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# the Socialist

Issue 1282

5-10 July 2024

formerly **Militant**

# TORIES SMASHED

# BUILD THE SOCIALIST OPPOSITION

**A**fter 14 years of austerity, five prime ministers all acting in the interests of the super-rich, and the working class coming back on the scene during the strike wave, we are finally rid of the Tories.

The damage they have done to working-class lives is plain to see: shuttered council services, crumbling infrastructure and the NHS competing with council houses for longest waiting list.

So we should celebrate and demand change - for an end to the cost-of-living crisis, an end to the NHS and services starved of funding beyond recognition, and an end to the mouldy expensive housing nightmare. And if the strike wave taught us one thing, it's what is needed to win change - mass working-class action.

Appealing to big business, Keir Starmer has committed to stick to Tory spending limits.

### Starmer's tests

But on a whole number of issues - Tata Steel's proposed closure, public sector pay recommendations, local council finances - the Starmer-led government will be tested almost immediately.

We need to be prepared and organised as soon as Starmer opens the door to 10 Downing Street. To prepare workers' action, in the trade unions and in our communities, to fight for what we need and win. And those battles would be strengthened if there was a mass political force representing the interests of the working class.

If you want to fight for workers' interests against those of the bosses under Starmer's Labour government. If you're disgusted by parties defending the worst aspects of the capitalist system - war, death and destruction. Join the Socialist Party today.

MARK BEST



**WHAT WE THINK**

**LABOUR CAN  
BE FORCED  
BY WORKERS'  
ACTION >>> p3**

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

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

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

# Unite action forces Tata back - nationalise to stop steel jobs slaughter

ALEC THRIVES  
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY AND SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL

Unite has suspended the all-out strike action it was due to start from Monday 8 July, in response to the proposed jobs slaughter by Tata Steel, after a meeting of its reps. This action has forced senior management back to the negotiating table. The fact that, until a few days before, Tata was trying to intimidate steelworkers with threats of bringing forward the closure of the two blast furnaces if the strikes went ahead will give confidence that action works and it is possible to win a victory.

However, steelworkers know well enough not to trust Tata, and they, and their unions, have to be prepared for the most serious struggle on both the industrial and political fronts.

Tata's plan to close the two blast furnaces and replace them with electric arc production would result in thousands of direct and indirect jobs being lost, devastating working-class communities.

That is why Unite's demand to save all jobs in the transition to green steel, backed up by militant industrial action, is the correct approach and should be supported by Community and GMB, who, despite both unions winning industrial action ballots, had not called action to join Unite on the picket lines!

But members of Community and the GMB have now seen that only being prepared to take action can have any effect on management and must demand that their respective unions now join with Unite for a serious fight.

It is abundantly clear that militant industrial action, coordinated across all steel unions, could win a decisive



Protest in support of steel workers in February SCOTT JONES

victory, retaining all jobs and preserving virgin steelmaking at Port Talbot.

But it is essential that any industrial action is linked with political action!

If Tata bosses come back with their threat to bring forward the closure of the blast furnaces, all the steel unions must be prepared to take immediate industrial action, and refuse to comply with instructions to wind down the blast furnaces, ensuring the safety of the plant and local communities.

### Nationalisation not devastation

This must be accompanied by the demand that the new Keir Starmer-led Labour government brings in

emergency legislation to nationalise Tata in the same way Tory Prime Minister Edward Heath nationalised Rolls Royce in 24 hours in 1971.

The future of steelmaking in south Wales still hangs in the balance, but the events of the last few days show that nothing has been decided yet.

Victory is possible. But to achieve that demands the building of the

mood of steelworkers on the back of forcing Tata into talks. The most effective way to do this is to fight for joint militant strike action across all the steel unions if Tata maintains its plan for a jobs slaughter, and at the same time demanding that the steelworks are nationalised to save jobs and working-class communities.

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Momtaz (right) campaigning in Kent

# Stand up to Starmer's divide and rule

Keir Starmer's comments about Bangladeshis during 'The Sun readers Question the Leaders' event ahead of polling day were condemned by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate Momtaz Khanom, standing in Folkestone and Hythe.

In response, Momtaz said: "I am a candidate for TUSC in Folkestone and Hythe and, as a member of the Bangladeshi community, I say to all political parties and their candidates, stop blaming migrants for the crisis in Britain - a crisis of privatisation, low pay and housing shortages, created by the ruthless profit-hungry capitalist system."

