

he horrors of war fill our screens and airwaves.

Israeli forces advance deeper into the Gaza rubble and continue to drop further devastation from the skies. Two million people, half of them children, under constant fear of death and facing starvation and disease under siege. Over 8,000 $\stackrel{\circ}{=}$ millions have marched on pro-Pal-have already perished. In the West $\stackrel{\circ}{=}$ estinian protests, some expressing

Bank, hundreds of Palestinians have been driven from their homes and dozens killed.

Millions worldwide have taken to the streets, including in defiance of bans on pro-Palestinian protests in France. In Britain too, the Tories have threatened to repress protests - not that it has worked; the 28 October London protest was the biggest yet. Across the Middle East,

opposition to their own governments. Protesters in Egypt faced police violence when chants calling for an end to the repressive rule of President Sisi developed.

Potential power

The potential power of the millionsstrong protests is huge. It would be strengthened by building mass political forces making the case for a united workers' struggle and for socialist change. In Britain, thousands chanted "Keir Starmer shame on you" in Trafalgar Square on 28 October; the Labour leader has suspended MP Andy McDonald for saying at a rally: "We won't rest until all people, Israelis and Palestinians, between the river and the sea, can live in peaceful liberty". Dozens of Labour councillors have resigned from the party.

Fighting to build a working-class political alternative to the Tories and New Labour in Britain, standing

for socialism and internationalism, is crucial to build solidarity with the Palestinians' struggle. Join the Socialist Party to help us fight for it.

Read what we think:

Israeli state offensive on Gaza escalates - only socialist struggle can pave the way for peace. Page 3

How can we build a movement to stop the war on Gaza? Pages : **8-9**

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PCS MEMBERS GEAR UP FOR LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS >>> p7

the Socialist

Issue 1249 2-8 November 2023

DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?

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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editors@socialistparty.org.uk 020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

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

We are writing to you to request an $\frac{1}{2}$ socialist, internationalist alternative in-person meeting in light of the res- : to the pro-capitalist politics of the esignation of nine councillors from the tablishment parties. Oxford City Council Labour group

The following is an open letter from Oxford Socialist Party

from the Labour Party

over the stance of the Labour Party

and its support of the Israeli state.

leadership towards the war on Gaza

We send solidarity and support

to anyone who is willing to take a

principled stand against war and op-

pression. Clearly the horrific events

in Gaza over the last weeks have

shocked a huge number of people in

of its population by the Israeli state -

of workers and youth from the party.

the current Labour Party, with all of

the key manifesto pledges from the

time of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership

being scrapped and Corbyn himself

now blocked from standing as a La-

bour candidate at the next general

The Socialist Party and supporters

of the Trade Unionist and Social-

ist Coalition (TUSC), of which the

Socialist Party is a member, have

a proud history of campaigning

against all forms of oppression and

have been active participants and

leaders in the anti-war movement,

stretching all the way back to the

campaigns against the Vietnam War,

Blair's illegal war in Iraq, the war in

Ukraine, and now this latest episode

be necessary to bring about a deci-

sive change in the situation, not just

in Israel and Palestine, but here in

to any sincere anti-war campaign-

ers, trade unionists, and socialists to

join with us in helping to build such

We believe a mass movement will

of the conflict in Gaza.

Labour U-turns

election.

members to the nine Oxford councillors who have resigned

socialistparty.org.uk

The issues with the Labour Party are not limited to its stance on the conflict in Gaza however. Like many others around the country, the La bour-controlled Oxford City Council has overseen years of austerity and cuts to public services with little-to -no fightback against the budget cuts imposed by the central government.

incils must fight

We believe that all councils should

to lead the fight against austerity.

May 2024 will be the next date

If you agree, or want to discuss further on concrete steps that we can a movement, starting with plan- take in Oxford then please contact us ning a campaign in Oxford to offer a as soon as possible.

tusc.org.uk

2-8 November 2023

Labour resignations: Prepare an anti-war, anti-cuts stand for May local elections and beyond

the Socialist

Britain and internationally: the callous stance of Keir Starmer's Labour Party therefore - of supporting the

use their existing financial reserves siege of Gaza and the persecution and borrowing powers to fund the services that people need and then has rightly alienated a huge number launch a mass campaign against the Conservative government for more funding, linking up with local trade unionists and community activists Unfortunately, this is only one in a and with other councils around the long line of betrayals and U-turns by country that take the same stand.

TUSC has campaigned for this since its foundation in 2010, but a proposal for a no-cuts, needs-based budget presented at a council meeting by local TUSC supporters was reiected by Oxford City Council in 2022. Unfortunately, Labour councils have proven again and again that they are unwilling to take the steps necessary

for elections to Oxford City Council and Socialist Party members along with other local campaigners will be standing as part of TUSC as widely as possible in the city in order to offer a genuine socialist, anti-austerity, anti-war choice at the ballot box to the people of Oxford. We encourage all who agree with the core TUSC programme (see: www.tusc.org.uk/ policies/) to consider standing under this banner as well, but we are open to working alongside any left-wing Britain as well. We therefore appeal : candidates who are in agreement with our key policies.



Stop the war on Palestine! Crisis confirms need for an alternative to Sunak and Starmer

Read the TUSC statement at

Behind the headlines, how can the Israel-Palestine conflict be solved?

The Israeli regime's indiscriminate bombing and starving of 2.3 million people in Gaza, including 1 million children, of food, water, medicines and fuel - "a death sentence" according to the United Nations - has provoked mass protests around the world.

This podcast, recorded on 23 October, goes behind the headlines to examine the processes that have brought us to this point - and to offer socialist ideas to build the anti-war movement to end the conflict and deliver peace, security and a decent future for the masses of the region.

 Listen and subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Soundcloud and all major podcast platforms pod.link/1438845215/ socialistparty.org.uk/main/Podcasts



ter, food and medical supplies.

sive scale

Israeli war cabinet's strategy.

spreading.

Masses' pressure

further.

In this volatile situation Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanvahu inflamed the situation further by describing the war on Gaza as Israel's "second war of independence". The first was the war before and after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 when up to a million Palestinians were forced from their homes, becoming refugees. So Netanyahu's war spreads - including fear that In Israel, following the callous killwords caused immense fear among : mass fury can turn on the capitalist : ing of 1,400 Israelis and immigrant : back lip service from Biden's US



Protesters i London chanted "Keir Starmer Shame on you



Israeli state offensive on Gaza escalates Only socialist struggle can pave the way for peace

Socialist Darty WHAT WE THINK

he horrific bombing of the Gaza Strip has continued relentlessly, inflicting terrible and unprecedented suffering on the trapped, blockaded population. The death toll has increased daily - over 8,300 at the time of writing - with more than 20.000 injured. Nowhere in the Strip is safe, so Gazans are in deep trauma, not knowing where the next missiles will land, and lacking electricity, fuel, wa-

Israel's spokespeople dismiss the death toll as exaggerated by the Hamas-led Gaza authority, but the pictures of housing turned into rubble and the reports from foreign journalists and aid workers in Gaza - who are also being killed - indicate its mas-

Referring to the recently started ground invasion, Amir Avivi, a former Israeli military deputy division commander, confirmed the lack of differentiation between military and civilian targets when he said: "When our soldiers are manoeuvring we are doing this with massive artillery, with 50 aeroplanes overhead destroying anything that moves." The intensive bombing has also shown that the fates of the Israeli hostages held in Gaza are only of secondary importance in the

Its declared aim is to wipe out Hamas, but that will be not be possible and the devastating bloodshed will not prevent more bloodshed in the future. The ground invasion appears to have been calibrated as piecemeal stages in a drawn-out war rather than as a full-scale invasion with stronger impact. This is probably with the aim of minimising casualties of Israeli troops but also to try to avoid a sudden shock effect across the Middle East and internationally which would increase the chance of the war

But outrage across the masses of the Middle East and beyond is so great that regional forces such as Hezbollah in Lebanon have come under pressure to open up other fronts, and might do so as this war develops



Palestinians in the occupied territories and inside Israel on where the war is heading. He posed the war as existential for Israel, clearly hoping to come across as a leading saviour for Israeli Jews and turn the tide on his sinking popularity.

Already in this war over a million Palestinians have been displaced inside Gaza and hundreds in the West Bank, due to the orders and incitement of Israel's ministers, some of whom make no secret of wanting more 'facts on the ground' regarding enlarging Israeli territory. US imperialism and other Western powers, while staunchly supporting Israel, are at the same time trying to exert some pressure on Israel's leaders to limit their war objectives. This is not out of concern for the Palestinians, but rather due to worry over the potential for massive disruption to the world economy and other instability if the

ruling classes, especially in the Middle East.

The Palestinians can place no trust in the world's capitalist powers. In the occupied territories they will need to turn back to the mass struggle they engaged in during the first intifada, only this time organised under the democratic control of elected popular committees of struggle. This would mean challenging the Palestinian pro-capitalist parties - whether Fatah, Hamas or others - that have no way of ending their national oppression or of providing decent living standards for all. The Palestinian masses need to build their own political party armed with a socialist programme for taking into public ownership the main companies and resources in society, and running them democratically in the interests of all.

furmoil in Israel

workers by Hamas on 7 October. most Israeli Jews support the military onslaught on Gaza. That support is likely to lessen though as the death toll of Israeli soldiers rises, along with questioning on where the heavy use of firepower will lead.

