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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

END ISRAELI STATE TERROR

● Drive out the warmongering Tories

● Build a mass working-class socialist alternative to Tories and Labour

- End the siege - for the immediate permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from the occupied territories
- For a mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for liberation
- For the building of independent workers' parties in Palestine and Israel and links between them
- For an independent, socialist Palestinian state, alongside a socialist Israel, with guaranteed democratic rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East
- No trust in capitalist politicians, internationally or in Britain. Fight to build a workers' party in Britain that stands for socialism and internationalism

AFTER THE DEMO...

COME TO THE RALLY FOR SOCIALISM

SATURDAY EVENING IN CENTRAL LONDON

Sat 24 Nov, 5.30-7.30pm, Institute of Education, near Euston station, WC1H 0AL More info about Socialism 2023 on back page

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT PUTS SCREWS ON LABOUR POLITICIANS

UP THE PRESSURE WITH A TRADE UNION LEAD AND SOCIALIST ELECTION STAND

Socialist Party

WHAT WE THINK

The vast majority of people are looking on in ever-growing horror as the destruction escalates in Gaza – as IDF forces assault al-Shifa Hospital and helicopters drop leaflets in south Gaza telling people to evacuate to safety before another onslaught. Yet nowhere is safe for them.

Thousands of mainly young people poured out of the stations and onto the streets in front of parliament on Wednesday 15 November as MPs voted on what to do – the key vote being on a Scottish National Party (SNP) amendment for a ceasefire.

The young protesters were emboldened by the first scalp of the movement – the sacking of arch-rightwing Home Secretary Suella Braverman – and correctly believed that mounting pressure of a massive mobilisation can achieve more.

There was already enormous anger against Labour leader Keir Starmer's position of refusing to support a ceasefire. On all the protests, people ask: "Who can I vote for now?"

That view will have been intensified by events in parliament. The Tories, of course, did not vote for a ceasefire. But neither did Starmer's Labour, underlining once again for masses of people that Starmer is not on their side.

Whose side? Not ours!

Starmer's call for a 'humanitarian pause' is effectively the same as the UN's resolution for a 'humanitarian truce'. The UN is not an independent arbiter but a gathering of capitalist world leaders. Starmer has the backs of imperialism.

As an article in the New York Times put it: "In Britain, as its politicians and public move away from each other, reality is cleaving in two."

Nonetheless, an online poll of British Muslims after Wednesday's vote showed that while 45% are dissatisfied with Starmer's position, and that 41% felt more negatively after the vote, 64% of those who expressed a voting intention still said they would vote Labour.

Starmer is still most likely to win a general election because the answer to the question "Who can I vote for?" isn't "Tory"! The Tories are continually and increasingly utterly riven. The ruling of the Supreme Court on Rwanda and even the discussion of the possibility of Sunak ignoring international law – however unlikely this is in reality – is more evidence of how removed the current Tory party is from reliably representing the interests of capitalism. The revelations

in the Covid inquiry are also piling up the evidence.

Bringing back David Cameron is, as a Financial Times (FT) editorial put it, the "last gasp of an administration that is out of ideas". It illustrates how desperate Sunak is that the best 'heavyweight' he can find to bring back is not only the architect of over a decade of austerity, but the capitalist leader who dazzlingly failed to deliver for capitalist interests. He is the leader who, against the interests of the majority of big business, held the EU referendum and failed to win 'Remain', and who came within a hair's breadth of being unseated by the working-class uprising in the Scottish referendum.

His return just deepens the schisms in the party between the various forms of 'centrists' and the rabid right. As the FT concludes: "The sooner the British people are given a chance to express their views at the ballot box, the better." For the strategists of capitalism, their eyes are on what happens to rebuild the main historic party of capitalism after the general election.

Their best hope for now is Starmer, who is bending over backwards to be reliable for capitalism.

A quarter of Labour MPs rebelled against Starmer's dictat – that's a substantial number but it means three-quarters of Labour MPs don't even support a ceasefire.

Ten frontbench shadow ministers resigned or were sacked. That follows the resignations of around 50 councillors.

But when the main spokespeople of the rebellion are Starmerite/Blairite MPs Jess Phillips (Birmingham Yardley), Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) and Stephen Timms (East Ham), it indicates that the current divisions are not likely to precipitate an immediate crisis in the Labour Party.

These 'rebels' are squaring the circle of responding to the pressure of significant Muslim populations in their constituencies while still saying they support Starmer. Stella Creasy faced a big backlash in her constituency when she voted to bomb Syria in 2015, including mass meetings, a march of the local community to her surgery, and school protests. A Socialist Students meeting in her constituency made national TV. It is another small victory for the anti-war movement that she and the others feel under pressure to save their own skins.

What a workers' party could do

On Radio 4's Today programme, Creasy was at pains to stress that she respects Starmer's position and it was all just a question of what was the best way for parliament to spend its time. She said none of them are under any illusions that what happened in the British parliament would make any difference.

How wrong is that.

The movement against the slaughter in Gaza already has strength. If



PHOTO: THEO SHARIEFF

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, which the Socialist Party is a part of, has invited campaign groups and socialist organisations to co-host 'a convention to organise a working-class challenge at the general election' in early 2024.

TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS

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Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

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the trade union leaders were to use their authority and put the organised working class at the head of the movement, that could mobilise enormous potential power. A movement that used that power, including strike action, could stay the hand of capitalist leaders in their support for Israel's government, for fear of rebellion.

Imagine if that movement had a political voice. If the Labour Party were a party that operated in the interests of working-class people it could campaign on the streets, in the workplaces and communities, and it could mobilise even greater numbers outside parliament, while inside parliament it voted to withdraw the UK government's support for Israel's leaders.

Of course, Creasy, Phillips et al have no more intention of doing that than Starmer. Just as they have no intention of renationalising Royal Mail or ending privatisation in the NHS or paying inflation-proof pay rises, they also have no intention of acting in the interests of working-class and oppressed people internationally.

A defeat for the Tories at the general election ought to be a blow to warmongering capitalist powers internationally, but a Starmer-led government would still back the Israeli state.

Workers' candidates

But imagine if there were candidates that stood in the general election on the side of workers in Britain and oppressed masses in the Middle East. Imagine if Jeremy Corbyn and other banned former Labour MPs, if trade union leaders and strikers, if young people campaigning against the destruction of Gaza, were to stand on a workers' list along with socialists. That would be able to channel the anger of the hundreds of thousands on the streets every weekend.

And a group of those could be elected – a much greater pressure on a Starmer-led government than simply keeping their heads down in the Labour Party. The vote on 15 November is an illustration of the potential impact a new party or even just a small group of socialist MPs could have.

It wasn't debate inside the Labour Party that pushed Starmerite MPs to 'rebel' and vote for a ceasefire but the pressure of public support for an SNP amendment. The SNP is no working-class voice, it is another pro-capitalist party, and is itself under pressure. But it gives us a taster of the potential pressure that could be applied by pro-working class MPs giving voice to a mass movement on the streets and in the workplaces.

That is why the model motion being moved by Socialist Party members and passed in union branches and trades councils includes the words:

"We need political representatives who oppose the capitalist elites and stand for the rights of the working class and oppressed here in Britain and internationally. That has to include standing in solidarity with people in Gaza today. We would welcome trade union-backed candidates standing in the general election on that programme, including Jeremy Corbyn, who has been banned from standing for Labour."

End Israeli state terror

FIVE WAYS YOU CAN FIGHT BACK!

1 After the demo... Come to the Rally for Socialism!

Part of the Socialism 2023 weekend

There is no better place to be on Saturday evening and Sunday. Join hundreds of other working-class fighters and socialist activists, coming together to draw on shared experiences to discuss how best to organise and fight for every possible gain for the working class, and struggle for socialist change worldwide.

All the workshops, Saturday's 'Rally for Socialism', and the anti-war rallies on Sunday take place at the **Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H 0AL.**

Nearest tube stations: Russell Square, Euston, Euston Square
Socialist Party members are inviting everyone we meet on the 25 November Gaza demo to come along.



2 Organise a walkout at your school or college

Socialist Party members are active in Socialist Students, that organises in universities, colleges and schools across the UK. Get in touch if you would like help organising protests or meetings wherever you are!

See more on page 5

3 Organise a meeting, protest or lobby

Would you like to help organise a protest or lobby of your local councillor or MP, a meeting of your workmates, or move a motion at your trade union branch? Get in touch!

Thousands are considering what steps need to be taken towards developing a political alternative to the Tories and Starmer's Labour.

The organisations with the most authority to take steps towards a mass working-class political alternative are the trade unions, which have led the fight against the Tories during the more-than-a-year-long strike wave.

Socialist Party members in those unions are fighting for them to take steps towards a new party by backing a list of workers' candidates for the general election. But preparations for a general election stand need to begin now. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, which the Socialist Party participates in, has written to other left-wing and campaigning organisations inviting them to co-host a convention in the new year to make such preparations.

Can you help campaign in your trade union in support of this?

4 Donate to fund the fight for socialism



Hundreds of thousands of people have come out on the streets, protesting and marching together in an anti-war movement that has been inspiring to see. Those who have participated have felt the strength in numbers and collective determination to end the slaughter that is taking place in Gaza.