"Hardworking Bangladeshi people who live in Britain contribute to the communities in which we live. TUSC is fighting for a mass united struggle - of all working-class people - for fully funded public services, NHS and decent jobs and housing for all. It is not exploited workers who gain from this 'race to the bottom', it's the bosses!"

"We are fighting for a socialist world where wealth and resources can be harnessed to meet the needs of the majority through democratic workers' control and planning".

The deputy leader of the Tower Hamlets council Labour group Sabina Akhtar resigned in protest, asking why Bangladesh was singled out by Starmer. Meanwhile, the left-wing Labour MP Apsana Begum, who survived attempts by local Starmer supporters to stop her standing for re-election in East London's Poplar and Limehouse constituency, has

called it "totally unacceptable for politicians for any party to use dog-whistle racism against Bangladeshis or any other migrant community".

But any reprieve for Tata workers, whether or not the measures taken extend to nationalisation, will have been won through workers' struggle, and will be seen as such by others. What confidence that would give to other sections of the workers' movement, that the Labour government can be pushed by workers' action! What an answer that would be to some sections of the trade union leaderships which will inevitably try to persuade their members that the best way to get Labour to move is not to take action, but to 'give them time'!

Similarly, another failed privatisation stalks Starmer. That of Thames Water. It is demanding government bailouts in the hundreds of millions to help it pay its £18 billion mountain of debt - loaded onto it by capitalist investors since Thatcher's privatisation. Will Starmer simply bail it out, opening the floodgates for the bosses of Britain's many other debt-ridden

# Tories defeated LABOUR CAN BE FORCED BY WORKERS' ACTION

## Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

Relief, rejoice, cautious optimism, scepticism... There will be mixed feelings in the minds of working-class people on 5 July. But whatever the cocktail, the fact clear to everyone will be that the Tories, historically the bosses' primary political party, which has inflicted 14 years of misery on ordinary people, will be resoundingly defeated.

At the time of writing, before polling, Labour are odds on with the bookies to have an overall majority, too short even to make it worthwhile Tories betting on their own demise. Their electoral annihilation will dissolve any remaining cohesive substance holding the world's oldest capitalist party together.

The source of its fragility? The fragile state of the global capitalist economy and particularly British capitalism's falling standing within it. And Starmer's Labour will build a government on those same ruined foundations.

But although Starmer is committed to defend the capitalists' interests, that doesn't mean workers can't or won't struggle, or that concessions can't be extracted from the new government, whatever its intentions entering office.

### Tata Steel

Unite the Union called strike action to defend 2,800 jobs at Tata Steel in South Wales to begin just four days after the general election. At the time of writing, that threatened action has forced Tata bosses to the negotiating table (see left). The need for Labour to nationalise to save jobs, as Socialist Party members have been consistently raising, is posed immediately.

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PHOTO: UK PARLIAMENT/MARIA UNGER/PCJ AND LONDON SP

companies to come cap in hand threatening collapse or redundancies? Nationalisation is posed again - to a party with an election manifesto that's only mention of such measures is to not tender passenger rail freight services again when contracts expire.

The workers' movement needs to fight for real nationalisation, under democratic workers' control and management, and with compensation only paid where there is proven need.

### Public sector pay

Even before taking office, Labour Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting has reportedly been negotiating a pay agreement with leaders of the British Medical Association (BMA) to try to resolve the junior doctors strikes. Whether or not that is accepted by members, it will be carefully inspected by other public sector workers.

Weeks into the new Labour government, the School Teachers' Review Body is set to announce its recommendation for teachers' pay. The Pay Remit for civil servants was delayed by the Tories and the NHS Pay Review Body has been submitted and sits in Starmer's in-tray. Deciding on pay offers for hundreds of thousands of workers, many of who have been on strike in the last two years, is an immediate task.

### Labour's spending?

And within the first few months, Labour's first 'fiscal event' will take place. Its earliest possible date is just after the Trades Union Congress meets in Brighton.

Labour's chancellor Rachel Reeves will pen that 'spending review' under pressure from the capitalist class and the ruthless world 'markets'. Britain's capitalists overwhelmingly back Labour as a temporarily more stable political vehicle than the Tories. They themselves are divided on the way forward British capitalism - but remain united in the principle that the working class should be made to pay.