Also, a majority in Israel strongly blame the Netanyahu government for not preventing the Hamas offen sive, anger that will be added to by recently repeated reports in the me dia on how, for years, Netanyahu encouraged the funding of Hamas from Qatar. He saw keeping Hamas afloat as helpful, so that he and other Israeli leaders could point to its hostility towards Israel and the separation of its rule in Gaza from Fatah's in the West Bank to argue there has been no united Palestinian leadership to negotiate with and nothing to be gained from talks with Hamas. That was part of a strategy against any talks taking place about a future Palestinian state

Now, however, the war has brought

administration, the Arab elites and others for the idea of a Palestinian state. This isn't out of support for the right of the Palestinians to self-de termination. Rather, having no solutions to the Israel-Palestine conflict they can only try to end rounds of bloodshed by sponsoring façades of talks that won't achieve an independent, genuine Palestinian state because there is no prospect of one under capitalism. Israel's capitalist ruling class regards the idea of such a state as a threat to its interests and von't allow it. Also, that ruling class benefits from a 'divide-and-rule' approach, including fostering a heavy smokescreen of racism and security concerns in Israel to draw Israeli Iew behind capitalist interests.

But the interests of Israel's working class and middle class are another matter. They have an enormous amount to gain from an end to the conflict, as well as from ending Israeli capitalism with all its exploitation both within and beyond the country's borders. Israel's myriad of pro-capitalist parties have shown again and again a complete inability to offer any way out of the cycles of war, or to end the poverty and mas sive inequality in Israeli society. So the building of a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme is needed in Israel.

Socialist forces

Only the development of socialist forces on both sides of the divide can start to counter the distrust and division and indicate the way forward towards an alternative system, free of war and oppression.

On a socialist basis, it will be fully realisable for both sides to have their own state if they so wish, while fully respecting the rights of minoritie within those states, and linking them together in a voluntary socialist con federation. Capitalism is so rotten across the Middle East - as well as the whole world - that the taking up of socialist ideas on a mass basis in any country would very quickly become enormously attractive in neighbouring countries, laving the basis for a socialist confederation of the entire region, in which cooperation would replace conflict.



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the Socialist

TORY TUITION FEE CHANGES – MAKING AN AWFUL SYSTEM WORSE

ADAM HARMSWORTH

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY AND GRADUATE

The Tories have snuck through a massive change in student finance. 'Plan 5' loans apply to new students from August this year and, crucially, they lower the salary threshold at which graduates start paying back their loans from £27,295 to £25,000.

That means far more low-wage graduate workers will have to start paying back, squeezing poorer graduates' incomes from the start. If you were earning £30,000 a year, your student loan repayments go up from £243 a year to £450.

The debt is also written off after 40 years instead of the previous 30, leaving these 21-year-old graduates in debt almost until retirement. unless they're one of the few graduates lucky (or well-connected) enough to land a big salary.

Also, if a student's family income is just £25,000 or more, they cannot get the full maintenance loan for living costs. The maximum loan available to students is just £9,978 for those living away from home - far from enough to live on

Reality of studying with fees

My parents saved up over years so that I could go to uni under Blair's tuition fees. When the Con-Dem government tripled tuition fees, even with those savings and a student loan. I still had to get a part-time job after my first year. I typically worked 20 hours a week

- time I should have been able to spend studving!

Students from wealthier families don't have to worry about that. Those that can afford to pay the tuition fees from the start and can fund three years of living aren't burdened

50%

increase in total student loan payments for an average graduate after recent changes

more years paying off student loan debt for new students

with work or debt. From the start, the entire student loans system has been grossly unfair on working-class students. Poorer students pay more than the rich, then study less than the rich, and so get worse grades and less out of university than the rich.

It is a clearly flawed and unfair system, and students and working graduates must fight to write off the debt and for free education

Stop the Tory stealth fees attack. Cancel all student debt, scrap tuition fees and take the weal off the 1% to fund it

End the student cost-of-living crisis. Replace maintenance loans with grants students can

actually live on, rising with costs Students and campus workers unite to fight for he funding our universities need

End the student housing crisis, for third-party halls to be brought back in-house, with democratic

control to make sure student housing is good quality and not a rip-off

Students can't afford to go to university

£44.730

average

student

in 2023

graduating

debt

DEAN YOUNG LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Being a student is meant to be one of the best periods of your life. Sure. there is the stress of whether you can finish your essays in time, but that is supposed to be the side dish to three or more years of growing up, enjoying not having the responsibilities of a full-time job and thus avoiding being eaten up by the exploitative capitalist system.

But in reality, students are seen as commodities by universities desperate for our fees, and with maintenance grants replaced by loans that don't cover the cost of living. What does this look like for students? It means having to work to survive; over 50% of students now work, unable to fully focus on their studies.

It means having an average debt upon graduating in 2023 of £44,730, if you study in England. I'm a third-year student and would like to do a Masters degree. That's another £12,000 or

more of debt to be paid off separately to my undergraduate loan.

Students hardly ever pay this debt off. with the interest rates at ludicrous levels. Instead we are burdened by a stealth tax, costing graduates thousands upon thousands of pounds across their working lives. Paying off the debt from a Masters degree is an additional 6% of your income above a much lower threshold of £21,000. So if you enjoy education, good luck to your bank account!



or text your name and school ollege or uni to 07747 174 833



When students were paid to go to university

ROGER BANNISTER

IVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

I was brought up in one of 36 terraced houses in a working-class cul-de-sac in Manchester. In 1970, when I went to Bristol University, I was the first person from there to go to university. My parents were both low paid, at that time my dad was earning around £600 a year, and my mum even less as a part-time typist. To get things into perspective, a newly qualified teacher then would be paid around £940 a year. If things were as they are now. with inadequate maintenance loans and massive tuition fees to pay afterwards, there is no way that I could have gone to university.

But back then, as a result of legislation from the mid-1960s, local authorities were obliged by law to pay all university fees (including student union membership) and pay all but the children of rich parents a maintenance grant. In 1970 the full grant was £340 a vear, but it was meanstested according to parental income and certain outgoings. I remember that in my first year my grant was £309, my parents having to make up the difference, which they still struggled to do.

The grant was never lavish, but we could survive within a culture of frugality. Rather than buy a small

loaf, two of us would buy a large one, and we would have half each, which worked out cheaper! A couple of weeks' work on the Christmas post and a summer holiday job in a local brewery made a big difference. During the Easter holiday, when temporary jobs were rare, I used to sign on as unemployed, which students were allowed to do then, and get paid unemployment benefit.

This all meant that life at university was free from worries about money. I did not know any students that worked during term time, so we could concentrate on our studies, buying our textbooks out of our grants, and even managing to have a bit of recreational spending at weekends

One other difference between then and now was that the National Union of Students (NUS) was more militant. National student strikes were called to defend grants or to push the case to have them increased. I was surprised that when grants were ended, and tuition fees introduced by the New Labour Blair government. there seemed very little action from the NUS. Socialist Party members, as part of the campaign 'Save Free Education, pushed for the NUS to act to prevent the fees-based model, expanded upon by Tory-led governments decades later

JON DALE MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

upstairs.

much down to a fine art."

now again. hasn't been done.

Bankers get Halloween bonus treat

LINDSEY MORGAN BRISTOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

It's a really happy Halloween for bankers this year after the cap on friends.

After the 2008 financial crash, the cap was introduced in part due to mass anger with the banking system and supposedly to prevent risky gambling with our money. The cap claimed to help stamp out prioritising short-term profits. But capitalism as a system will always prioritise short-term greed over the long-term needs of the working-class majority. The cap meant financial dire straits for the bankers, with bonuses restricted to just double their annual salary! And even then, for wellpaid bankers, there was room for

negotiation.

What about us?

Storm Babet floods result of Tory rule

torm Babet's widespread floods devastated homes local shops and businesses An 83-year old Chesterfield woman tragically drowned in her living room, unable to climb

Thérèse Coffey, Tory Environment Secretary, claimed rain coming from the east was the problem! When it comes to predicting rain from the west, she said, "We've got that pretty

Local residents were scornful when she visited Retford in North Nottinghamshire last week. They experienced floods in 2007, 2019 and

Four years ago, the district council put £200,000 aside to widen a culvert that can't cope with heavy rain. But austerity cuts have slashed the Environment Agency's funds by almost two thirds since 2010, so council funds weren't matched and the work

Retford's Tory MP, Brendan Clarke-Smith, said in Parliament, "Can we also please ask councils to stop building on floodplains?" But his own government has encouraged

About 10% of new houses were built in areas at the highest risk of flooding in England in 2021. Half the planned houses in neighbouring North Lincolnshire were on a flood plain, where it's more profitable for building companies and developers. Despite this. Keir Starmer has attacked the "restrictive planning system" as the blockage to new



building. What's needed is democratic control of planning by local unities, ensuring drainage, soakaways, green space and other essential measures are installed. Big building companies should be na tionalised to prioritise flood prevention over profit. So should the water companies responsible for sewage Residents and small businesses affected should be compensated from their vast profits.

Bolsover Tory MP Mark Fletcher said, "We need to make sure that Derbyshire County Council, unlike



in 2019 [when there was fatal flooding], is given the proper funding it needs to get things back to normal. quickly." More hypocrisy after voting for every Tory cuts budget!

Derbyshire County Council has announced it's short of £46 million. despite making £300 million 'savings over the past 13 years, and £63 million more planned over the next five.

Ground is now water-saturated be fore winter starts, so there's a strong possibility of more floods in coming months. What junior Tory minister, Rebecca Pow, complacently called "rare, extreme levels of rainfall" are becoming increasingly common as a result of climate change.

We need socialist planning to urgently stop environmental destruction and to make sure working-class people don't pay the price for its effects

SOCIALISM 2023 An unmissable weekend for those who want to fight back



Prasad, one of the speakers at the Socialism 2022 rally a participant in the mass uprising against the Sri Lankan government that year PHOTO: SENA

ALI COOK DORSET SOCIALIST PARTY

Every year our Socialism event is something to look forward to. It is an opportunity to learn about many different aspects of our struggle - over 30 different workshops in fact! This year includes: 'Gaza under siege, 'Building Marxism in trade unions and workplaces', Marxist economics and many more. (See socialism.org.uk for the full programme.)