Many are looking to do all they can to stop the onslaught on Gaza, and for the socialist ideas needed. The Socialist Party has been on those demos, fighting for those ideas.

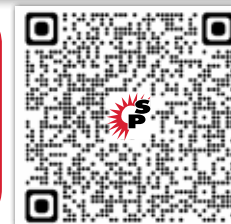
Since the beginning of September we have spent £10,022.20 on printing. We have spent £7,200 for 7,500 placard sticks alone, with the demands to 'End Israeli State Terror', 'For a Socialist Intifada' and to 'Build a mass workers' alternative to Sunak and Starmer'. We have distributed tens of thousands of leaflets and newspapers. All have been hugely popular because they point a way forward, with many protesters donating generously in support.

The Saturday evening rally at Socialism 2023 will include a financial appeal to help continue to fund our resources. This year, a third of all the donations we receive will go towards building the Committee for a Workers' International - the international to which the Socialist Party is affiliated, made up of socialist fighters in different countries around the world.

Donate now to fund the fight for socialism!



Join the Socialist Party



War and conflict is on the rise. But the global mass movement in support of the Palestinians does point towards the working-class 'superpower' that could end this rotten system and start to build new socialist societies able to meet the aspirations of the working classes and poor masses of 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.

The lessons of the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, when uprisings were followed by new authoritarian rulers, civil war and failed states, is that spontaneous mass movements are not enough. The working class and poor need their own independent political organisations with a programme that points to how capitalism can be thrown into the dustbin of history and replaced by socialism.

By replacing private ownership of the main corporations with public ownership and democratic control by the working class and poor masses, it would be possible to end shortages and poverty for all, laying the basis for building a socialist world free from war, oppression and national tensions.

Wherever we organise, our members fight for the things working-class people need. Everyone should have a warm home, a well-paid job, quality NHS healthcare, free education and more, while protecting our environment. We work to build fighting democratic trade unions and a new workers' party, to help build a mass struggle for socialism.

Our branches across the country are discussing and campaigning week in, week out! It's easy to get involved, and you have an important role to play - **join us!**

Thousands swamp Westminster to protest for Parliament ceasefire vote



Westminster 15 November PHOTO: THEO SHARIEF

JACK DEACON
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

Despite being arranged at relatively short notice, over 15,000 people gathered outside Parliament to demand that MPs vote for a ceasefire in Gaza on the evening of 15 November. Their chants included "Keir Starmer is a wasteman", "Rishi Sunak, you will see: Palestine will be free", "Occupation no more" and "Ceasefire now".

The Socialist Party's presence at recent marches and rallies has sparked curiosity about what we stand for. Protesters who engaged in conversation with us showed support for what we are saying about withdrawing the Israeli military from occupied territories, establishing an independent socialist Palestine alongside an independent

socialist Israel, and building an anti-war and anti-austerity workers' party in Britain that stands for socialism and internationalism.

Many protesters told me that they had planned to vote for Labour in the next election but have felt betrayed by Starmer's refusal to back calls for a ceasefire and threats to sack any frontbenchers doing so. They said that they would "never again" vote for Labour under Starmer but did not know who to vote for instead.

They showed enthusiasm when we explained plans the Socialist Party is making as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) to stand candidates in the general election - bringing together socialists, trade unionists and campaigners to provide a genuine alternative to parties run by pro-war, pro-market capitalist politicians.

Birmingham: No trust in Labour MP

Around a hundred people congregated in front of Labour MP Steve McCabe's constituency surgery in Birmingham to protest against his lack of support for a ceasefire in Gaza. Throughout the demo, speakers reiterated that their distrust of McCabe goes beyond his position on the conflict, and that an effort must be made to unseat him and Labour MPs like him. A speaker from the Socialist Party encouraged the crowd to organise and help build a mass workers' party as a viable alternative to Labour.

LLUIS BERTOLN

Leicester: Appetite for a political alternative

The protest in Leicester was the largest we have seen yet. Up to 2,000 people took to the streets calling for a ceasefire and an end to Israeli state terror. This came after local Labour MPs Jon Ashworth and Liz Kendall abstained on the vote to call for a ceasefire.

Conversations with attendees focused on their dissatisfaction with their local MPs, and with many now seeing Labour being no different to the Tories on this issue, they are now looking for an alternative.

Attendees were keen to discuss TUSC and many said they would attend our upcoming meeting on this issue. Socialist Party member Steve Score spoke, calling for a socialist Palestine, alongside a socialist Israel in a socialist Middle East. Another speaker said that the imams should not be having private discussions behind closed doors with MPs; they called for open democratic discussions.

SAM WARD

Oxford: Calling for a socialist intifada

Around 500, mainly working-class and young people, attended a march in Oxford. It started with more general chants of 'Free, free Palestine!' and 'Stop bombing Gaza' but, thanks to the intervention of Socialist Party members, we managed to inject a socialist perspective into the crowd.

We called for a socialist 'intifada', a mass movement of Palestinian and Israeli working-class people against capitalism.

The only sight of Labour was on placards claiming they support genocide. The main question asked was: 'What can we do about it in the UK?' We explained the role trade unions can play in preventing the shipment of arms to Israel and that, more generally, joining a trade union will help people fight working-class struggles.

SAM BENNETT

Newham, East London: Resigned Labour officer standing independently

"Lyn Brown MP - resign! Gaza blood on your hands!" read posters at a protest outside Stratford station, Newham, on 18 November. The rally demanded an end to the Israeli state's massacres in Gaza and for the resignation of the local West Ham Labour MP who abstained in last week's vote in parliament calling for a ceasefire.

The rally was initiated by Newham Resists, in which East London Socialist Party plays a key role. Speakers included Sophia Naqvi, an independent candidate (backed by Newham Socialist Labour) standing in the Plaistow North ward council byelection on 23 November. Sophia resigned as a local Labour Party women's officer over Keir Starmer's

support for Israel, and she is also opposing local council tax increases and cuts. Sophia's campaign has Newham Labour rattled. She is on course to win a big vote and perhaps take the seat, in which case she will join independent left councillor, Mehmood Merza.

NIALL MULHOLLAND

Brighton: Trade union lobby

Around 200 people took part in a demonstration at Hove Town Hall.

Two days before the demo - and five weeks after the Israeli state began its murderous war on Gaza - the city council Labour group issued a weak statement which called for a humanitarian ceasefire, but which did not condemn Israel's killing (at that stage) of 10,000 Palestinians including 4,000 children.

Trades council officers decided, correctly, that the demo should still go ahead. The demo took place just yards from Peter Kyle's constituency office. Kyle, a member of the shadow cabinet, is the only local MP who has not called for a ceasefire.

BILL NORTH

Walthamstow, East London: Raising trade union action and socialism

The Walthamstow demo was lively and noisy. Many residents simply wanted to show solidarity with Palestinian workers; families joined, horrified at the killing of 5,000 children by the Israel Defence Forces; young people were determined to show the Tory government is not acting in our name.

Kevin Parslow, secretary of Waltham Forest Trades Council, took to the microphone to raise the need for trade unions to step up, saying they should take the lead in discussing with their members in the armaments, transport and banking industries about what they could do to prevent the manufacture and transport of arms, and the financing of them.

Linda Taaffe addressed the crowd on behalf of the Socialist Party, pointing out: "Marching and chanting is great to feel part of the struggle, but we need also to start talking about a political strategy where any lasting solution must involve both Palestinian and Jewish workers - and not going back to the same capitalist system."

Wolverhampton: Emotionally charged sense of solidarity

On a grey Saturday afternoon in Wolverhampton, a 200-strong crowd holding banners and placards huddled together to listen to a range of speakers describe, amongst other things, the horrors unfolding in Gaza from the perspective of ordinary Palestinians trapped inside. Amidst the whoops, cheers, chanting and murmurs of "shame!" at the abject failure of the majority of politicians refusing to vote for a ceasefire.

There was also an emotionally charged silence as three young people stood before the crowd with a maturity and dignity which belied their young age. A hush descended as they read out a list of names of a few of their Palestinian counterparts; children murdered senselessly and in cold blood.

But ultimately, the demonstration offered a message of hope, people standing together, united by their condemnation of the ongoing

horrors, and showing solidarity with Palestinians trapped in Gaza and the West Bank.

LILETH BLAIR

Leeds: hopeful and demanding change

It brings me no joy to march with thousands of others in an attempt to sway our government towards what should be an obvious call for the end of the massacre in Gaza.

Chanting could be heard from across the street as I approached the demonstration.

It was overwhelming in the best way - saddened by the situation that gathered us all together, but hopeful from the sense of community and demand for change.

FARONE

Worcester: 'Hardcore' support for socialist demands

Around 80 gathered at a trades council organised event in Worcester. Mark from the Socialist Party spoke on how this war is not just a war in the Middle East, but an attack on the working class of the world, with the few taking decisions for the many.

Worcester Socialist Party was asked to take part in a 'hardcore' punk benefit gig on Saturday night, where we addressed a crowd of over forty people who cheered our demands, including calls for a ceasefire and to get organised to fight back against the Israeli state machine.