Although Starmer is committed to defend the capitalists' interests, that doesn't mean workers can't or won't struggle, or that concessions can't be extracted from the new government

Meanwhile, the spectre of Liz Truss's 'mini-budget' catastrophe remains. It exposed the fragility of Britain's debt-ridden economy, and the low regard with which it is held by capitalist investors internationally. The pledge to match Tory 'fiscal constraints' and to reduce government debt as a proportion of GDP by the end of the five-year parliament is an attempt to reassure the 'markets'.

Reeves's answer as to how that is possible without a continuation of brutal austerity? Ironically, the illusive 'growth' - the same aspiration as Truss. Britain has long been unable to achieve productivity growth to levels competitive with its rivals, the other rich capitalist nations. On average, workers are £10,700 a year worse off than they were before the 2007-09 economic crisis than had wages grown at the same rate as they had before. How long will workers accept being told to 'wait for growth'?

The workers' movement needs to organise to counter the big-business pressure on Labour from day one. Any concessions won by workers will raise confidence to fight for more. Concessions on public sector pay, for example, would mean the next questions will be: 'What about council funding?', 'What about crumbling schools?', 'What about money for our NHS?'

The trade unions should seize every opportunity to fight for workers' interests. For example, by demanding that Labour repeals all aspects of the Tories' Trade Union Act 2016 and the rest of the Tory anti-union laws going back to Thatcher and Major, and on any number of other issues.

British capitalism has an array of festering sores which can quickly develop into pressing crises for Starmer. In an increasingly conflict-ridden and unstable world, international events will impact Starmer's government too. Such is the crisis of capitalism in Britain and worldwide, it is not possible to lead a stable capitalist government in the medium or long term.



Any concessions won by workers [from a new Labour government] will raise confidence to fight for more

### Countering Reform UK

What form will political opposition to Starmer's Labour take? The surge in support for Reform UK is an ominous straw in the wind, signalling how the populist right can develop - spreading its dangerous and divisive ideas - in the absence of a mass working-class political alternative.

The current political terrain would have been different had Mick Lynch and Dave Ward, the trade union leaders behind 'Enough is Enough', used their authority to develop the organisation into a new political party at the beginning of the strike wave in autumn 2022. It would have had the enthusiastic support of the half a million who signed up to support, and many more.

The question of the trade unions developing independent working-class political representation will be posed even more sharply with Labour in power. The Socialist Party's stand in the general election as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition was part of the process of advancing that struggle for a new mass workers' party.

Working-class opposition to Starmer's Labour government is unlikely to develop in a straight-forward or predictable way. But by engaging in those struggles, workers and young people will be forced to look for political ideas and an organisation to take their fights forward. Socialist Party members engage at every stage, putting forward a programme for the socialist transformation of society, linked to the immediate tasks facing those in struggle. There will be huge opportunities to build the Socialist Party, now and throughout the lifetime of this Labour government, and if you want to help us in that task - join us!



[socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)

# RMT AGM Fringe meeting debates what's needed under a Labour government

RMT MEMBER

An excellent fringe meeting hosted by transport union RMT's London Underground Engineering, and Piccadilly and District branches was held on day four of the union's Annual General Meeting in Hull. The question of how to fight for the RMT's objectives under an expected Starmer-led Labour government was discussed.

Mike Whale gave a brief report of the activities of Hull Trades Council, which brought solidarity to RMT picket lines throughout the national dispute, as well as driving racist and far-right thugs from the city centre.

Clive Heemskerck of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) explained the history of the organisation as well as highlighting the important role of RMT and its predecessors in setting up the Labour Party at the turn of the last century. He also explained the role of our late general secretary Bob Crow in recognising the need for a new working-class political vehicle, first with No2EU - Yes to Democracy in the 2009 European elections, and then Bob's initiative

in setting up TUSC alongside the Socialist Party and others, in 2010.

The fundamental problem of the current lack of working-class political representation was raised again and again, and the point was made that, even with a handful of genuine socialist MPs who were prepared to support workers in struggle, Starmer's Labour could be pushed back.

One delegate raised that there was no political 'Plan B' from those such as our general secretary Mick Lynch, who called for a Labour vote. The Enough is Enough campaign, launched in 2022 as an alternative by Mick Lynch just weeks after he called for the withdrawal of RMT reps from the TUSC steering committee if it continued to stand in elections, has disappeared after the initial mass support it achieved - a wasted opportunity to change the political landscape.