Speaking as someone who lives n quite a remote area of the country, can at times feel a bit isolated far from the 'big city' struggles. Socialism is an opportunity to see all the Socialist Party does and hear the experiences of people from up and down the country.

Perhaps you are looking for a way to fight back, but haven't vet decided if the Socialist Party is for you. Socialism is a weekend of discussion and debate so come along and let's see in vou want to join.

Increasing numbers of young people are looking towards socialist ideas, so its great that tickets are staying at the same price as last year and students pay as little as £10 per day. To get a top-tier political education to prepare for the struggles to come, it's a bargain!

So come along to Socialism 2023 vou won't regret it!



bonuses was lifted by the ghouls in government. Announced in Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng's disastrous 2022 'mini-budget', Rishi Sunak has kept this little treat for his banker

While not all bankers are obscenely rich (just most of them), removing the cap is a massive kick in the teeth for the majority of us. We've been told that we shouldn't fight

is preached to us by a billionaire prime minister, the Tories, and the supine Labour Party 'opposition'.

Trade unions have been right to condemn the announcement; general secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) Paul Nowak described it as an "obscene decision".

He's right but we need more than just talk. With over six million workers in trade unions in this country represented by the TUC, much more could be done to harness that power than scathing critique. A 'wait and see what Labour does' approach does not help working-class people hurting from austerity now.

Trade unionists, anti-austerity and community campaigners should stand in the upcoming elections and take the fight to the bosses under the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition banner! This would be an important step to build a mass working-class alternative to the bosses' parties. Such a force, armed with a socialist

top 150 companies including the banking sector and make sure that a decent quality of life isn't just a bonus for some but a way of life for all

We've had enough of having tricks from them and them having their treats taken from us!





Three-day Amazon strike: GMB must build the fight

ADAM HARMSWORTH

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Amazon workers in Coventry will be back on strike from 7-9 November. This is the workers' response to another round of insulting pay rises. Warehouse workers previously on £11 an hour now get £11.80 an hour, rising to £12.30 in April. This is far off the £15 an hour GMB members at Coventry's BHX4 site have demanded. Amazon has called its wages 'competitive'. The only competitive part of it is the competition between workers' gas bills and food bills heating or eating!

This poverty pay is in real contrast to what Amazon workers have earned for their bosses. New figures show Amazon's profits have tripled from \$2.9 billion last year to \$9 billion this year!

The strike is also about Amazon's appalling work conditions. Bathrooms that take half a lunch break to walk to, overheating trailers, managers trained to intimidate; no wonder the workers say robots are treated better

Anger at this nightmare brought BHX4's workers together to fight for better. Over 1.000 workers at the site have now joined the GMB union. Hundreds make up every picket line in impressive displays of strength. A lot of working-class organisation has been built.

A few weeks ago, dozens of BHX4 workers suddenly booked an afternoon of annual leave to stage a walkout. This shows impatience at GMB's inaction for some weeks. There have been no strikes since 5 August, giving Amazon three months to prepare to organise against GMB.



Amazon has a well-earned reputa tion as a vicious union-busting company. It spies on workers and lays out warehouses so meeting places are minimised and monitored. Breaking through that in BHX4 has been a success, but Amazon won't let it last if it can break the union. GMB must hrow everything at this fight.

The three upcoming strike days should be used to organise the active layer among the hundreds of members. GMB should call a mass democratic meeting on the picket line to decide the course of the strike and encourage members to get active. Also, GMB has made good attempts to leaflet more Amazon workplaces; this is an opportunity to try again and bring new activists along. The cost-of-living crisis has made Amazon workers' lives more difficult, which makes it more likely workers will be convinced to join a union and to strike. Reaching out once again to other sites could help prevent BHX4 being isolated, and rebuild the campaign to defeat the zon monolith

PCS MEMBER

tary, won 87 nominations.

leaders have let them down.

employers.

conditions

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN RMT

prove our conditions.

We are not limited by narrow 'craft



Six weeks in, striking **Black Country** metal workers standing firm

NICK HART WEST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY

After six weeks of strike action. Unite members at the ArcellorMittal steel coil plant in Willenhall in the Black Country are showing no signs of backing down!

We heard on the picket line about how management would sooner spend several thousand pounds sending out work to subcontractors and the company's two other plants than settle a pay claim equal to just 5% of their profits in 2021.

This is despite the shop floor workforce there earning an average of only £11.24 an hour - at least £2 less than what many other similar metalworking jobs in the area pay. As one work er put it: "They can find £90.000 to do up the offices, they can pay the top brass who work in there a six-figure salary, but when we ask for our pay to be brought up to where it should be for the work we do, we get threatened with the factory closing and us losing our jobs".

The campaign for a living pay increase continues, with further strike days planned into December if management carry on refusing to negotiate with the union



Unison social work strikes spread



DAN SMART ADULT SOCIAL WORKER AND BRANCH SECRETARY UNISON SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

With soaring workloads, massive understaffing and the ever-increasing demand for care, social workers are beginning to take a stand.

A grassroots movement in Unison s now well under way, with multiple strikes set to take place. Social workers in Brighton and Barnet branches have recently won emphatic mandates to strike, and have set out a programme including co-ordinated action on 7 November.

Swindon Council social workers in GMB have also been on strike recently over cuts to unsociable hours payments, and social workers in Leeds have reportedly just won their ballot and are setting strike dates. South Gloucestershire Council social workers and occupational therapists are still in dispute, after striking for six days over the summer, and may eballot if there is no satisfactory

From around 60 council staff in South Gloucestershire, being the first group of social workers and occupational therapists to take action during the recent strike wave, this has now spread to at least five local authorities! Led by Socialist Party members in Unison, this shows the massive potential workers have.

The majority of the current dishave been sparked by inputes equality between various social care departments when being paid retention payments. Retention payments are increasingly being used by councils across the country as a sticking plaster for the staffing crisis. However, they have mainly been implemented in children's services, creating a two-tier workforce with adult social workers. This is despite adult staff having exactly the same qualifications and similarly dealing with some of the most challenging situations in society. We are one profession

The divisive use of the payments

outcome from ongoing negotiations. : has further angered workers who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Many are being forced to leave for better-paid roles, for example in agency work where the pay can be three or four times that of local councils, for less stress. This then creates the knock-on problem of a lack of experienced council staff being able to pick up complex work and train newer staff

The crisis in social care has gone on for far too long. The multitude of issues, including endless austerity and understaffing, have all had a devastating effect on the care and support people receive in their communities. Social workers go into the profession because we care about people, not the money, but when we're prevented from being effective at doing this, the job just becomes demoralising.

A statement from Brighton and Hove Unison states: "A recent survey found that over half [of social workers] are considering quitting - unless : everyone gets the support and digwe improve pay and conditions it is inity they deserve

unlikely we are going to avert a disaster that is literally waiting to happen.

Nevertheless, we can take optimism in the workers deciding to fight back. The burgeoning strike wave in social work is a tremendous step forward in tackling the issues of low pay and inequality in the sector. At a Unison social work seminar I attended last month, the enthusiasm for strike action was palpable, with many seeing the action going on in other branches and being eager to go back to their own workplaces and organise. Sections of striking social workers are already sharing experiences and speaking at each other's events, recognising the importance of solidarity and seeking to build wider change

This now has the potential for a movement to emerge which can not only win on pay demands but also go further. To fight for a properly funded, fully public-owned social care service. A service that can ensure

PCS members gear up for leadership elections Vote Marion Lloyd for general secretary and John Moloney for AGS

MARION LLOYD

FOR PCS GENERAL

SECRETARY

s reported in last week's Socialist, Socialist Party member and PCS Broad Left Network (BLN) chair Marion Lloyd has secured a phenomenal 80 nominations to stand in the elections for PCS general secretary. Marion's running mate. John Moloney, who is standing to be reelected as Assistant General Secre-

This is not a flash in the pan. As workers have come under pressure from high inflation, from threats to jobs and offices, and from Tory rhetoric about lazy civil servants working from home, they have turned to their union to fight back. But PCS members have found that the union's

The BLN, which is supported by Socialist Party members in PCS, has been at the forefront of attempts to rebuild a member-oriented union. that can exert control in workplaces. that puts resources under the control of members' elected representatives. and which bargains effectively with

Basics like this have all but col-

activists from Left Unity (LU), the grouping which most of the cur rent leadership are members of, are dominant - not least of which is the union's largest employer group, the Department for Work and Pensions where branch officers hardly ever get a response when they raise concerns with the LU-dominated union executive.

The recent events in the pay bat tle have tipped the balance for many members. The leadership decided to cancel the union's planned strike action, reballots and the strike lev following an inadequate government pay offer, and dressed this up in a dishonest membership consultation as 'continuing the campaign'. This happened under Fran Heathcote's presidency. She is now standing for eneral secretary.

Marion is standing on a platform of rebuilding the union's national campaign, including a serious plan of national strike action, supported by targeted, selective action. She is also standing on a platform of re-democ ratising PCS, returning the union to the control of members and reps.

• Voting begins on 9 November and lapsed in areas of the union where : runs through to 14 December

Elect Marion and John! PCS election online launch meeting Thursday 9th November 7pm zoom ID: 832 6171 5048

#ACTION NOTWORDS

FOR A FIGHTING, DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP OF PCS

FOR PCS ASSISTANT GENERAL

JOHN MOLONEY

London Underground: Build the resistance Go North East to attacks on our pensions, pay, terms and

The RMT is an all-grades trade union that seeks strength through unity and action of all grades to defend and im-

interests'. That is why the 'final offer' of a 5% pay rise from London Underground is not acceptable. If accepted. it will further increase the gap between the higher-paid members and the lower-paid. Even for higher-paid members, 5% represents a significant real-terms pay deduction. Currently, RPI inflation is at just under 9%.