CALVIN FOWLER AND STUART

Do you agree? JOIN THE SOCIALISTS socialistparty.org.uk/join

Young socialists against war Build the movement in our schools and colleges

Thousands of young people have been part of the millions who have marched in recent weeks against the murderous siege of Gaza by the Israeli state.

We're furious at the hypocrisy of the Tories, Starmer's Labour Party and pro-capitalist governments around the world which claim to stand for peace and democracy, yet support the brutal onslaught of the Israeli state against innocent Palestinians because it suits their interests. This is on top of them turning a blind eye to the daily oppression and persecution the Palestinian masses have suffered for decades.

Now, students are taking the struggle back to their schools and colleges. Thousands have walked out of classes and marched to demand an end to the onslaught on Gaza. Students in Bristol and London marched to the offices of their local MPs to voice their anger at the Israeli state's bombardment of Palestinians.

The fact that some Labour MPs, under mass pressure from their

constituents, were forced to vote for a ceasefire in Parliament against Labour leader Keir Starmer's orders shows that when they think their cushy parliamentary careers are on the line, they can be pushed back!

It also shows the role that students and young people can play in building the struggle for Palestinian liberation here in Britain. That's why we need to build our movement, organising gate protests and marches locally to keep up the pressure on and expose all politicians who support war and cutbacks.

A key way to strengthen our movement would be the establishment of students unions at our schools and colleges. Such organisations could provide a democratic forum through which students could come together to discuss how to most effectively build the movement against the siege of Gaza, help mobilise and protect students from any attempts to restrict our right to protest, and to organise future campaigns against attacks to our futures and education here in Britain.



PHOTOS: JAMES IVENS

Students walk out...

Tower Hamlets

About a thousand school and college students all across Tower Hamlets waked out of lessons and gathered to protest the ongoing slaughter of Palestinians and the British government's complicity in it on 16 November. Tower Hamlets MP Rashanara Ali refused to vote for a ceasefire.

Students of all ages were outraged and took to the streets, marching from the Town Hall building to the Labour Party offices. Students called for a ceasefire and an end to the siege and violence on Palestinians in Gaza

and the West Bank.

Seeing students so well informed on a topic and angered enough about it to take action shows just how important it is for the youth to organise. The government has tried to silence all discussions about Israel-Palestine in schools, colleges and on campuses, and would like to have us believe that 'it's too complicated and complex for us to understand'. But this has not deterred students. We are informing ourselves and our voices will be heard. There is power in the collective and we will wield it to demand peace and liberation.

NANDI SHALITA



Newham

Newham residents gathered outside East Ham Town Hall to protest against the continued attack on Gaza and to call for an immediate ceasefire on 17 November.

The crowd of roughly two hundred appeared to be predominantly made up of families with children, as well as local political activists and Socialist Party members.

The mood was energetic but outraged. By then, Newham residents were aware that MP Lyn Brown for nearby West Ham had chosen to abstain from voting for a ceasefire in Parliament. Residents I spoke to were pleased, however, to hear that East Ham MP Stephen Timms had voted for a ceasefire apparently understanding the strength of feeling amongst his constituents.

Socialist Party members were invited to address the crowd and our socialist perspective on the attack on

Gaza was received well. As the crowd continued to chant, students from a school situated on the same site as the town hall began gathering closely to the demonstration and enthusiastically joined in with the chanting, before eventually being directed back into the school by staff.

Eventually and organically, the group decided to march from the town hall, down East Ham High Street. As they marched, many passers-by expressed support by sounding their horns, clapping or stepping out of shops onto the street as the group passed.

The march finished outside of East Ham tube station where chanting continued. A Socialist Party member again addressed the crowd and, as a result, many committed to also attending a subsequent successful demonstration on Saturday, calling for the resignation of MP Lyn Brown.

HARRIET ALLEN
NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

Alongside getting organised in our schools and colleges, students need a political fightback as well. As the vote in Parliament on the question of a ceasefire demonstrated, all the establishment parties back war and the capitalist system which demands it. We can't put any trust in Starmer, or the other parties which represent capitalism, to stand up for the oppressed Palestinian masses or working class and young people here in Britain.

That's why we need to challenge them at the next general election - part of the struggle to build a new mass political party that fights for socialist change and stands on the side of the oppressed masses in Palestine and the working class internationally.

The truth is that no capitalist governments or institutions can win liberation for the Palestinian masses or establish lasting peace in the region, because they all represent and defend the profit-before-all-else system of capitalism, which relies on division and oppression to maintain its rule.

But the global mass movement in support of the Palestinian masses points towards the force capable of ending this rotten capitalist system - the working class - and the need to establish a new socialist society based on the democratic public ownership of society's wealth and resources, and solidarity and cooperation, not profit and war. Join the socialists to be part of that fight.

Sheffield

With Socialist Students members and others, I was part of the student walkout on 17 November in protest against the University of Sheffield's involvement with the arms industry currently supporting the Israeli state's offensive on Gaza.

The protest gathered outside Sheffield Town Hall before moving to an open meeting discussing how to organise opposition to the attacks on Gaza.

The turnout quickly grew to several hundred students from the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam to listen to speakers from the wider community. We were greeted kindly by the speakers as they exposed both universities' compliance - speakers said that the University of Sheffield has hired a chaplain with ties to the Israel Defence Force!

Students marched through Sheffield centre with chants in support of Palestine. Cries of "Shame" and "Blood money" accompanied discussions about capitalist politicians' support for the Israeli state's brutal attacks.

ALEX MCLEOD

SOCIALISM RALLY 2023: YOUTH AGAINST WAR



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

Ash Field Academy strike victory!

STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Support staff at Ash Field special school in Leicester have achieved a huge victory. The above-inflation deal increases pay for some of the lowest-paid classroom-based support staff by between 18% and 25%, when added to the nationally agreed increase of £1,925.

The academy had been paying significantly less than support staff in local authority schools for doing the same job. So, Unison members took 43 days of strike action over six months, with big, energetic picket lines involving the majority of members.

Workers on the picket lines explained to the Socialist that they do a highly skilled job, but they struggle to survive on low pay. They faced all the usual arguments from management that their claim could not be afforded by the school, but their determination has proved management wrong.

Unite members at the east London Barts NHS Trust – domestics, porters, catering staff and more – concluded two weeks of strike action over pay on 17 November with a rally at the Royal London hospital in Whitechapel. They will be out again 4-10 December.

Speaking at a rally earlier in the week at Whipps Cross hospital in Leytonstone, **Ellen Barzey**, Unite rep at St Bart's hospital, one of the five hospitals that make up the Trust, said: "A big thank you to everyone who's striking and taking part. We're striking for fair pay and equality. Keep up the fight!"

Milicent Manso, rep at the Royal London, said: "We are not here because we just want to come out, just for fun. We want to stand up for our rights. We don't want to just stand down there for people to ride over us. Now we have to stick together and fight together."

"We are always last – everything they do, we are always last. And now we want to put a stop to that. We will not allow them to treat us anyhow. Let us come together and fight together. We will win together. We will not stop till we get fair pay, respect and fair treatment."

Barts NHS strike: 'We won't stay down for people to ride over us'



Whipps Cross rally JAMES IVENS

Birmingham uni support staff still fighting

CLIVE WALDER
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Support staff at the University of Birmingham took two further days of strike action on 13 and 14 November to follow up their strike during freshers' week. The mood of the workers, members of Unison, is still determined. ACAS has been involved, as have lawyers who are trying to determine whether the £700 payment offered to staff to accept the disputed changes to terms and conditions is legal.

The university management is pleading poverty and claiming that it is the best it can offer, despite having vast reserves. The vice-chancellor and head of HR were challenged by the union branch secretary as they left a meeting on 14 November, and were subject to some impromptu negotiation in the presence of the pickets!

Strikers were pleased to get support from a Labour councillor – Birmingham council workers would want him to oppose the council's continuing cuts as well!



PHOTO: UNITE WALES



PHOTO: NORMAN HALL

Go North East bus strike:

'The money is there, but the company won't stump up'

ELAINE BRUNSKILL
NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST PARTY

As Go North East Bus drivers entered their fourth week of all-out strike action, there's a mood of gritty determination on the picket line.

A picket line visit by Sharon Graham, Unite's general secretary, really boosted the confidence of the strikers. The mood is that this is a strike they will win.

Local news channels have been running stories about the difficulties

facing vulnerable people because of the strike – with an unspoken inference that it is the fault of the drivers. However, Sharon emphasised that Go North East could end this strike with the stroke of a pen, and that the parent company "is awash with cash, but won't stump up the funds it would cost them to end this dispute right now."

The mood of the strikers has been further lifted by one driver, who had initially crossed the picket line, joining the strike.

Cardiff workers still fighting a Labour council

JOE FATHALLAH
CARDIFF SOCIALIST PARTY

Unite members at Cardiff Council are now taking their eleventh week of strike action, against a Labour-run authority, for a decent pay increase in line with the cost of living. The workers have decided to concentrate on picketing County Hall, where most of the council meetings take place, for maximum impact.

I got into a discussion on the picket line with a striker about the attitude of management. To get to work on time he has to catch the first bus in the morning, and then run to meet a connecting service. If he misses the connection, he gets a black mark for lateness. To top things off, Cardiff

Bus, 100% owned by the council, has implemented cuts to services this year, making getting to work in the morning harder for workers all across the city and surrounding area! The employer is aware of this, but has been unwilling to take the situation into account, an attitude which adds to workers' determination to fight back.