RMT is in a crucial position to aid the formation of a new working-class party in Britain. The battles that lie ahead under the Labour government will show the need for a political alternative if we are to build the socialist society that is demanded in our union's rulebook.



Bob Crow at election rallies of No2EU - Yes to Democracy in 2009 and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in 2012. Mick Lynch speaking at an Enough is Enough strike rally in 2022 [top to bottom]

PHOTOS: PAUL MATTSSON



## Red Line public Zoom meeting: Trade unions and Starmer's government

The 'Red Line' is a bulletin produced by members and supporters of the Socialist Party in the RMT. All welcome at the public meeting to discuss the battles ahead and how to build a new workers' party.

5pm Sunday 7 July  
Zoom ID: 840 4292 3187

# Hasting schools strike for funding from academy bosses



PHOTO: NEU REP

NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION REP

Members in five schools from the University of Brighton Academy Trust (UBAT) - four in Hastings and one in West Sussex - took two days of strike action on 1-2 July.

We walked out due to threats of redundancy and excessive workload caused by a lack of funding from the trust. The average contribution that individual schools make to an academy trust is around 6% of the budget. Our trust takes an average of 13%, and has taken well in excess of 20% from some schools in the past. They have a huge central spend, whilst frontline services and jobs are being cut to the bone.

There are 13 schools in the trust and we serve some of the most deprived areas of the country. The fact that support staff are being made redundant, whilst at the same time the executive team take over a million pounds in combined wages and spend over half a million a year on corporate marketing, is nothing short of scandalous.

Over the course of the dispute our membership has grown enormously. A lot of the people walking out are doing so for the first time, including a huge number of support staff that have joined the NEU.

A cross-trust strike like this is unprecedented, but sadly necessary. Academy chains give control over public funds, not to mention the education of children, to CEOs who treat schools like businesses. There is often little transparency and no local accountability. Schools need to be brought back under local authority control and run democratically with all key 'stakeholders' having input on important decisions - including staff, parents and students.

## School funding

The acute funding crisis in UBAT schools should be understood in the context of a wider funding crisis. 14 years of Tory government has left education on its knees - pay is up 25% lower in real terms, recruitment and retention of staff is almost impossible, school budgets are stretched

beyond breaking point, and buildings are crumbling.

However, Labour currently offers no solutions. Beyond recruiting 6,500 teachers (with no real plan for how they will do this) Labour does not seem to have any policies that could address the crisis in education. They have not backed the NEU's manifesto for education (which includes spending 5% of GDP on education) and does not support calls to bring schools back under local authority control.

NEU members in Sussex will continue our dispute until we get assurances that the trust will properly fund frontline services. We have three more days of strike action planned next week if an agreement cannot be reached.

I hope our campaign will encourage members in other trusts to organise collectively and fight back against the worst excesses of academisation, and build the pressure behind demands on Starmer's Labour to fund education and end academisation.

# Early years staff and parents protest together to demand funding

SHEILA CAFFEY  
NEU EXEC MEMBER AND EARLY YEARS TEACHER.  
PERSONAL CAPACITY

National Education Union (NEU) members organised a rally outside parliament on Saturday 29 June to demand funding for Early Years education from the new government, and an end to cuts, closures and redundancies in maintained, council-run nursery provision.

Excellent speeches were heard from striking campaigners against closures from Balham Nursery, Wandsworth. A parent and Socialist

Party member spoke from the campaign to save Little Owls Nurseries in Leeds, calling for immediate investment to prevent the closures of council-run nurseries.

Education workers from across England spoke. As a National Executive member for the Southwest region of the NEU, I spoke, calling the cuts facing nurseries "A damning indictment of profit, and the Tory ideology to underfund and attack early education. We must unite these fights to win the funding the education system needs and deserves."



PHOTO: SHEILA CAFFEY

# Junior doctors pile on the pressure



Junior doctors in the BMA have taken five days of strike action in the run-up to the general election, putting pressure on the new Labour government. Photo: Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on the first day of the strike NICK HART

# Tees HCA strike victory: 'We know our worth and we are coming to claim it!'

UNISON REP

I have been an employee of the NHS for 34 years and am also active in the trade union Unison. In that time, I have observed considerable development across all clinical roles, not least that of the Health Care Assistant (HCA).