For over a decade on London Underground we have won inflation proofed pay increases. Through industrial action we have

delayed attacks on our pensions. But these savage cuts backed by the government and the London Mayor,

ND THE GAP

table. That is why a big 'yes' vote for further action is imperative. We have also through action (the

Socialist Party opposed calling off the coordinated action) and the threat of strikes achieved a partial victory in restoring 200 station jobs and forcing other partial retreats by management.

The latest 'final pay offer' should be rejected. And we must build a campaign throughout our membership to resist this threat to reduce our real wages at a time of high inflation. This offer should also be rejected because it contains a freezing of pay bands for some of the grades we cover. This, if implemented, will lead to a pay cut and reduced pensions for these members.

To win would require unified and sustained action that would close down London. We are always told that a day's strike costs the London economy £50 million plus a day. This shows how important our members

VIEW OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Labour's Sadiq Khan, remain on the : are to the London economy. The vast wealth of the London economy is robbed from the workers who create the wealth by big business and the parasitic bankers. The money is there to pay our members and other public service workers that kept London running during Covid and continue to keep it running.

We are dismayed that the Aslef leadership are recommending acceptance of 5%. We urge Aslef members to reject the offer and fight alongside RMT to defend pay, pensions, and terms and conditions.

STOP PRESS - TICKET **DFFICE VICTORY**

As we go to press, the government and train operators have announced a U-turn on closing ticket offices in England following pressure from rail unions and the public. A full article will be published in next week's issue of the Socialist

MIND THE GI

bus workers 'Go all-out'

Drivers from Go North East have re jected the company's latest pay offer by a resounding 81% on a turnout of 93%. More than 1,300 Unite members are now on all-out strike action.

Strikers on the picket line outside the Gateshead depot told us how bosses had attempted to needle them by putting up notices in the depot, saying: "The lion doesn't concern itself with the sheep". One striker commented, "That poster probably substantially added to the vote for strike action!" Another added, "I don't see any sheep running away from lions."

The company's business director, Ben Maxfield, has been dubbed "Baffled Ben" by strikers, as he is quoted in local press as being baffled as to why drivers have turned the pay deal down. Go North East



SECRETAR

These strikers are determined to fight for fair pay and conditions. **ELAINE BRUNSKILL**

Cardiff bin workers fight on

Cardiff Council refuse workers con tinue their strike for a pay rise. The current phase of strike action began on 16 October and is set to continue until 26 November.

Unite is now calling for an inves tigation into the council's potential use of agency workers to undermine the strike - a criminal offence. Workers lobbied agency firm Acorn on 27 October

Bin workers in Wrexham, also Unite members, have voted to settle a seven-week-long strike



the Socialist

HOW CAN WE BUILD A MOVEMENT TO STOP THE WAR ON GAZA?

HANNAH SELL

SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY

he world is looking on in horror at the siege of Gaza. The Israeli state has been carrying out unprecedented levels of airstrikes on the densely populated Gaza Strip ever since the terrible Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians. The bombing campaign is not only the most intense ever inflicted on Gaza, it is worse than any carried out during the invasion of Iraq. Swathes of Gaza are reduced to rubble. Clean water is in extremely short supply and starvation is stalking the Strip. More than 8,000 Gazans have died to date, with the death toll mounting hourly. Slaughter from the air is now being followed up with troops on the ground. Meanwhile, Palestinians have also been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, and within Israel itself all those opposing the onslaught against Gaza - especially Palestinians - are facing growing repression. No wonder that millions of people in Britain, as in countries across the world, are wondering what they can do to stop the war on Gaza and to aid the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination

What power stands on the side of the **Palestinians?**

Inevitably people are looking for an institution with the authority and will to stop the slaughter. Some have hopes in the United Nations (UN) to do so. After all, the UN Secretary General has called for a humanitarian ceasefire and accused Israel of "clear violations of international humanitarian law". However, the UN is not an independent power. It is composed of the governments of the world, and is dominated by the major powers, the 'permanent members' of the security council, above all US imperialism. So while a symbolic motion calling for a 'humanitarian truce' was passed by the General Assembly, even the motion for a 'humanitarian pause' put to the decision-making UN security council was vetoed by the US, with Britain abstaining.

Clearly, it is no good looking to Western governments for the Palestinians' salvation. All have joined in behind the world's strongest power - the US - in backing the assault on Gaza. The EU summit only agreed for a 'humanitarian pause' rather than a ceasefire, never mind actually calling for withdrawal from the occupied territories. US imperialism is in decline but it remains the pre-eminent militwo of its eleven aircraft carriers to the Arabian Gulf, for example, whereas no other country has more than two. For US imperialism. Israel has always been a base of support in the Middle East which it backs to the hilt.

However, nor are the regimes of the the Palestinian people. Rather, they

rule and defending the wealth and power of their elites. That does not mean there is noth-

ing we can do, however. There is a potential 'superpower' that stands against the onslaught on Gaza. The massive demonstrations that have taken place across the Arab world including Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Iordan. Kuwait and Tunisia, as well as on the West Bank - have given a glimpse of that superpower. They are a central factor in US imperialism and other Western powers changing their tone at least, and attempting to prevent the Israeli government going 'too far'. The imperialist powers, and the Arab regimes, are undoubtedly anxious to try and avoid the real danger of a regional war. Above all, however, they are anxious to avoid a new 'Arab Spring'. Just over a decade ago, mass movements of the working class and poor swept the region overthrowing dictatorships. Ultimately, 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. Nonetheless, the working class is potentially the most powerful force in society, capable of overthrow ing the existing order. The elites fear they might not be so lucky next time around.

How do we build that potential superpower here in Britain? What lessons can we learn from the movement against the Iraq war?

Here too, hundreds of thousands of people have already taken to the streets of towns and cities across Britain in solidarity with the Palestinians. And those demonstrations are already piling the pressure on Westminster. How do we make the movement more powerful?

Twenty years ago, in the campaign against the Iraq war, the Socialist Party helped to build for the gigantic demonstrations that took place. In London on 15 February 2003, up to two million people took to the streets, with millions more protesting across the country. Those demonstrations shook the New Labour government to its core, with Blair fearing he would have to resign. Nonetheless, his government clung on and continued on its path to war. Many trade unionists participated in the demonstrations, and trade union leaders spoke tary power on the planet. It has sent i at them. There were also some cases of collective trade union anti-war action, particularly the Motherwell freight train drivers who refused to transport munitions bound for Iraq.

However, there was no lead given from the top of the trade union movement for that kind of action on invasion began, school students and

are driven by maintaining their own : students across the country walked out on strike action, largely initiated young Socialist Party members, with some groups of workers joining them. Had the trade union leaders called for strike action against the war on a national basis it could have brought the country to a halt. and forced the government to retreat from participating in the invasion. That wouldn't have stopped US imperialism going ahead, but it would have enormously strengthened the confidence of the anti-war movement in the US. Today as well, collective trade union action, for example blocking the production and transport of military equipment bound for Israel, could have a significant effect. The trade unions in Britain have over six million members and enormous potential power. And over the last 18 months they have begun to feel that power, with the highest level of strikes in thirty years.

Are there also political lessons from that antiwar movement?

Yes. Another weakness of the antiwar movement twenty years ago was that it had no mass political voice. Although it was largely led by socialists, the leadership of the Stop the War Coalition, including the Socialist Workers' Party, mistakenly did not give socialist organisations speakers to raise the need for a socialist alternative at the mass demos, instead handing the stage to the likes of the Liberal Democrats, who posed as the 'antiwar' and 'left' alternative, before they backed the war once it had begun and later joining a coalition government with the Tories.

Today no one is surprised that the ory government has wholeheartedly backed the onslaught on Gaza. However, Starmer's New Labour has been no 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. It is welcome that some have rebelled against this diktat, but it an indication of the right-wing character of the Parliamentary Labour Party that only a quarter have even called for a ceasefire

Starmer is on course to be the next prime minister but - on foreign and domestic policy - he is making it clear he is not going to follow a fundamentally different path to the Tories. He will act in the interests of the capitalist elite, rather than the working-class maiority. Starmer's New Labour Mark II is no different to New Labour Mark I which, under Blair, took part in the invasion of Iraq. That's why a crucial way to strengthen the Palestinian solidarity movement will be the building of a new party that represents the interests of the working-class majority, rather than the capitalist elite, and stands in defence of the Palestinians Arab world interested in defending 🗄 a broader scale. On 'Day X', when the 🗄 as part of a socialist and internationalist programme.



What attitude should the movement take to Hamas?

Sunak, Starmer, Biden and the rest of them express condemnation of the Hamas killings of Israeli civilians, while standing over the right of the Israeli state to defend itself by killing thousands of civilians trapped in the open-air prison camp of Gaza. Rightly that hypocrisy has enraged all of those participating in the anti-war movement, who understand that these events follow decades of brutal repression for the Palestinians. That does not mean, however, that we should support Hamas's ideology, strategy or methods. Even before the horrific killings on 7 October, the Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) had warned against the targeting of Israeli civilians in the national conflict and opposed such attacks. We are not pacifists.

The Palestinians are struggling against a brutal occupier. Nonetheless, by targeting Israeli civilians inside Israel, Hamas and the other forces involved in the 7 October attack have made it far easier for the Israeli government to mobilise Israeli society behind its current savage onslaught on Gaza. Contrast how the attacks of 7 October strengthened the support for a ground invasion into Gaza with the way the mass movements across the Middle East have made it more difficult for the Israeli state to escalate. We point to the first Intifada mass uprising in the occupied territories which began in 1987. The way forward for the Palestinians will be through democratically organising mass struggle - a socialist intifada - based on the interests of workers and the poor, independent of the rich elites.