Unite has informed the employer of the intention to reballoon for further action over the Christmas period, as the current strike mandate is about to expire. Cardiff Council employees deserve a proper pay increase.

Unite members in Wrexham Council have already accepted an increased offer, won through effective strike action.

Salisbury traffic wardens fight 'fire and rehire'

ALI COOK
SALISBURY SOCIALIST PARTY

On 4 November, Salisbury traffic wardens in the GMB union went on strike against Wiltshire Council, after they threatened to carry out 'fire and rehire' of over 500 staff. This was combined with a march around town bringing together GMB, Unison and Unite unions. The council's bid to reduce the wages of social workers, leisure workers and traffic wardens could mean that workers lose around £7,000 a year.

According to reps for the GMB, the council have gone as far as hiring workers to pose as traffic wardens, and act like them! This is despite the fact that these workers aren't legally allowed to dole out penalty notices and so they are merely serving a purpose of scaring people into buying their parking tickets as normal.

There was also an expressed frustration with the Starmer Labour leadership, especially at his refusal to commit to scrapping the two-child

benefit cap if he is the next prime minister.

It was only a year ago when the council previously planned to carry out fire and rehire. This resulted in ten days of strike action, costing the council £30,000 a day, before the council shelved the plans.

These kinds of attacks are to be expected by a Tory-led council, but the 'alternative' of Labour councils up and down the country has been to carry out Tory cuts with no resistance.

We deserve better. We need councillors who are willing to stand up to the Tories and their repeating bullying tactics. We need councillors who are willing to put forward no-cuts budgets, and refuse to pass on their austerity agenda. Imagine the support local communities and trade unions would give to councillors who actually stood their ground!

Do you agree? JOIN THE SOCIALISTS socialistparty.org.uk/join

PCS members want change – elect Marion and John



Marion campaigning against office closures and redundancies in Sheffield SOCIALIST PARTY

PCS REP IN DWP

I am a PCS union rep in the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions). I am also a proud socialist in a working-class area, and have been a union member since I started working at 16.

One of my duties as a rep is to know and speak to my members. I floor-walk, at work, all through my building, but I'm most familiar with the Retirement Services Department, pensions and such. There's a fair number of us in there and a good mix of old hands and new hires. There are staff who haven't worked anywhere else and remember the various anti-trade union laws over the years. There are staff in their first job too, who are just happy to be working at anything in this wretched economy.

What unites us all is the common goal to oust our union leadership

that is seen as right-leaning, and put back leaders who are completely "one of us".

And that is Marion Lloyd for general secretary, and John Moloney for re-election as assistant general secretary.

My branch voted almost unanimously for Marion and John, with no votes against. No one I've spoken with has changed their mind. Everyone is grimly determined to see their candidates achieve two incredibly important leadership roles.

There is faith that electing Marion and John means we have leaders "of the people", not ones earning more money than an elected Member of Parliament, while brushing off members' democratic decisions, or sending out questions that were perceived as sneaky, tricky questions in the consultative ballot.

There is anger at not being reballoon despite a direct statement that

DWP would be reballoon. There is anger from single parents who lost benefits because of the arbitrary cost-of-living payment, and from part-time staff who lost out because it was pro-rated. Anger because there was no visible outrage and defence from their union leadership.

And now, members want a change: a change for the workers, a change to be represented by people who haven't lost touch with how miserable it is to try to survive a winter on minimum wage, or who still know what it's like to not have fresh fruit and veg in the kitchen for your children.

My members want change, and the change they want is Marion Lloyd for general secretary and John Moloney for assistant general secretary.

If you also want change, get involved in our efforts to make PCS a fighting, democratic union at bln.org.uk

Tory 'minimum service levels' threat to strike action

Aslef train drivers

Members of the train drivers' union Aslef will be taking strike action between December 1 and 8, with 17 different rail companies affected on different days. Aslef will also carry out an overtime ban between December 1 and 9. This is a continuation of the dispute that has been running for 18 months. The bosses' rail pay offer made in April included an inadequate 4% pay rise for both 2022 and 2023. But it still included attacks on work arrangements.

A WEST MIDLANDS TRAIN DRIVER WRITES

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act (MSL) is a major attack on hard-fought-for trade union rights won over generations. Sunak's Conservative government is attempting draconian, undemocratic measures to curtail the right to strike.

Coming on the back of four decades of brutal Tory anti-union legislation, it is clearly designed to cut across the recent strike wave across all sectors, rather than tackle the causes of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Act allows employers to issue a notice to unions setting out who is required to work during a strike.

As train drivers in many companies are preparing for action, the Tory government's proposed minimum service level would be 40% of the service – in other words a demand for nearly half of our members to still go to work!

This potentially leaves unions who refuse to comply open to serious financial penalties through sequestration of funds, and removes workers' protection from being dismissed for undertaking lawful industrial action.

We need to fight for an appropriate industrial response to defend workers' right to strike and protect any trade union attacked under this new law. No individual union or member



Leeds Aslef members SOCIALIST PARTY

Lobby of TUC Special Congress

9-10am Saturday 9 December

TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

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Swansea ambulance workers SOCIALIST PARTY WALES

Ambulance workers

GARETH BROMHALL
AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKER

Ambulance workers, many of whom took strike action for the first time in the past year, are among those singled out by the government's draconian 'minimum service levels' (MSLs) aimed at strike-breaking.

On 6 November the government announced the outcome of its consultation and outlined proposals for MSLs on the service in England.

Guidance from the GMB, one of the main unions in ambulance services, highlighted the stark reality of these proposals.

MSLs in the ambulance services would be set at as high as 80% of staff, from paramedics and emergency

medical technicians (EMTs), to call handlers, dispatchers and support staff. Meaning almost all crews would be forced to work on strike days, and that unions would be expected to ensure members would work under threat of sequestration.

As health is a devolved issue, the reaction of the Scottish and Welsh services differ. The Scottish National Party's response outflanked Mark Drakeford's Welsh Labour when it said it would not cooperate with the legislation.

The unions effected by this legislation should pressure Labour-led devolved administrations, local authorities and public bodies not to issue work notices or enact the levels proposed by the Tories.

Starmer has pledged to scrap the new legislation and the Trade Union Act 2016. However, his shadow health secretary Wes Streeting has also pledged to "hold the doors open" for further privatisation of the NHS under a future Labour government. They cannot be trusted.

The overwhelming majority of the public, ambulance staff and NHS staff are against the imposition of these levels on ambulance services.

The TUC is meeting on 9 December in a special Congress to combat this latest attack on our trade union rights, following the resolution passed at Congress in September.

In response to this, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has welcomed the special Congress and is lobbying for the other points agreed in September to be implemented urgently:

- 100% solidarity with any trade unions attacked
- support for demonstrations and for a national march opposing the legislation
- to explore options for non-compliance and resistance
- to call for repeal of the anti-union laws

Support this lobby, help build the trade union response necessary to fight for our fundamental rights as workers and for the future of our NHS.

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CLIMATE CHANGE: CAN TECHNOLOGY SAVE US?

PETE MASON

NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

After UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's latest October U-turn, all new cars sold in the UK must be electric by 2035, five years later than the original date. Of course, who knows what it will be in another five years' time!

Cars produce half of transport emissions in the UK and transport emissions are one of the big-four contributors to global carbon emissions. The other three: energy production, homes and industry.

Existing technological developments in all four areas will need to be harnessed to face up to climate change. But in truth, the planet is not waiting for some new technological innovation to save it from burning up.

Sunak's other recent climate U-turns include pushing back the deadline for phasing out home gas boilers and increasing the frequency at which new North Sea oil and gas licences are granted.

Together with London Mayor Sadiq Khan's expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) – charging owners of older petrol and diesel vehicles a punitive £12.50 a day to drive in the capital – these are lessons in how not to embrace the new technology we need to defeat global heating.

Meanwhile the real climate criminals – the big bosses, including in the fossil fuel industry – continue to benefit from huge state subsidies. Global fossil fuel subsidies and costs hit an incredible \$7 trillion in 2022, the IMF reported in August this year.

Khan's ULEZ efforts only feed suspicions that the science of global warming is a plot to rob the working class. Of course it is true that, as with everything else, the bosses will do all they can to make sure it is the working class not the capitalist class which pays the price for climate measures.

Rich-list Rishi has said meeting net-zero targets should not "unnecessarily give people more hassle and more costs in their lives", as if the man who has presided over the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation cares about our bank balances!

The workers' movement has to make sure that the working class is not made to pay, and fight for the necessary climate measures too.

So does technology capable of saving the environment exist? And who will pay?

The first answer is, yes, existing technology can already save the planet, but with two caveats. The first is that some major changes to the planet can now likely only be mitigated, not reversed.

"Accelerated ice melt in west Antarctica is inevitable for the rest of the century no matter how much carbon emissions are cut, research indicates" the Guardian reported in October, meaning an ocean rise of five metres, threatening to sweep away cities from London to New York, from Mumbai to Shanghai: "More than a third of the global population lives within 62 miles (100km) of the coast."

