuela, with a population of 90,000 at the time, is described by Grenadians as "just south of paradise, just north of frustration."

Much of that historical 'frustration' experienced by the poor, former British slave colony turned to hope when, in 1979, five years after independence, the left-wing New Jewel Movement led by Maurice Bishop came to power establishing the People's Revolutionary Government.

Bishop said: "We are a small country, we are a poor country, with a population of largely African descent, we are a part of the exploited Third World, and we definitely have a stake in seeking the creation of a new international economic order which would assist in ensuring economic justice for the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world." This was echoed on the streets by ordinary people in Grenada, as one journalist said: "This is the first time I've seen the fellows on the block controlling something."

Gains for ordinary people

The new government set about launching literacy campaigns and allowing the learning of Grenadian Creole in schools. Medical consultations were made free and milk was distributed to children and pregnant women. Financial loans, equipment for farmers, and agricultural cooperatives were provided. Unemployment fell from 49% to 14%. The government also invested in infrastructure, building new roads, upgrading the power grid and construction of an

international airport, to expand trade and tourism.

The building of the airport was aided by Cuba, which also provided Grenada with doctors, and the two countries formed close ties. Capitalism had been overthrown in Cuba in 1959 by the revolution led by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Its support for the Bishop government provoked the anger of the United States, which did not want another Cuba on its 'doorstep', nor for the ideas and actions of Grenada to spread to larger Caribbean countries like nearby Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica.

US president Ronald Reagan claimed in early 1983 that aerial photographs showed the "the Soviet Cuban militarisation" of the island, but even his own defence officials denied that the airport's 9,000-foot runway was ever, or could ever, present a military threat to the security of the US. The British company Plessey was also contracted to build parts of the new airport and it too denied that its building specifications were remotely like those for a military airstrip.

But the pretext for US intervention came in mid-October when a power struggle between factions of the New Jewel Movement and the army erupted, and led to the arrest and execution of Bishop and members of his cabinet, with deputy prime minister Bernard Coard and General Hudson Austin taking the reins. Reagan ordered an invasion, which took place days later with the aim of "forestalling chaos".

Yet during the invasion - called 'Operation Urgent Fury' - US military and aircraft bombed a hospital in the capital St Georges and almost a hundred people were killed overall, including Cuban workers and soldiers, and US troops themselves. There were also hundreds wounded, and Grenadian government supporters, called "leftist thugs" by Reagan, were arrested and detained by the US 'peacekeepers'.

never went anywhere near the island. He absurdly declared: "Our days of weakness are over!" after occupying an island of just 90,000. There were plenty of weaknesses too and against a bigger army it could have led to another 'Bay of Pigs' style disaster like in Cuba in 1961. The invasion force used photocopies of tourist maps and one officer had to call his base in North Carolina from a pay phone to request air cover due to communication failures!

But Reagan used the invasion to bolster justification for US intervention elsewhere, escalating attacks on the left-wing Sandinista government in Nicaragua after Grenada.

The Socialist Party, then Militant, supported the reforms of the Bishop government and opposed the US-led coup that intervened in the interests of local capitalists, and which installed a new regime with American bayonets. We joined protests outside the US embassy in London and in Hyde Park, pointing out: "The invasion has 'internationalised' the Grenada issue in the minds of many Caribbean workers", and we called for "a Federation of Democratic Socialist States, as an answer to the impasse of capitalism and all its social ills."

The New Jewel government in Grenada had mass support because of reforms and measures it introduced that improved ordinary people's lives. But as we said in the pages of the Militant at the time: "Bishop's government was not one based upon an active and healthy regime of workers' democracy, with committees of workers constantly checking, discussing and controlling the functions of the state. The key sectors of the economy remained in private hands, despite the reforms."

This task, struggle and programme remains the same today. Grenada is now one of the poorest countries in the Caribbean, one of the poorest regions in the world. In the Caribbean, like workers and the poor masses around the world, revolutionary socialist and working-class parties are needed to fight poverty, capitalism, imperialist wars and invasions, and for socialist change.

The US relied on its ally Britain, and Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher, to install a new regime - Grenada was a part of the Commonwealth - led by the Queen's representative on the island Governor-General Paul Scoon, who it was later revealed had worked with the US to undermine the regime before Reagan's coup. This was despite Reagan admitting in his autobiography that he had invaded without even telling Thatcher who had some uncharacteristic reservations. So much for the special relationship! And proof there's no honour among thieves.

Reagan exaggerated the scale and success of the coup, handing out 8,612 medals, many of them to desk officers who



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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

STUDENT HOUSING NIGHTMARE

Fight back with Socialist Students!

ADAM POWELL-DAVIES
SOCIALIST STUDENTS NATIONAL ORGANISER

The student housing squeeze shows no signs of slowing. University student rents have jumped by 30% over the past year, according to a recent report by NatWest. More students than ever are seeing their housing costs outstrip their maintenance loans, which have gone up by just 2.8% this year.

In London, the average student rent is a whopping 150% of the maximum maintenance loan, with students now expected to fork out £20,000 per year for privately owned student accommodation!

And it's not just the cost of housing; students are struggling to find any place to stay! To keep up with demand, 40,000 new places are needed every year but fewer than 9,000 were built last year.

Universities are more than happy to give students a place in return for our fees but are less concerned about whether we can then find an affordable and good-quality place to live. Many universities are notorious for running cramped and decrepit student halls, charging rents barely less expensive than the private sector.

Socialist Students says that higher education must be fully funded by the government, which includes

universities having the necessary resources to build and maintain good-quality housing for all who want it.

This also means scrapping fees, cancelling student debt, and replacing maintenance loans with grants. Genuine living grants would mean students could afford their rent and bills, with money left over for food, transport, socialising, etc. A decent standard of living, without having to work on top of our full-time studies.

To meet the needs of students and the local community, Socialist Students calls for universities to be run under the democratic control of staff and students. As a step in this direction, we call for rent controls in

all student accommodation, to be decided by democratically elected committees, including trade unions, staff and students.

And it's not just students who need a decent home. Everyone deserves a warm and comfortable place to live. That's why Socialist Students calls for a mass building programme of eco-friendly, good-quality and affordable council homes.

All of these demands require a massive fight to be won. It would mean taking the wealth and resources out of the hands of big business, and harnessing them in the interests of the majority. It would require a mass workers' party, armed

with a socialist programme, which fights to take the banks, monopolies, and major industries into democratic public ownership, under workers' control and management.

That's what we are fighting for in Socialist Students. Join us!



● Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
● or call **020 8988 8761**
● or text your name and school, college or uni to **07749 379 010**

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ▶▶▶ see column on p12



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