But doesn't supporting the Palestinian struggle require supporting their existing leaders?

Well Tory home secretary Suella Braverman tries to argue that carrying a Palestinian flag means supporting Hamas, but clearly that is not the case! Unfortunately, there are also some on the left, including the Socialist Workers' Party, who argue that socialist revolutionaries should give unconditional support to Hamas on the grounds that revolutionaries should always support the resistance of the oppressed against their oppressors". We agree that it is essential to support struggles for national liberation, but giving "unconditional" support to the leaders of organisations who have no strategy to win national liberation does nothing whatsoever to help those struggles. Hamas has ruled Gaza since gaining the biggest vote in the last elections held, 17 years ago. Opinion polls from within Gaza are not reliable, but the most recent from before the current war showed big majorities with little : class are driven by defending their

or no trust in Hamas and angry at the : own profits and resources. They wil scale of corruption in the institutions of the Strip. It is a pro-capitalist, rightwing Islamist organisation which opposes independent working-class organisation – which is the key to winning Palestinian liberation.

But surely no matter how the Palestinians organise, and how big a movement is built in their defence worldwide. it will still be impossible to defeat the Israeli state. which is armed to the teeth and backed up by US imperialism?

The military strength of the Israeli state is one side of the question. Since the foundation of Israel in 1948, the Palestinians have suffered a succession of crimes against them. Over a million have been driven from their land and into refugee camps in surrounding countries. In 1993 the Oslo Accords raised the hope of a capitalist 'two-state' solution but, as we warned at the time, it has turned out to be a cruel illusion. However, no amount of military strength can ever destroy the desire of the Palestinian masses for self-determination. Nor will the current war, no matter how barbarous, be able to do so. On the contrary, it will be strengthened.

At the same time Israel is not one homogenous block. It too is a class society and is, in reality, deeply divided. In 2017 Israel's GDP per capita was \$35,700 a year, compared to just \$1,700 in the Gaza Strip, but of course that doesn't mean all Israelis are wealthy. anymore than Britain's GDP per capita of \$45,100 does. One third of children within Israel are bought up in poverty. Prior to the current war there was an unprecedented political crisis in Israel. with a nine-month-long mass movement against the government. including a general strike and widespread refusal of reservists to serve in the army. In the current situation that movement has been cut across, but the government remains extremely unpopular, and it points towards the inevitability of future big class conflicts in crisis-ridden Israeli society

But surely the Israeli ruling elite will never grant a genuine right to self-determination to the Palestinians?

No they won't. The Israeli capitalist

always combine brutal repression of the Palestinians with exploitation of the Israeli working class, whilst using nationalism to maintain their rule They will need to be overthrown A workers' government in Israel which broke with capitalism and began to develop a democratic and socialist planned economy would, however, be an entirely different prospect.

Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the Russian revolution, predicted that if an attempt was made to create a Jewish homeland in the Middle Eas it would be a "bloody trap". Clearly he has been proved correct. However, Israel has existed for three quarters of a century and there is an Israeli national consciousness which socialists cannot ignore. Today around 70% of Israelis were born there and certainly feel it is their home. Like working-class people everywhere, they too want to be able to live free from poverty, but also from war and insecurity - which will never be achieved via continued repression of the Palestinians.

But a workers' government in Israel would have a road to achieve that, via negotiations with elected and accountable Palestinian workers' organisations - which also need to be built - to reach agreement or all relevant issues, including on land borders, on how water and other resources would be distributed, and how Jerusalem could be shared

So we need socialism?

Yes! Winning a genuine right to selfdetermination for the Palestinian people is inextricably linked to the overthrow of the capitalist system. For the capitalist classes of the major powers, the right of oppressed nationalities has always been so much loose change. Lip service is paid when it suits their interests, only to be discarded when it does not. Even lip service has rarely been paid to the na tional rights of the Palestinians. And today, capitalism globally is a system in crisis, increasingly unable to meet the needs of the majority or to overcome environmental crisis. War and conflict is on the rise. But the global mass movement in support of the Palestinians does point towards the potential 'superpower' that could end this rotten system and start to build a new socialist society able to meet the aspirations of every nationality in the Middle East and worldwide. Revolutionaries have a vital role to play, not just in supporting and building the mass movements, but in arguing for the socialist programme that is needed for victory.



Protesting, marching, chanting, campaigning against war on Gaza



Biggest protests yet Bristol – sea of people

Bristol hosted its largest-ever demonstration for Palestine. 10,000 people took to the streets.

The energetic, diverse and youthful sea of people made its way down. The noise carried well ahead. The chanting never stopped, shaming both Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer.

Demonstrators' sorrow at the loss of life, and fear for the people of Gaza, was matched with anger and determination to change things. People wanted to hear how the conflict could be resolved. We couldn't keep up with the demand for our leaflets.

When I spoke at the rally, I was greeted with a cheer simply for saying I was from the Socialist Party. Even bigger cheers followed calls for a socialist intifada, and saying that I was marching not just for peace and for the Palestinian people, but also for solidarity, struggle and for socialism TOM BALDWIN

London – eyeopening experience

I was lucky to stand with the Socialist Party at another huge Palestine protest. It was eve-opening. The 28

October demonstration brought more anger and sadness, and rightly

Almost everyone that has visited our campaign stalls on the protests has been desperate to hear an alternative. People approached me. emotional, to demonstrate their deep gratitude to the Socialist Party for supporting the demonstration.

People are also very inquisitive and interested in our call for a socialist intifada, and very keen to donate to the Socialist Party SAMANTHA FRIN

Bradford and Leeds - 'Labour MPs. where are vou?'

25 people lobbied the constituency office of Labour MP for Bradford West, Naz Shah. We handed in letters from her constituents, protesting against her silence over the bombardment of Gaza.

Several speakers demanded that Shah call for a ceasefire, and then join the 30+ councillors who have resigned from the Labour Party in pro test at Keir Starmer's stance.

I spoke to raise how those opposed to Starmer on this issue, his refusal to support the strike wave, and other retreats from Labour's 2017 and 2019 manifestos, should come together on a common antiausterity and socialist platform for the general election. This could include Jeremy Corbyn.

And another speaker said: "We will stand against Naz Shah and others, and make sure Starmer's candidates don't win".

And, for the third time in as many

weeks, thousands marched in Leeds. I spoke on behalf of the Socialist

The biggest response came when I asked whether any local MP had defied Keir Starmer's ban on attending demonstrations. Leeds East MP Richard Burgon finally attended a demo, speaking in London, the only local MP to do so. The crowd chanted: "Richard Burgon, where are you?" during the 21 October protest in Leeds, because of his absence.

A Labour councillor was booed. as well as other capitalist politicians when they were mentioned. This was mirrored by loud cheers when I raised the need for a challenge to those councillors and MPs who have failed to take a stand on this issue and failed to support workers striking over the cost of living.

Dozens of people bought copies of the Socialist, and many donated money to help produce more placards and other campaign material. But the best reflection of the interest in the Socialist Party's ideas was when two people walked up to our campaign stall and asked: "How do we joir IAIN DALTON



There was an outpouring of anger as 2,000 marched. A group of young women approached our stall to buy a Socialist paper. They liked the front page so much that they each bought a copy to hold up as a placard.

Another woman wanted to ensure we had nothing to do with the : cavalcade showing support.

Labour Party before making a donation to the Socialist Party. FI AINE BRUNSKILL

🗕 Birmingham cheers

The organisers offered the Social ist Party a speaker at the 23 October vigil in advance. Our call - creating workers' parties in Palestine and Israel, which could tear Israeli workers away from the Netanyahu government - was met with cheers. One woman took a supply of our leaflets to give to friends who weren't there. CLIVE WALDER

🗢 Solihull – thank vou

400 people turned up to show solidarity. A woman approached us, asking: "Have you got a candidate standing in Hall Green [parliamentary constituency]?" She identified as a Corbynite, and is interested in joining the Socialist Party.

Socialist Party member Clive Walder spoke, and struck a chord. Afterwards, the organisers couldn't thank us enough for being there. They told us they really appreciated our presence at this and other demos WILLIAM DOWNS

Loughborough – cavalcade

200 protested outside the office of local Tory MP Jane Hunt. There was large-scale support from ongoing traffic, with many drivers and a car

2-8 November 2023

There was great interest in the Socialist Party, and what we stand for, leading to donations to our fighting fund, people buying the Socialist paper, and large uptakes of our leaflets and posters. JACOB GYTON

Brutal war politicises students

Swansea uni – marchers defy ban

was asked to speak on behalf Socialist Students, alongside others. I put forward the need for workingclass unity internationally to defeat the capitalist class's support for the occupation of Gaza. Following the rally, protesters – mostly young Muslim women - defied university management and security to march onto GINNY BAYLIS

🗕 Leeds uni – alternative to capitalism

spoke on behalf of the Socialist Party, calling for a united workingclass party. A party like that could be a genuine alternative to the capitalist politicians in power. Through a working-class movement, the resources in the Middle East would be controlled democratically by the people there for the benefit of all ΙΟΗΝ ΤΙΥΔΙ

Newcastle uni – new generation

While we were campaigning in the run-up to our Socialist Students meeting, students said it's good to see something happening on campus against the barbaric attack on Gaza. Many students mentioned they were impressed that we call for workers' unity.

The brutal war is politicising a new generation. And a growing number look towards socialist ideas to combat war.