The fear is not that the problem of sea rises could not be solved – that human ingenuity could not be used to mitigate the effects of a five-metre sea rise, for instance, in a modern equivalent to the centuries of building dykes for which the Dutch are famous.

The fear is that human ingenuity will not be engaged, except to protect the super-rich, because it will 'cost too much'. That too little will be done, too late, too poorly and it will fail.

The levies failed in New Orleans, in the world's most advanced capitalist nation, during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 – a hurricane that was as much a marker of the arrival of global warming as any of the disasters that have followed.

80% of New Orleans disappeared underwater, some under 15 feet of water. That's just slightly less than the five metres of predicted sea rise over the next few centuries. There were 1,836 fatalities.

And overwhelmingly, the victims of Hurricane Katrina were poor. A fear sweeping the world is that, whether in the USA or the UK, or anywhere else in the world, the poor and oppressed will be left defenceless against the effects of global warming.

How could we trust our capitalist governments, motivated by trying to cultivate a 'profit-friendly' environment for their own nation's capitalist class – and clearly paralysed in the face of global warming – to protect us? The simple truth is, we can't.

That's the second, very large, caveat: that profit-driven competition-based capitalism is unable to take the necessary measures to prevent environmental destruction.

So who will pay? Clearly not the capitalist class if it gets its way. Only by nationalising big energy companies, other major industry and the banks, under democratic working-class control and management, can investment be planned to meet the needs of people and planet.

Electric vehicles and public transport

It may surprise you to learn that Clara Ford, wife of Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor

company, drove an electric vehicle, a Detroit Electric car, for many years, more than a century ago.

In the years that followed, as the planet heated up, investment in technology in other areas got humankind to the moon and back, created the atom bomb and the silicon chip, but despite declarations to the contrary, the legacy car manufacturers never seriously invested in the technology.

Electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla, led by Elon Musk, is now the world's most valuable automaker. But far from being a shining light of capitalist development, Tesla has taken billions of dollars in US state funding during its development. In 2010 alone, Tesla received a \$465 million loan from an Energy Department program, that offered funding to car companies making fuel-efficient cars.

The US capitalist state has stumped up cash for electric vehicle start-ups, with individual capitalists themselves unwilling to invest, for the benefit of US capitalist interests as a whole – and in competition with China.

Seeing the rise of Chinese capitalist dominance over green technology, Joe Biden, desperate for US capitalism not to lose too much ground, enacted the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), including plans for \$370 billion in energy and climate spending.

Environmental disasters, extreme weather events and other consequences of global warming are generally bad for profits – it is in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole to stop them. But the capitalist system is hindered by competition between individual capitalists, and between capitalist nation states. The 'reallocation' of resources to green technology at the rate needed would mean a serious hit to short-term profits. Capitalists and capitalist states don't want to put themselves at a disadvantage.

By far the most effective transport measure to reduce carbon emissions would be expanded, reliable, publicly owned public transport, made free to all.

But for many in Britain, public transport is simply not an option at present. The local rail system was ravaged many decades ago, approximately cut by half and it is far too expensive; it is often cheaper and quicker to travel by car. Many commute for hours every week, unable to afford to live near their workplace or find work near their home. Much of the rail network is not yet electrified. Freight is largely moved by diesel lorries, rail freight unable to provide enough capacity.

The now partly scrapped HS2

scheme, planned to connect London, Birmingham and major northern cities, was another example of capitalism's reliance on state investment. Its completion was ultimately deemed 'unaffordable' by Sunak's Tory government, with billions already spent.

With no affordable and reliable option, millions drive; and a majority that are looking to buy, now plan to 'go electric.' UK battery electric vehicle sales increased 88% year-on-year in a standout July 2023, and 68% in Europe in August. Yet developing the charging infrastructure is once again something the capitalists look to the state to do, so that they can reap the profits.

Green energy production

It is essential that the electricity to run industry, homes and transport must be generated by green energy. Is it possible to generate enough?

Nine of the top 15 greenhouse gas emitters in the UK, which collectively output one sixth of the annual greenhouse gas emissions, are energy generating firms, according to a 2019 Sky News investigation.

Multiple studies have shown that the UK has plentiful green energy potential to supply all its needs. Zero-carbon sources provided 40% of the electricity used in 2022, made up of solar, wind, biomass, and hydropower.

In fact, renewables worldwide have developed far more rapidly than anticipated. Carbon emissions from the global electricity sector may peak this year, and the entire carbon emissions of China could peak this year, according to one study, such is the investment in its renewable power generation capacity.

Yet, at present, the world's emissions are still hitting record numbers. The ever-present danger is the profit motive itself. It was a lack of potential profit, not technical issues, that caused the failure of the latest UK government wind farm auction in September, gridlocking further growth. Wind power produces almost three quarters of the UK's green energy, but reliance on private capital has just throttled growth again. This industry should be nationalised to enable planned development.

68% of the UK adult population support bringing energy companies back into public ownership. The Socialist Party supports this, as part of a democratic plan of production, and says compensation should only be paid to those shareholders who can prove real need.

More than a decade ago, a study carried in Scientific American, 'A Plan for a Sustainable Future'

(November 2009), showed how "wind, water and solar power could supply the entire world's energy needs by 2030."

The study said that renewable energy is superabundant: "Accessible sunlight alone (excluding sunlight that falls on the oceans) could provide more than 40 times the amount of energy being consumed around the world today."

If it seemed a little unrealistic in 2010, since then, the cost of electricity from solar plants has fallen by 89%. The emergence of cheap perovskite solar cells signals another significant price drop and increase in efficiency of solar cells. Solar is now the cheapest form of electricity, according to the International Energy Agency. The cost of batteries has seen a similar price drop. The technical potential is very real.

Converting all transport and energy production to zero carbon cuts about 50% of the UK global warming emissions. The same principle applies to the other half – it's not technology that is lacking but the inability of capitalism to implement it.

Extracting CO₂ from the atmosphere is entirely technically possible but as billionaire Bill Gates told the Financial Times, "it's not economic for the world". (3/10/23) OK, it's not a substitute for zero emissions, but as an emergency, concomitant action, it makes sense. So what price does capitalism put on saving the planet, Bill?

Batteries of every sort

Sceptics say that batteries, a critical component of green energy, are not advanced enough. If a society runs solely on electricity produced by solar, wind and waves, which vary so enormously, how can it be stored for average daily use?

In reality, energy storage is not a problem once one escapes from the capitalist mindset. The 'problem' of green energy generation and storage is a problem for big energy companies wishing to maintain monopolies over energy generation to make massive profits.

Large-scale energy storage has many ridiculously simple, low-tech solutions. For instance, 'gravity batteries' are weights, such as water or concrete blocks, raised when there is energy to store, and dropped as energy is required, generating power from a turbine.

These devices can be implemented in purpose built buildings, high rises, or even disused mineshafts. They can power a small town for a few hours at peak demand, to replace the peak-demand gas-fired power plants.

They can store surplus solar,

wind and wave power to ensure steady output night and day. But existing batteries can do so too. The UK already has over 3 gigawatts of battery storage systems with the same again having received planning permission but not private capital funding.

And new battery technology advances continue. Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer BYD ('Build Your Dreams'), the preeminent challenger to Tesla, is ramping up sodium ion battery production this year, and next year is thought to be placing them in its new Ford Fiesta-sized Seagull electric vehicle. It currently has a lithium battery, and is on sale in China for a remarkably low £8,500.

When the Seagull arrives in the UK next year, even at twice that price, it will undercut internal combustion engine vehicles and present a significant saving for buyers, given petrol costs. So has capitalism stepped up?

Well, no. Facing such significantly lower costs from China, the European Union is talking about imposing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. The EU aims to "protect" European car manufacturers, which failed to develop decent batteries for decades. A trade war gathers pace.

Action against global warming takes second place to profit, and competing national capitalist interests, once again. And car insurance companies, spooked by scare tactics, are threatening to hike costs massively. Another industry ripe for nationalisation!

The simple truth is, wherever you look, the obstacle to saving humanity from global warming is capitalism. For capitalism, the environment is an "externality", to use the phrase of JP Morgan Chase, US-based multinational investment bank and one of the premier financiers of fossil fuels. Global warming is a systemic failure of capitalism itself. Trade wars, competition, secrecy, and decades of disinformation, lies and super-profits from oil, gas and coal – it is time to call time on the profit-based system.

Socialist change is needed – based on the nationalisation of major industries, a democratic plan of production and international collaboration – to swiftly put an end to global warming.

IS THERE STILL TIME TO STOP CATASTROPHIC CLIMATE CHANGE

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'No-fault' evictions increase as landlords seek to increase rents

LEAH BYATT
SHEFFIELD SOUTH EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

The number of 'Section 21' no-fault evictions served, allowing landlords to evict tenants without good reason at eight-weeks' notice, has increased by 38% in the past year, according to recent Ministry of Justice figures.

The increase comes as landlords rush to push evictions through before the Renters (Reform) Bill becomes law. Initially the Bill included plans to outlaw the use of 'no-fault' evictions.

23,000 households have been affected by 'no-fault' evictions since the promise to ban them was made by Theresa May's Tory government in 2019. Caving to pressure from big landlords, the government dropped the ban from the Bill, pushing it back to 2025.