FI AINF BRUNSKII I

Read about the previous weeks of protest - 'Protests condemning bombing and siege of Gaza grow and 'Hundreds of thousands march against war on Gaza' - at socialistparty.org.uk • Read more on pages 2-3, 8-9





Council

Union Council (TUC).

raeli state's war.

of the Israel-Gaza border".

A couple of union delegates proposed more wording on Hamas's action on 7 October. An additional line was unanimously agreed: "Newham Trades Council condemns the recent attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians". Newham TUC supports "a mass struggle by the Palestinians for selfdetermination and their own viable state". While also saying: "Only the struggle for workers' unity, for full national rights, and for socialism can remove reactionary elites, and lay the

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the **Socialist**

Winning opposition to Gaza siege in workers' movement

Newham Trades Union

"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 leaderships to mobilise for future mass protests opposing the war on Gaza", read the motion passed by Newham Trades

With its large Muslim population Newham has seen thousands of local people travel to central London for protests. And hundreds attended a local protest at Newham Town hall. The motion also condemned Keir Starmer's Labour for backing the Is-

The Newham TUC motion was moved by Socialist Party members, expressing "horror at the deaths of thousands of civilians on both sides

basis for an end to oppression and : union action to boycott supplies of lis mutually agree on their future relations, free of all coercion, and able to live in peace and prosperity." NIALL MULHOLLAND

NEWHAM TRADES UNION COUNCIL VICE-CHAIR AND SOCIAL IST PARTY

Coventry Unite and **Coventry TUC**

A model motion, prepared by the Socialist Party, was discussed at Coventry 'Tom Mann' Unite branch, representing 3,500 workers, and at Coventry Trades Union Council (TUC), the federal body for unions in the city, representing over 20,000 workers. Both organisations overwhelmingly passed the motion.

But there were some dissenting views. A small number of trade unonists at the meetings, members of the Socialist Workers Party, argued that such has been the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza, that any form of military action was justified.

Socialist Party members opposed the "targeting and killing of thousands of civilians on both sides". The killing of 260 young people at a music festival would not separate workingclass Israelis from that country's far-right government, but would drive them to support Netanyahu's strategy

We also raised the need for trade

wars, and see Palestinians and Israe- : armaments for the Israeli army to use against the Palestinian people.

Italian dockers did this 20 years ago to US arms destined to attack Iraq. Rolls Royce workers near Glasgow did this 50 years ago, refusing to work on engines for the Chilean Air Force to use following the military coup

The Coventry Unite branch sent the motion to the union's emergency Executive Council which met on 26 October. Coventry TUC sent the motion to the Midlands and national TUC DAVE NELLIST

COVENTRY TUC TREASURER

Liverpool TUC

Our motion recognised the need for political representatives who oppose capitalist elites, and stand for the rights of the working class, including standing in solidarity with people in Gaza. So, we welcomed "trade union-backed candidates standing in the general election on that programme, including Jeremy Corbyn, who has been banned from standing for Labour **ALEX SMITH**

LIVERPOOL TRADES UNION COUNCIL (PERSONAL CAPACITY) AND SOCIALIST PARTY

Go to 'Mass united workers' struggle to stop the war on Gaza at socialistparty.org.uk to find the model motion

BBC 'impartiality' illusion shattered Fight for a socialist working-class media

PALESTINE

IOSH ASKER FDITOR OF THE SOCIALIST

The BBC's mythical claim to 'impartiality' has only been further eroded by its reporting of the latest events in Israel-Palestine. For many of the hundreds of thousands marching in opposition to the war on Gaza and in support of Palestinian national selfdetermination, and millions watch ing on, it is held in distain, BBC HO was daubed in red paint representing blood as a protest

Millions more have other reasons for mistrust; including memories of its bias in backing up the capitalist class and its representatives in the Labour Party, the Blairites, relentlessly attacking and undermining Jeremy Corbyn.

However, millions also look at the platter of billionaire-backed broadcasters and print media, and choose to go to the BBC for news. Its authority has diminished from its peak, but its influence hasn't gone.

Tory politicians

Despite a whole host of Tory politicians going back to Margaret Thatcher looking to weaken the BBC's monopoly on broadcast media, opening up profitable markets for private outlets, it remains in existence. One major reason is that, for the ruling capitalist class as a whole. a state broadcaster continues to play a very useful role, supplementing the billionaire-owned media with a veneer of 'impartiality' and 'balance'.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog complained to Rishi Sunak on his arrival in Israel that the BBC insists on lways saying who or what is labelling Hamas as "terrorist", the UK government for example – a policy that goes back decades and applies to many organisations beyond just Hamas. Six BBC presenters have been taken off air for alleged pro-Palestine

The BBC has received around 1.500 complaints about bias in its coverage of this war, reportedly distributed equally between supporters of the two national sides. It has defended its 'impartiality' by citing the breadth of different organisations whose views it has sought for comment. But almost every one is either a capitalist party or state institution, mostly from the West, or an NGO which sees its role as campaigning within the exist ing capitalist system. Where are the views of workers' organisations?

What counts as a 'balanced' and impartial' position is under constant contending pressures. In this case from the Israeli state, different sections of British capitalist class and its state. Mass popular opinion, part-expressed by hundreds of thousands marching, exerts pressure too - this would be even more the case if there was a mass workers' party supportive of the Palestinians' cause and making the case for socialist change nternationally

Ultimately the British state broadcaster is a mouthpiece for the British capitalist state. The same is true of other capitalist state broadcasters: Al-Jazeera, Press TV and Bussia Today all present an editorial line in accordance with the Oatari. Iranian and Russian states respectively.

Every time the BBC is seen to use its authority to put the bosses' side in opposition to the workers', trust is further diminished. In July this year a YouGov poll found just 38% of peo ple trust BBC journalists to tell the truth, down from 80% in 2003.

"Scrap the licence fee, they're all li ars", one protester told me on a Gaza demo. The licence fee is a regressive flat-rate tax, it should be scrapped. A publicly owned broadcaster should be publicly funded through general taxation, not left in the hands of the establishment stooges currently at its head, and under the democratic con trol of the working class.

The current BBC Director General is an ex-Conservative Party council candidate, and the last BBC chair who resigned this summer had do nated £400,000 to the Tories. The BBC's governing board is appointed by the King's Privy Council.

Democratic control

Democratic control of publicly owned media would mean elected representatives from the media trade unions and wider working class de ciding on content and staffing, with political parties' coverage allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections, and guaranteed space for alternative views. Corporate media too should be taken out of the ownership and control of a small numbe of billionaires and be brought into democratic public ownership, as part of a programme of nationalisation of big business and the banks.

To aid in the building of a mass working-class movement which can achieve that and lead the struggle for socialist change, we need media and publications to put the workers case. And to not just report events but offer a way forward - the concrete next steps for working-class struggle. That's why the Socialist Party produces the Socialist newspaper and our other publications; as a tool for our members and other workers in the struggle for a socialist world.





Socialist Darty WHAT WE STAND FO

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

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

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

Because capitalism is a world system. CWL the struggle for socialism must also

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

WORK. PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence • For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.

For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eve care - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.

Renationalise privatised utilities including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power - under democratic workers' control and management.

Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation. and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations. The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates

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 is socialist world.

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JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

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Probation workers need a fighting lead

Report from Unison police and justice conference



AMY SAGE

DELEGATE TO UNISON POLICE AND JUSTICE SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE PERSONAL CAPACITY

the Socialist

In the opening remarks of Unison's Police and Justice Service Group conference, it was highlighted that. in order to restore pay for probation staff to 2010 rates, pay would need to increase by 68%. This failure to keep up with the rising cost of living has had a determinantal impact on staff recruitment and retention with the current vacancy rate amongst Probation Officers, for example, up to 29%. These concerns, however, ap-

peared to fall on deaf ears when it came to Kim Thornden Edwards, Chief Probation Officer, who came to speak at the conference on behalf of the employer, armed with statistics showing off how many people have been recruited in the past year. Members were quick to respond with questions about how management intend to retain these staff members given that, when trained, these members of staff quickly moved to higherpaying, private sector jobs.

Reject the offer?

During the conference, some mem bers also expressed concerns with the leadership of the union, particularly with regards to their lack of guidance when it came to last year's below-inflation pay offer. My question about their position to neither accept nor reject the offer was met with a wishy-washy answer about how the committee who made this decision was democratically elected by members and therefore it was Starmerite right wing that is content the correct position to take. It was : with simply waiting for Labour to be also revealed that Unison has made elected and, in the meantime, fails to moves to reopen the three-year pay really challenge the employers.

done in the past year

Overall, it was clear from this con-

ference that Unison members work-

ing in the Police and Justice sector

are angry, fed up and looking to the

union to provide leadership. How-

ever, strikes weren't mentioned once.

There were several comments instead

that suggested many are pinning

their hopes on an incoming Labour

government. This was summed up

by Christina McAnea, General Sec

retary of Unison, who stated in her

conference address: "We will hold

promises to police and justice." The

best way to hold a future Labour gov-

ernment to account would be to make

clear our preparedness to strike if it

In last year's pay ballot, almost 40%

voted to reject the pay offer and in-

dicated that they were prepared to

take industrial action. However, due

to the lack of a fighting, coordinated

leadership with a fighting strategy

to reduce workloads, win inflation-

proof pay rises and the resources

probation service staff need to prop-

erly and safely do our job, members

lacked the confidence in their trade

union leadership to lead and organ-

ise strike action, and the Tories' un-

democratic 50% turnout threshold

It is clear that what staff working

in the Probation Service need is a

united left challenge within the un-

ion to democratise it and counter the

wasn't reached.

doesn't give the funding needed.

the Labour Party to account on their

2-8 November 2023

deal on the basis that, at the time, no one could have predicted that RPI inflation would reach the levels it has

> and answers to some of the current problems.

ing class understand its potential

RAE COX OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

them.