At least a further 12,000 households are now expected to be impacted by the time the ban becomes law!

Renters in the country's most deprived areas - including Blackpool, Burnley, Bolsover, Hastings, and Wigan - will bear the brunt of the country's homelessness crisis thanks to continued government stalling.

The government stalls are being blamed on claims that 'the courts are not ready to handle a new system', reinforcing what we already know: the Renters (Reform) Bill will be nothing but words without properly funded investigative bodies to keep dodgy landlords in check.

There are continued cuts to bodies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, where tenants can obtain housing advice. Cuts are rendering services unusable and isolating tenants. And yet property developers continue to make billions in profits year on year.

We need to boot the Tories out of government and fight for enough funding for council housing departments to enforce the rights of tenants, but reforming the housing sector isn't enough to solve the renting crisis.

Will Starmer's Labour stand up for renters? Based on their records in power in local councils cosying up to property developers and refusing to use their powers to build the council housing needed, not likely!

What we really need is a new mass workers' party prepared to follow the example of the Liverpool Militant council in the 1980s: funding the building of mass council-housing programmes, allowing workers to access affordable housing for all. Demanding the resources we need and mobilising working-class people to fight for it.

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Inflation down to 4.6% - but still no cash for retail spending

JUNE ANGUS
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Conservative ministers pat themselves on the back when inflation was reported to have dropped to 4.6% in October, down from 6.7% in September and falling sharply from its peak at 11.1% the previous year. However, the government can't take too much of the credit - economists at the Institute for Fiscal Studies say the drop was largely due to a fall in the energy price cap.

While the Tories are celebrating, people across the UK struggling to keep up with costs certainly won't be - mortgage rates are soaring, food prices remain mostly unchanged

and, despite the energy cap, many households will find it even harder to pay energy bills this winter since government support is no longer being provided. On top of this, wages remain low and support services are still critically underfunded. Prices are 21% higher now than they were in January 2021. The average working person is finding it increasingly difficult to survive - let alone save any extra cash.

This was reflected in retail sales for October. Sales volumes fell by 0.3% last month, hitting a low not seen since the Covid-19 lockdowns of early 2021. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that shoppers are spending "cautiously", increasingly prioritising the essentials over things

like household goods and clothing. The ONS also found that shoppers are buying cheaper products, citing "cost-of-living pressures" for this change. This will come as little surprise to the growing number of people worried about their ever-rising costs, especially with the festive period looming.

The Conservatives serve the interests of the UK's wealthiest people and are not interested in helping the masses - 13 years of austerity have made that clear. Labour doesn't provide much hope either, with Keir Starmer unwilling to mount a real opposition to the Tories' brutal policies. The millions of households struggling to afford bills this winter desperately need a political party that represents working-class interests.

McDonald's sexual harassment sackings show need for union organisation

JOHN WILLIAMS
CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

This July, McDonald's faced a crisis; over 400 current and previous employees made accusations of sexual abuse, racism, and bullying. Though a shocking figure, for hospitality workers such as myself, it wasn't

surprising. It exposed appalling practices in hospitality, many of which go unnoticed. So far, 157 reports have been fully investigated, resulting in 18 sackings.

It seems little has changed since McDonald's boss in the UK recently told MPs: "The company faces one or two sexual harassment allegations

from workers each week", as he pledged to "eradicate" abuse claims. But Ian Hodson, national president of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, told MPs that the feedback the union is getting is that "nothing has changed".

Join a union
We need to change attitudes and tackle the problem at its roots in the workplace. The best thing workers can do is to join a union and fight back against sexism and harassment. Workers can collectively challenge attitudes and make workplaces safe from vile behaviour and sexist managers.

Every complaint needs to be investigated fully in an open and honest manner. It needs the oversight of trade unions, with democratically elected committees in the workplace to oversee procedures. Part of this is to fight for the right for precarious workers to join a trade union, without fear of victimisation so workers can unite and tackle issues head on.



Tory Autumn Statement won't stop fall in living standards

The Socialist goes to press before the full details of Tory chancellor Jeremy Hunt's Autumn Statement are known. But we know one thing, the Tory party won't be fiddling around with tax rates to benefit the majority of working-class people.

Freezing income tax bands until 2027-28 means more and more of the lowest paid are being forced into paying tax - four million more workers are expected to pay tax for the first time by 2025. This 'fiscal drag' mean workers will be worse off, as the cost of goods has gone up and wage rises have had to be fought for. On top of that, many of us will be forced to pay more in tax.

Unlike the super-rich, we can't afford expensive accountants to hide our money and avoid tax. We need to fight collectively for pay rises to fight the cost-of-living crisis and for a different kind of society - a socialist society. One that's not rigged against the majority of us but one where we can democratically use the resources hoarded by the super-rich for the genuine good of us all.



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



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Childcare reforms: fight for funding, staffing and training



ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

In his 2023 spring budget, Tory chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced big changes to the free provision of early-years childcare. Due to come into effect early in 2024, 15 hours of 'free' provision is being extended to two- to three-year-old children of working parents. And from September 2025, all eligible children over nine months old will get funding for places for up to thirty hours a week.

On the surface, this seems like a welcome introduction for the many parents who currently struggle with some of the highest childcare costs of any advanced capitalist country. The reality is that without proper funds, recruitment and training it will overburden an already stretched sector.

A decade of underfunding has already led to a crisis in the nursery sector. The current level of government funding means that nurseries are running at a shortfall of approximately £2.31 per child, per hour. This shortfall is made up, where possible, by charging paying parents more per hour or by charging for extras, such as snacks or meals. As the cost-of-living crisis continues and overheads continue to rise, this shortfall is only increasing. The result has been an 87% rise in the number of nurseries closing. Those who are still open can run a shortfall of up to £32,000 a year due to the current funding model.

Also exacerbating the crisis are massive staffing shortages. Due to low wages, high stress and a forthcoming relaxation of staff:child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5, uptake of available positions is low. A report by the Early Education and Childcare Coalition found that 57% of nursery staff interviewed are thinking of leaving the industry in the next 12 months.

New government policy would require an expansion in the early-years workforce of at least 8% to meet increased demand. This is looking increasingly unlikely to happen by April. Only about 17% of early-years providers say they are able to increase the number of available places offered in 2024.

Richer families likely to benefit from childcare reforms by almost 6 times vs lower income families

As the funded nursery places scheme expands over the next two years, the cracks in the system will only widen further. The effects will be seen more in deprived areas, where the proportion of government-funded childcare places are higher. Already almost 30% of nursery closures over the last year have taken place in the most deprived areas.

The loss of childcare places in these areas naturally has the knock-on effect of forcing more parents or extended family carers, usually women, out of the workplace and back into the home as alternative childcare costs are too high.

Private sector
It is not just nursery places in deprived areas that face threats, however, as private equity and venture capital sectors have moved into investing in nurseries, buying up large numbers of previously not-for-profit or collapsing businesses. This causes a very real existential threat to the sector, as has been demonstrated by

the disaster of the privatised adult social care system. These private equity firms run a risky business model of rapid expansion, high debts and minimal cash reserves that, while maximising profitability, leave them exposed to financial difficulties and bankruptcy. The future educational success of far too many children now hangs in the balance of profit margins.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the early-years education system is teetering on the edge of collapse. Yet the Conservative government will not invest what is needed to boost the sector. The Labour Party, which is likely to be in power by the time the whole of this scheme comes into effect, is also unwilling to commit to improving funding to the industry, citing 'fiscal responsibility' and the need for caution.

The capitalist system, which looks at the childcare sector only in terms of what profit is to be made, cannot prevent further collapse of the system.

We need a fully nationalised nursery sector, well-funded with living wages for all staff, free for all children and under local democratic control. A socialist society would guarantee our children the bright future they all deserve.

HOW FAR CAN THE BACKLASH AGAINST WOMEN'S RIGHTS GO?



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

Why I joined – Socialist Party joined protests, Labour refused to back ceasefire

Holly (left) on one of the Palestine protests PHOTO PAUL MITCHELL



HOLLY BENNETT
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

I started to become disillusioned with the Labour Party due to the unjust smear campaign against Jeremy Corbyn, from people within his own party. And, after reading the 'Labour Leaks' document, and watching the Al Jazeera 'Labour Files' series, I soon realised that I could no longer vote for a party which sought to deny not only its members, but workers and young people generally of a better life.

Just when I thought that Labour couldn't disappoint me anymore, Keir Starmer could not find the decency to back a ceasefire during the Israeli onslaught on Gaza, which has seen over 12,000 Palestinians murdered, and Gazans denied of basic human rights.

Only 56 Labour MPs backed the

call for a ceasefire. Opinion polls say that 76% of people in the UK back a ceasefire. Labour MPs are clearly not representative or democratic.

Whilst I regarded myself as 'politically homeless' for the last few years, I always found myself dipping in and out of the local Socialist Party branch's news emails.

Standing in solidarity

Whilst attending the protests in solidarity with Palestine, I noticed that the political party on the ground, always doing the work, and always standing in solidarity with people is the Socialist Party. Not only does the Socialist Party back the mass movement calling for a ceasefire, but it proposes a socialist solution of transferring the means of production to working-class Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Since joining the Socialist Party, I

have absorbed a great deal of knowledge, and I am constantly learning, growing and developing a more comprehensive understanding why society needs and deserves a socialist movement. I am very grateful to have met a group of people who are more than willing to help me on my journey.

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Anti-cuts campaigners march from Batley to Dewsbury

IAIN DALTON
SOCIALIST PARTY YORKSHIRE SECRETARY

To chants of "cutback, fightback" and "Kirklees Council, shame on you", campaigners marched from Batley to Dewsbury to highlight the savage cuts being carried through by the council.

With a £47 million hole in its finances for next year, the last few months have seen Kirklees Council announce more and more cuts to local services.

In the last few weeks, there have been increased charges for parking and allotments, and the sell-off of a number of buildings used by sports clubs, charities and community groups.

Stop the closures

The march featured speakers from many of the campaign groups fighting under the banner of 'Stop the Closures', including from Dewsbury and Colne Valley leisure centres, Claremont House Care Home, Deighton Sports Arena, Batley Library, and others.

As the march passed, drivers who had stopped gave us thumbs up and tooted in support. At the rally in Dewsbury, the Socialist Party campaign stall was constantly busy

with passers-by signing our petition against the closures.

Amongst marchers there was huge anger at the Labour council. The Labour group on the council is now split. Seven councillors have indicated they won't vote for the closures.

But demonstrators were also angry at the Tories. Rishi Sunak, responding at Prime Minister's Questions, said Kirklees Council "is no longer fit for purpose". One speaker at the rally said if that's the case, "why doesn't he ensure the council is funded properly?"

Put councillors on spot

I was invited to speak at the rally, and pointed out that in the run-up to the Autumn Statement, the Tories are talking of having tens of billions of pounds of "fiscal headroom". So why couldn't that be used to protect services in councils up and down the country, rather than cutting inheritance tax which will benefit just 4% of the population?

I raised that councillors should be put on the spot, that they should vote to stop these cuts, and MPs should be challenged on whether they will reverse more than a decade of cuts to local government funding. Those who don't should face a challenge at the next election from anti-cuts campaigners.

Book review: A Revolutionary's Memoir by Keith Dickinson

Charming and unique personal account of 60 years of politics and history

ALISON HILL
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

This is a fascinating book. It will interest both people with a long history in the movement, and people completely new to it. It explains, amongst other things, the dash to the right in the Labour Party, which is being exposed so starkly today.

But most of all it is a personal memoir, which gives it a charm not commonly found in other books about politics and history. It is an account of Keith Dickinson's 60+ years in the fight to defend socialist and Trotskyist ideas. Keith is a Socialist Party member, and was a member of its predecessors – Militant and Socialist Fight.

It starts by explaining why he came to the socialist conclusions he did. Leaving school at 14 to work as a messenger boy in a newspaper office played a role.

Packing newspapers

And the experiences of trade union organisation gave him important experiences at an early age. Those early years as a young worker taught him many things, particularly how to pack newspapers in the back of a moving van, and gave him an encyclopaedic knowledge of the pubs of Liverpool.

Liverpool was his birthplace. Keith gives accounts of seeing bomb damage as the docks were attacked from the sky. But also the times with his family and friends as he began to understand a bit about what people's political opinions meant.

Important gains by the working class, like the formation of the NHS, meant a lot to him as a chronic asthmatic. His mother did not have to pay to call the doctor any more. He was given better care and an inhaler.



Keith running the Socialist Books stall at the biggest trade union march ever in Britain - when 750,000 marched against the Tory austerity in 2011. PHOTO SENAN

There are tales of working-class Liverpool, sing-songs but also strikes and workers' battles, which formed his political thinking.

Being a memoir, it is not in strict chronological order. But that adds to its attraction as he draws on his early experiences to deal with his later political activity.

Having to battle with both the right wing and the sectarian ultra-left certainly taught him a few lessons, and prepared him for a move to London, and eventually the launch of Militant. His dogged determination to defend the ideas of socialism and

Trotskyism was partly forged in these battles, and has stood him, and what is now the Socialist Party, in good stead for decades.

Fire

A lot of people will be interested to read of the struggles to get the Militant newspaper printed, the premises moves, the people who combined printing and maintaining the press with full-time jobs, and surviving a fire which destroyed a lot of equipment.

Keith deals with the massive witch-hunt in the Labour Party in the

1980s when Keith, Peter Taaffe, Clare Doyle, Lynn Walsh and Ted Grant were expelled. This was an all-important step in the formation of 'New Labour', which Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher boasted as her finest achievement. Keir Starmer, of course, has eagerly seized the baton, turning Labour even further to the right.

Keith also goes into the events leading up to Ted Grant's split from Militant, as he and a few others could not adjust to the new terrain both inside and outside the Labour Party.

The battles against the Poll Tax

are described – carefully explaining how the 18 million non-payers brought Thatcher down. And before that, the magnificent struggle of the Militant-led Liverpool council, which showed how Tory cuts could be fought, and important victories won. Those lessons have been suppressed, distorted by the capitalist media and establishment, but their relevance is even more clear now than ever before.

These are just some of the highlights in the book, but there are many more. It's a good read – it's unusual to get such a personal account of workers' struggles and the evolution of socialist and Trotskyist ideas and organisation.



A revolutionary's memoir
from *Socialist Fight to Militant* and *the Socialist Party*

by Keith Dickinson (from 1950s to Today)
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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

The Socialist Party organises working-class people to fight against the attacks from this rotten system on our lives and livelihoods, and for a socialist alternative: a society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich

and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few.

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A £15-an-hour minimum wage for all, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.
- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.
- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.
- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.
- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.
- For trade unions independent of the

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

- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.
- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including

dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.

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

the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

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

workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.
- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition

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

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

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US auto workers strike: UAW workers can win more!

PEGGY WANG
MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, ASSOC.
OF PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATORS
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

After six weeks of selective strikes against the 'Big 3' US automakers, the United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership reached tentative agreements (TAs) with Ford, GM, and Stellantis. Union leaders called off picket lines, and approximately 50,000 striking workers returned to their jobs. Now, the 150,000 rank-and-file union members at the three auto companies are voting on the TAs to either approve new contracts or send the negotiating team back to the table and possibly re-start the strike.

The UAW's rolling strikes against all three automakers began on 15 September with walkouts at three assembly plants. The strike escalated over the following weeks with 38 parts and distribution centres (PDCs) walking out, followed by five more plants across the country.

The strikes included walkouts at the Big 3's most profitable plants, notably Ford's Kentucky Truck Plant. The 8,700 workers there generate \$48,000 a minute in revenue for Ford, while new hires only earn \$37,523 a year. Other large moneymakers the UAW targeted were Stellantis's Sterling Heights Assembly Plant and GM's Arlington Texas Assembly Plant. In total, the work stoppage cost the car companies over \$5 billion in revenue over six weeks.

The strike made some gains for members compared to the Big 3's 'final offer', but there are still crucial issues left unaddressed. Workers do not get the same benefits and protections for the same work, and electric vehicle (EV) production jobs don't automatically fall under the national union agreement. More can be won, especially considering the majority of UAW workers didn't walk out, there was overwhelming public support (by a 4-1 margin) for the strike, and general support for unions is the strongest it has been in 60 years.

The Independent Socialist Group (ISG), the CWI's co-thinkers in the US, joined picket lines in solidarity with UAW members in their fight for strong contracts, and encourages workers to carefully review and discuss what's offered.

'No' vote

We support a 'no' vote on the current TAs. More can be won on pay, on bringing an end to two-tier contracts, and to advance demands for a shorter working week.

The current round of UAW negotiations exhibit recent positive changes. UAW members voted in a new president in March in the union's first one-member-one-vote election. The new union leadership carried through their promise to lead members out on strike. They bargained and struck against all three companies simultaneously and doubled weekly strike pay from \$250 to \$500.

But the brutal attacks on auto workers during the 2008-2009 auto bailouts - followed by over a decade of further layoffs, numerous plant closures, and plummeting wages and



PHOTO: SCOTT DEXTER

benefits - have set back UAW members in the auto industry. And they're not alone: these blows are part of a 50-year trend of decreasing living standards. UAW members can be a crucial part of the fight for US workers to win back what we've lost, to make better gains in wages and benefits, and to save jobs. The current TAs are not enough.

The Independent Socialist Group urges UAW members to vote no in order to fight for more concessions from the Big 3 automakers.

The UAW hasn't thrown its full weight into battle against Ford, GM, and Stellantis. The vast majority of union workers at the Big 3 - 100,000 of them, in fact - were left out of the strikes. These workers laboured under expired contracts and ensured the employers' profits while their union siblings fought for a better contract by withholding their labour. ISG calls upon the UAW to take an all-out approach and shut down all Big 3 worksites across the country, in an effort to win stronger wage increases and more than the simple restoration of the 2007 contract terms.

The conditions for union workers often set the standard for an industry. Improving union pay and benefits can increase non-union wages as employers try to keep jobs filled and head off organising efforts. Shortly after the strike was called off, Toyota

announced a wage increase for its non-union US workforce that nearly matches the offer for UAW members. Clearly companies can immediately pay workers more.