Labour

oppression

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND ARFA & RECEIVED & TARGET 04: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023 DFADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2023 London 4.996 5.000 99% Northern 681 800 South West 1,083 2,100 52% North West 403 1,200 897 2.700 33% 29% Southern & SE 685 2.400 308 2.050 15% East Midlands Wales 358 2 400 15% orkshire 246 2.650 9% Eastern 80 1.300 6%

4,045 2,400

TOTAL 13,781 25,000 55%

Other



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Young people agree with what Socialist Party is

Socialist Darty VHY I JOINED

SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

I am really not happy with how things are. So when my friend Eris started talking about Marxism, and how she was involved with the Socialist Party, it got me interested.

Seeing only one or two parties ever get voted in made me question a few things. Why, after so many years of terrible leadership, do these people still get voted in? Why do people not vote for the other parties that actually want to defend people's rights, and work to achieve more equal society?

We are never properly taught or exposed to other options. So, when Eris invited me to a Swindon Socialist Party meeting about LGBTO+ rights. I was surprised and excited about how each person contributed to the discussion, with questions

We need to show young people how the issues they face, common issues they share with others, can be resolved. We need to help the work-



power, so that it can take back the means of production, manage and plan the economy democratically, and create a revolution.

This is the main goal young Socialist Party members have in Swindon, to expose young people to these ideas earlier. I am sure that many agree with our party's goals.

So, having Socialist Party campaign stalls on Saturdays, having socialist youth meetings at college, and going out to leaflet and sell the Socialist paper gives them access to : *article in a future issue*.

information that can help develop their opinions, and see that the Socialist Party is working in their favour We work together to show that w

information about our party - vita

can actually make change.

Ezra isn't the only young person that's ioined Swindon Socialist Party, Read what Eris said last week: 'College stu dents join Swindon socialists' at socialistparty.org.uk. And read Saige's



Lots of support for TUSC in east London by-election



NANCY TAAFFF WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY AND TUSC

CANDIDATE

he Socialist Party, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), received 9% of the votes in the Higham Hill by-election

which took place on 26 October in Waltham Forest. Although the turnout of 17% was extremely low, this is a result we are all very pleased with.

There was a freedom and an honesty about our campaign that translated into the way people saw us. It felt like there was a lot of support in the streets of Higham Hill towards our presence and the fight we put up. Our local history of running campaigns against the monster block and saving the Lime trees in the main square, were things people knew about, and our efforts esonated. Increasingly, people are seeing these monstrosities as environmentally damaging and not solving the housing issue as they are too expensive

We had a particularly striking leaflet which had testimonies from people who collaborated with us to stop library closures or prevent evictions. The area is probably one of the highest densities of council housing in the borough, and housing was up there as an issue. Our call for council housing, no hikes in council tax and rent, along with rent control and secure tenancies in the private sector, appealed to young people still stuck at home with their parents, and appealed to their parents themselves.

Youth cuts

The area also has an issue with young people having nothing to do. Many of the youth services were closed or severely cut in 2010 when the Labour council took a scythe to public services when they passed on the Con-Dem cuts budget. We called for a restoration of youth services combined with an extension of provision.

We experienced words of encouragement towards us, and words of disillusionment towards the establishment pro-capitalist politicians, as workers passed us in the streets.

A regular feature of the campaign was standing outside the Co-ops in the small shopping areas. Particularly in the final week, we made sure we were seen in these localities. One man passed me several times outside the Co-op and never made eve contact or took a leaflet. Yet, on polling day, he met my eyes and declared, voted for you.

I met a woman who said that she had been looking for us online. She had been active under Corbyn in the Labour Party and couldn't continue especially in the light of Keir Starmer's comment on Gaza, and wanted to become more involved with us.

In the middle of the election cam paign we put a statement out on the terrible events in Gaza and circulated it on community Facebook pages etc. We met people who were voting for us purely on this issue.

By standing I believe we will build through example and action, support for the idea that the working class needs its own voice and a party of its



Great response to Socialist ideas at Oxford trans rally

WHY ARE THE TORIES OBSESSED

WITH TRANS RIGHTS?

Come and discuss at

The mood at the recent Trans rights rally in Oxford was surprisingly politically conscious. Trans people have long faced discrimination and bigotry and so can be more likely to be politically radical. However, recently conversations have started to move beyond just the question of survival, towards how can we build a world where we can thrive The mood is increasingly angry at the status quo as people have been quickly realising that there isn't anyone politically who will fight for

The energy at the rally was a strange mix of sadness, anger, and hope. When speakers started, opportunities to raise Socialist Party ideas began organically bubbling up, especially on the question of

A couple of Socialist Party members managed to give speeches at the rally: James Morbin on behalf of his Unite branch, and me on behalf of the Socialist Party. James spoke about the role of the trade unions in fighting discrimination. We both called for a new mass workers' party to fight for Oueer, and all oppressed people. And I was able to raise the need to fight for socialism to end



London, 25-26 Novembe

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OBITUARY/REVIEWS

Obituary: Graham Lewis (1954-2023) **"One of the steadfast poll tax warriors**"



Graham Lewis, who has passed away Militant-supporting Lambeth La-

bour councillor, remembers Graham

priming her to ask detailed ques-

tions, to which the officers had to

respond and have their answers re-

corded in council minutes. Graham

then used these in court to get the

"Most of the 70.000 didn't know

what had happened or why, just that

they stopped getting poll tax bills.

The people who turned up in court

were relieved to have their bills can-

costs for everyone present whose

case hadn't been heard!" The costs

were then duly spent in a local pub

with dozens toasting Graham for his

Some years later, Graham returned

to the East Midlands, helping a new

generation of Socialist Party mem-

bers. Sadly, his health deteriorated

and he was diagnosed with demen-

tia. He donated a significant book

collection to the party to raise funds

and help educate younger socialists

but he had to move into a care home.

to his ideals, insisting he retain a

monthly subscription to the Socialist

Party right up to his passing. He died

peacefully in August with family pre-

sent. We will be raising a collective

glass to a lovely, gentle and kind man

(but one with a booming voice on

public activities!) So long, Graham.

EAST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY

PEGIONAL COMMITTEE

Graham remained committed

celled, but Graham insisted on go ing one step further and demanded

cases thrown out.

work!

aged 68, will be remembered by Socialist Party members in the East Midlands and London for his drive and unwavering commitment to socialist change over decades.

Born and educated in Derby before graduating in Manchester, he taught English in Borneo, returning just after Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979. Angered by the Tories' victory, Graham joined Militant (the forerunner of the Socialist Party) in Nottingham and formed the Long Eaton Labour Party Young Socialists branch. He developed a huge paper round, delivering the Militant newspaper, in all weathers, on his moped.

On moving to London, Graham trained as a paralegal, which he put to excellent use during the poll tax non-payment campaign which eventually saw off Thatcher.

He helped countless Lambeth residents as a 'McKenzie Friend' (lav advisor) and, as Steve Nally, the secretary of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation recalls, "Graham certainly had his 'day in court'. Lambeth Council attempted to deal with 70,000 non-payers in one go at Camberwell Magistrates Court. Graham proved the council had incorrectly issued the summonses, leaving the magistrate with no option other than to dismiss all 70,000, effectively breaking the back of Lambeth's attempt to batter the poor for non-payment. It was a decisive victory."

Anne Hollifield, then an elected

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Review: The Old Oak Ken Loach's final film 'a masterpiece of working-class solidarity'

I YNDA MCFWAN SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

socialistparty.org.uk

Ken Loach's new film, and by his own admission probably his last. The Old Oak is a masterpiece of workingclass solidarity

Set in northern England in a oncethriving mining town, it depicts the life of pub landlord, TJ, his struggle with mental health after a marriage breakdown, his desperate attempts to keep The Old Oak running, and of navigating the arrival of a group of Syrian refugees to the community.

After years of Tory austerity, the own and its residents have been completely demoralised. Poverty is rife and any real or perceived violation of their resources is met with suspicion and mistrust.

It is against this backdrop that Syrian refugees arrive and are housed in empty houses.

This causes reactionary and racist attitudes from some of the people to emerge, however TJ and others welcome the refugees, in particular striking up an endearing friendship with Yara, a young Syrian woman with a keen interest in photography.

Loach is an expert at portraying working-class lives, the struggle and misery but also the determination and unity that co-exist under capitalism

In The Old Oak he shows how racism can take hold in working-class



communities. That they're not in- : confidence to fight for more mone nate. but fostered by the ruling class : for the town. and its control of the media. Being drip-fed sensational 'them and us' headlines coupled with the devastation of more than a decade of cuts creates the conditions for xenophobia to spread.

TJ and others manage to win round most of the community through setting up a food kitchen in the backroom of The Old Oak, which helps not only their new neighbours but those residents struggling to feed their families too. This type of action is limited though. Trade union action could decisively cut across the racial tension and give the people the

The film finishes with hundreds of people coming to pay their condolences to Yara and her family after the news that her father has been killed in Syria, a tradition of old mining towns when one of their own dies.

The closing scene is of them all at the Durham Mining Gala carrying a banner made by the Syrian refugees in a poignant display of workingclass solidarity.

A beautiful and emotional film, we need a new working-class filmmaker for Loach to pass on the baton. The Old Oak, distributed by

StudioCanal UK. is in cinemas nou

Review : Killers of the Flower Moon A film about the exploitation of the Osage people in 1920s USA

PFTF MCNALLY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Killers of the Flower Moon is based on the book 'The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI' by David Grann.