How UAW members can win their demands

The UAW should not take on the major US automakers alone. Ford, GM, and Stellantis are some of the largest corporations in the world, with powerful politicians and the legal system on their side. They received \$80 billion in bailouts in 2008-09 under both the Bush and Obama administrations. In the past year, GM received \$2.5 billion and Ford \$9.2 billion in federal loans to construct non-union EV battery plants.

Autoworkers should take confidence in the overwhelming public support to launch an all-out offensive against the major US auto companies. The union could call for the support of solidarity strikes from other union members, as Tesla mechanics on strike in Sweden are currently doing. Already, the UAW has organised rallies with Sag-Aftra (Screen Actors Guild) members who were on picket lines themselves for four months. It has received support from the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, whose 26,000 members authorised a strike in August during their own contract battle.

for the broader working class. He has invited other US unions to align their contracts with the UAW's to aim for a joint strike coming 1 May 2028, stating: "If we're going to truly take on the billionaire class and rebuild the economy so that it starts to work for the benefit of the many and not the few, then it's important that we not only strike, but that we strike together." The possibility of a mass coordinated strike - even potentially a general strike - on International Workers' Day in 2028, holds immense power as a tactic and could unify the labour movement.

But workers can't wait another four years. Rampant inflation, poverty wages, and housing and food insecurity are major issues today for many workers, including auto workers. Working people should take every opportunity to unite and push for huge gains.

The UAW has enormous potential to re-energise the labour movement and help lead the charge against the capitalist class - not only in words but in action. It needs to unite and fight with other unions for much better contracts and put massive resources into new organising, including winning union drives and first contracts at the non-union car corporations like Tesla, Honda, Nissan, Volkswagen, etc. It will take tactics that have been absent from the labour movement for a long time, such as workplace occupations, solidarity strikes, general strikes, and building a political party for working people. UAW members have shown they can force the Big 3 to make concessions. The union has the power to seize the moment, to demand and fight for more - and they should take it.

• This can be read in full at independentsocialistgroup.org

US V CHINA: WHERE ARE THE GROWING TENSIONS GOING?

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TONY SAUNOIS

Nigeria: Use general strike to fight for workers and poor masses

On 16 November, 24 hours into a nationwide general strike, the leaders of Nigeria's two trade union federations (NLC and TUC) suspended the action without any of its demands being met. The following article was published online on 15 November by Democratic Socialist Movement, the Socialist Party's sister organisation in Nigeria. This is an edited extract, the article can be read in full online at socialistworld.net

PELUOLA ADEWALE
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (DSM)

The Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) wholeheartedly welcomed the decision of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to escalate strike action, over the anti-labour policies and state-sponsored act of terror of the Imo state government led by Governor Hope Uzodinma, into a full-scale nationwide general strike starting on 15 November, in defiance of a fraudulent order of the national industrial court.

The escalation became inevitable due to the continuous refusal of the Imo state government and the federal government to reverse the series of anti-worker policies and actions, including the brutalisation of the NLC president in a state-sponsored act of terror on 1 November, withholding of workers' outstanding salary arrears, and non-compliance with the minimum wage act.

We call for the setting up of democratic action committees at workplaces to enforce the strike and ensure more active participation and compliance. Evidence from the first day of the strike showed that compliance was scanty, obviously due to poor preparation. Public activities like mass meetings, protests and demonstrations should be organised both to strengthen the strike and mobilise wider support.

As the NLC itself noted in its statement, "inflation moved from 19% to 29% in the first five months of this government!" This means the NLC and TUC leaderships know a huge proportion of their members are suffering.

In fact, all of the anti-worker issues exist in almost all states across the federation. There is hardly any state where workers and retirees are not owed a backlog of several months of salaries and pensions. There is hardly any state where check-off dues and cooperative deductions are not being withheld, and there are many states, apart from Imo state, where the N30,000 minimum wage remains unimplemented.

For instance, over the past few months, Oyo state workers have been organising and protesting over similar issues. This is aside from the fact that the neoliberal and anti-poor policies of the Tinubu administration since 29 May have plunged the working and toiling people into new



PHOTO: OLUDELADEWALEPHOTOGRAPHY

levels of poverty and destitution. Due to increases in fuel prices and transport fares, as a result of fuel subsidy removal, many workers now trek to work while many only come to work a few days in a week.

In this condition of nationwide mass misery, the labour leadership would continue to miss an opportunity to win real improvement for their members by limiting the demands of the general strike to the issue of Imo state workers alone. This is why we, in the DSM, call on the NLC and TUC to broaden the demands of the general strike to include the following:

- Reversal of pump price of petrol to N195 per litre
- Arrest and speedy trial of all subsidy thieves and seizure of their ill-gotten wealth
- N200,000 national minimum wage to be regularly increased in accordance with the rate of inflation
- Immediate crash programme to repair old refineries and build new ones
- Petrol from Dangote refinery, when it starts operating, to conform to a price cap of N195 per litre otherwise it should be nationalised under workers' control and management
- Reversal of all hiked school fees. No to student loan. For adequate funding of public education and healthcare
- No hike in electricity tariff
- Rejection of neoliberal capitalist policies - deregulation, devaluation, privatisation, commercialisation of social services, etc
- Immediate meeting of the demands of academic staff, non-academic staff, doctors and all medical personnel
- Release of all political prisoners

including #EndSars protesters and an end to attacks on democratic rights

• Reduction in the salaries of political office holders and their placement on the minimum wage

The DSM has always argued that the experience of the working masses themselves amply demonstrates that no real or long-lasting relief can be won for the working people under capitalism. This is why for struggle to win real victories, labour and workers need to adopt a clear and bold pro-working people philosophy and programme that synchronise with the genuine aspirations of the working people and the objective basis of their existence and struggle.

This in our view is no other than a scientific socialist programme which links demands on the day-to-day issues facing the working people with a programme for the nationalisation of the key sectors of the Nigerian economy such as oil and gas, banks, big industries and mines under workers' democratic control and management, in order to ensure that society's wealth, currently trapped in the hands of a few, is made available to make life better for the mass majority.

This also underscores the need for the labour movement to initiate the building of a genuine mass working people's party with a revolutionary programme and method to wrest power from the thieving, backward capitalist ruling class and form a workers' and poor people's government with a socialist programme. Such a government will ensure the human and material resources of the country are used on the basis of socialist planning for the benefit of the vast majority and the genuine development of society.

Argentina: Far-right election win shows need to prepare for impending battles



Javier Milei PHOTO: ILANBERKENWALD/CC

TONY SAUNOIS
CWI SECRETARY

The far-right libertarian candidate, Javier Milei, has won a large victory taking over 55% of the national vote, beating the Peronist candidate Sergio Massa who took 44% of the vote. Meli, a far-right economist and TV star won in most provinces with the exception of Formosa, Santiago del Estero and marginally the province of Buenos Aires. Cities like Cordoba saw the right take over 70% of the vote.

Milei's victory will open a new chapter in crisis-ridden Argentina but will bring no stability and will begin a new era of savage attacks on the working class. Milei's programme includes free trade, dollarisation of the economy, wholesale privatisation of health, education and other key sectors of the economy, labour reform and attacks on workers, and opposition to abortion.

Social collapse

The surge to Milei is a cry of desperation from the masses in Argentina who are faced with a collapse of living standards and accelerating poverty levels, and signs of social collapse reflected in the growth of drug cartels and violence. 40% officially live in poverty as inflation rates of 150% ravage the country. The country has been on the brink of debt default as the crisis intensifies.

Voters vomited out the corrupt pro-capitalist Peronists who have governed up until now, along with all the traditional parties. Under Massa and the Peronists nothing has been resolved in the interests of the working class; cuts and attacks have rained down as demanded by the IMF and other imperialist agencies. The official trade union bureaucracy

failed to lead any struggle against the government as it is entwined with the Peronist apparatus.

Milei, however, will not resolve the crisis nor offer any hope to the working class and poor of Argentina. He has no majority in Congress, and threatens to rule by decree and by calling plebiscites. The right-wing leader of the Republican Proposal Party, Mauricio Macri, was elected president in 2015 having defeated the Peronists led by Néstor Kirchner. Macri rapidly faced strikes and general strikes as he attempted to force through his programme. He was then defeated by the Peronists in 2019. Milei, will confront the same revolt at a certain stage as the consequences of his reactionary programme become clear.

The crucial task for workers and revolutionaries in Argentina now is to prepare the building of a movement of workers and youth to struggle against the reactionary anti-working-class policies that Milei is certain to attempt to implement. Sections of the ruling class may use their position in Congress to try and contain some of the most extreme measures being proposed by Milei. However, an era of crisis and political and social upheaval is now certain to unfold.

At the recent congressional elections the Trotskyist-dominated front, FIT, increased its representation in Congress to five. It now needs to turn to the social and industrial struggles which loom. The convening of a congress of all those involved in struggle - rank-and-file trade unions - the unemployed, the youth, and others - is urgent to prepare for the future battles and offer a socialist alternative, which is the only way out of the dead end that Argentinian capitalism now find itself in.

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23-29 November 2023

formerly **Militant**

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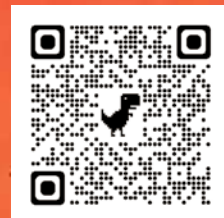
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PHOTO: PAUL MATSSON

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see pages 12-13



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