The Osage Native American tribe had been moved several times but bv World War One had been on a reservation settled in Oklahoma. The film shows how the US government made payments to the tribe members for oil discovered on their land, only some of whom were able to access this money, deemed 'competent Others deemed 'incompetent' could only access funds via a court-

appointed guardian - opening the door to exploitation. Ernest, played by Leon-

ardo DiCaprio, returns from World War One to live with his uncle. William Hale, played by Robert De Niro.

William Hale is an influential figure who will go

work out a way to get his hands on these funds and anything else that will ease his life. He is adept at getting pieces of paper signed. His nephew Ernest turning up injured physically and probably mentally from the war is a bonus for him to exploit.

The Osage are now rich, they can follow in the footsteps of white people buying new homes, new clothes and new cars. One scene shows an Osage person buying a new car while the salesman explains that if anything

back and just buy another one.

We see occasions where the Osage tribal council meets to discuss the problems they face. Appeals for help to various bodies are made without results. The tribal structure gives way on all important matters to the pressures of the modern world. Ernest is cajoled by his uncle into

a relationship with Mollie, an Osage played by Lily Gladstone, who is due a large inheritance. They marry and have children. Mollie suffers from diabetes and insulin is now available but the local doctors - who have both hands in most scams - are able to manipulate Ernest to add 'something' to the insulin doses which worsens Mollie's condition and contributes to her death.

William Hale thinks he can escape detection for his crimes because the Osage land is theirs and the laws of the federal government do not apply. The federal government disagrees and, after a spate of killings, this draws their attention at last, and the newly formed FBI arrives. William and Ernest are ultimately arrested and both iailed. But from 1921 to 1925 an estimated 60 Osage were killed, and most murders were not solved.

The story is worth telling and is well told but, for me. I recommend you save your money and read the book, as I intend to do.

Killers of the Flower Moon, distributed by Paramount Pictures, is



ROBIN NILSEN CWI NORWAY

ities at the door of capitalism.

cil budgets before people!

Despite Sweden still being viewed by many people around the world as 'socialist' the fact is that neoliberal policies have been used for some time. including by the social democrats. In October 2022, these disastrous policies led to the social democrats being replaced, with help from sections of the media, by the right-wing parties of the Moderates. Christian Democrats : have capitalism without racism".



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Germany: 'Goodbye socialism' - Sahra Wagenknecht leaves Die Linke and announces foundation of new party



SASCHA STANICIC

SOL (GERMAN SECTION OF THE CWI)

23 October was the day on which Sahra Wagenknecht and nine other members of the Bundestag (German parliament) resigned from Die Linke (the Left party). At a press conference, they presented the 'Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance' (BSW), which aims to found a new party to contest next vear's European elections and three state elections in eastern Germany.

This is no surprise and we have been pointing out for over two years that this development was to be expected, because the political conflicts in Die Linke could not be resolved.

Four slogans were mentioned at the BSW press conference as key points for both the Alliance and the future party: 'Economic Reason, Social Justice. Peace and Freedom'. Wagenknecht made it clear that her economic policy is about "more competition and a strong middle class," and declared her support for "meritocracy" At the time of the deepest systemic crisis of capitalism in almost a hundred years, Wagenknecht and her comrades-in-arms want to return to a social democratic policy of 'social balance' between capital and labour, and create the illusion that the "crisis of capitalism" - mentioned only once by Christian Leye (member of the Bundestag) in the press conference - has its cause in a wrong economic policy and not in the functioning of the capitalist system itself. It is fitting that Ralph Suikat, an entrepreneur, spoke on the

podium of the press conference. In addition to a wealth tax, Suikat spoke in favour of "fair competition" and a defence of middle-sized entrepreneurs, against large corporations.

One looked in vain for a high-profile trade unionist among the BSW executive members. It was noticeable that there was no mention of the strikes which have taken place this year and no call for class struggle, for trade union self-organisation. for protest - not even for joining the Alliance. On the contrary, Leve made it clear that the association and party would develop "slowly and in a controlled manner", in order to prevent "soldiers of fortune, careerists and people who hold other political views" from flooding into the party.

The fact that this concern might have something to do with, among other things, the right-wing migration policy advocated by Wagenknecht, was, of course, not mentioned. At the press conference, Wagenknecht also spoke of "uncontrolled immigration that overstrains our country" that is "irresponsible" and referred positively to Denmark's racist immigration policy. Somehow it was fitting that a question from an editor of the far-right newspaper Junge Freiheit was answered as kindly as any other question.

Apparently, the BSW representatives do not even have the backbone of football manager Jürgen Klopp, who does not answer questions from the right-wing 'Sun' tabloid at Liverpool press conferences because it i still largely boycotted in Liverpool due to its coverage of the Hillsborough disaster.

However, the announcement of

"controlled growth" of the party, like the name of the association, makes it clear that its foundation is not an expression of a movement from below but a top-down project that will essentially pursue proxy politics rather than be a fully democratic party.

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The statements of the BSW execu tive members made it clear that this party will not be a left-wing split from Die Linke. Wagenknecht stressed that no "Linke 2.0" would be founded. There was just as little systemic criticism of capitalism as there was no statement placing the new party in the continuity of the socialist movement (as Die Linke at least does in its party programme, if not in it day-to-day practice).

In terms of content, the BSW and the future party offer no alternative to the programme of Die Linke and no answers to the multiple systemic crisis of capitalism. However, in view of the failure of Die Linke - which is essentially because the party has in creasingly adapted to capitalism and the pro-capitalist parties - many people in Germany will see in the new party a chance to create an 'antipole' to the pro-capitalist establishment.

Opinion polls in the last few days give a party led by Wagenknecht the potential of gaining 27% of the vote remains to be seen whether this potential will also lead to an influx of nembers, including workers, trade unionists and leftists, who could challenge the party's pro-market orientation. This does not seem likely

• Sol will be producing further material on what this development means for the German political situation and the tasks of socialists

Gang shootings and bomb attacks in the suburbs of Sweden

In supposedly peaceful Scandinavia, we have recently witnessed mafialike shootings, gang killings and even bombs exploding in the suburbs of Sweden, Many right-wing commentators are blaming refugees fleeing from war-torn countries. Socialists must put the blame for all these atroc-

It was not the young war-weary Somalis that caused poverty and strife in Somalia. It was not their fault that the social welfare system in the small suburban towns of Sweden is breaking down - this was the fault of the right-wing politicians putting coun-

and Liberals, which are all firmly antiimmigration and 'anti-multiculturalism'. The far-right Sweden Democrats prop up the coalition government. These right-wing parties have drastically cut funds to the regional and local councils, leaving local communities with little or no funding for many of the necessities of life.

You can't have capitalism ithout racism

Racism and the injustice of discrimination taking place in all aspects of our lives need to be opposed. This means fighting for all the reforms and changes needed to improve the conditions facing Black, Asian and all ethnic minorities. To fight for a societv free from racism means challenging the very core of the system that we live in. Key leaders of the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Huev P Newton, all travelled along the road towards believing that Black liberation and de feating racism could not be achieved under capitalism. They all drew the conclusion of Malcolm X: "You can't

Many refugees have grown up in extreme poverty and in war-torn states (like Somalia), where education was minimal, with young people often finishing school at 14-15 years old In Sweden and elsewhere in Scandi navia, they have little to expect other than heading into a life of unemploy ment and poverty, often never find ing a decent job. Many are prey to the clutches of mafia-like gangs. There needs to be properly funded help to provide meaningful employment, and to stop cuts to social projects to help refugees. Workers' unity across all national and ethnic divisions is needed, and a political programme that fights against the bosses' system and for a socialist society.

Build solidarity in the communities, for a movement

- against council cuts!
- Oppose all racist government immigration policies!

A job and a living wage, for all Increase, don't cut, housing subsidies, and build more social housing - for a massive social housing programme, to bring job



<u>solidarity</u> price socialistparty.org.uk formerly Issue 1249 2-8 November 2023 Fight for a socialist alternative to the Tories and Starmer's Labour

JOE WATERS

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

n 2022, 1.8 million UK households experienced destitution, a recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found. This means 3.8 million people, including over one million kids, were unable to meet basic physical needs like food, warmth and shelter. Rates of destitution have more than doubled over the last five years with three quarters of these households reporting living on less than £85 a week after housing costs.

It is not difficult to understand

why so many people are being forced to live without basic necessities. Inflation has put enormous financial pressure on households, many of whom were already struggling due to low pay or underemployment (if they could even find work, or were able to work). While the bosses have made massive profits, wages have not kept up, making a slip into serious poverty for millions inevitable.

Benefits provide no real safety net for households struggling to get by. The basic rate of Universal Credit for a single adult (£85 per week) falls, by definition, below the threshold for destitution in the UK. With so many people failed by capitalism and its pursuit of profits, and punished by the Conservative government, whose benefit policies have guaranteed hardship for millions, it is natural that many would look to the opposition Labour Party in hope of change.

However under Keir Starmer, Labour has made it clear that it is unwilling to commit the resources needed to improve the situation. He has refused to commit to remove the two-child benefit cap, a policy which has been identified by groups as a major factor in pushing so many families into poverty. In many cases, where wages have risen for ordinary households, even if not in real terms, this has come as a result of industrial action. Through taking strike action across a number of sectors over the last year, working people have delivered some relief for themselves. However, whilst the government attempts to tighten laws to restrict the activities of trade unions, Labour has failed to show real opposition and stand with striking workers.

Labour has claimed it will scrap some of the Tories' anti-union laws. But in the context of Starmer's almost constant abandoned pledges, and the hostility the party leadership has shown to strikes (including banning MPs from speaking out on picket lines), this commitment seems paper thin.

Working-class households desperately need a new mass party, grounded in the working class, which can fight for the resources people need. Such a party, armed with a socialist programme to take the wealth and resources out of the hands of the bosses and putting society in the hands of the working class, on a democratic basis, could put an end to poverty once and for all.