Once, HCAs were known as 'bath nurses', assisting patients in maintaining their personal hygiene and toileting. Over time, HCAs have taken on more advanced duties which were previously undertaken by registered nurses. This extended role can include cannulation, phlebotomy, ECGs and clinical observations etc. For this vital job they are paid £11.45 an hour, just 1p more than the current national minimum wage!

A national campaign for a higher pay band has been ongoing for the past couple of years, with many trusts conceding the value of this staff group, paying the higher 'Band 3' salary and backdating pay by five years. Not so the combined health trusts of North and South Tees, which covers Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Hambleton and Richmondshire.

The employers initially suffered a

bad case of amnesia, claiming not to have known they were employing and training HCAs in this extended role! While agreeing to upgrade some, but not all, HCA roles, the employers would not consent to more than two years' back pay, despite almost 50 other trusts paying five years.

Since March this year, HCAs have conducted a campaign of strikes, walking out for 336 hours in total. Picket lines have been very well attended, with a positive and determined attitude to see the dispute through to a win.

On 17 June the employers finally restarted negotiations, and on 21 June a deal was struck for the full back pay of five years!

This success has ignited the touchpaper of dissatisfaction amongst other NHS staff locally, including phlebotomists and call-handling staff. I have no doubt that disputes will escalate given the new militancy I am witnessing. The message here is clear and simple: we know our worth and we are coming to claim it!

Several strikes of HCAs have taken place around the country on the same issue. See socialistparty.org.uk for reports

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# Victory for Unite members at Barts NHS Trust!



PHOTO: JAMES IVENS

Unite members at Barts NHS Trust in east London have won their hard-fought battle for the Covid bonus they were owed.

Nearly 700 workers, including domestics, porters and catering staff, were forced to fight, just to win the Covid bonus payment paid to other NHS staff. They had previously won a massive victory when, following determined strike action, they were brought back in-house from private employer Serco. But then the NHS bosses refused to pay them the Covid bonus.

But months of vibrant

campaigning involving strikes, protests and demonstrations forced the trust bosses into a new offer, which members have voted to accept. They will receive additional paid 'special leave' to the equivalent value of the lump-sum payment.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "This is a brilliant and incredibly hard-fought victory that our members should be incredibly proud of."

Unite has also fought for members at a private laundry company within Barts called Synergy, and their employer has agreed to a cash payment.

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER LEN HOCKEY, THE SECRETARY OF UNITE AT BARTS, SAID:

"This represents a massive win for hundreds of our lowest-paid members in one of the biggest trusts in England. This result shows clearly that striking gets results!

"It is an emphatic answer to those who argued we could not succeed, and that workers would have to accept inequality and discrimination. This victory is a beacon to others inside and outside of this trust, showing the power of collective trade union action."

# Sanctuary Housing workers 'We are worth it - let's win it!'

NICK AUVACHE

UNITE HOUSING WORKERS BRANCH

The strike of maintenance workers at Sanctuary Housing is a very important dispute. Its effects reach out across the whole sector.

Sanctuary is a huge 'social' landlord and employer. It employs 14,000 workers throughout the UK. It manages over 120,000 dwellings and has an asset base of £5.6 billion.

Unite Housing Workers started to build in Sanctuary a couple of years ago. We submitted our first pay claim in April 2023.

By February 2024 our members' patience in London had worn thin and, having secured 100% support for strike action in their ballot, workers embarked on the first strike in Sanctuary's history.

Our claim was for an inflation-based pay rise, a four-day week, parity of conditions with the office

workers on sick pay, holiday entitlement and pensions, and recognition for our union Unite. We don't want special treatment, we want equal treatment.

The employer has told us that it would cost as little as £2 million to bring maintenance workers up to the same level as their office-based colleagues. For an organisation the size of Sanctuary, that is a drop in the ocean.

In case you had any lingering doubts about the affordability of our claim, Sanctuary's profits last year stood at £101 million, up 73% on the previous year. Their revenue stands at £943 million, up 16% on the previous year.

How can we respect an employer that refuses to recognise a trade union? How can we respect an employer that refuses to pay an inflation-based

pay increase? How can we respect an employer that refuses to implement parity of conditions among its workers, while talking about how it believes in equality?!

According to the employer's own figures, it would cost as little as £4.57 per employee per day to grant parity of conditions.

Unite fully supports the Sanctuary maintenance workers' dispute. We say: "You are worth it, you have earned it, let's fight for it, we can win it!"

Sanctuary London's maintenance workers have spearheaded this dispute. They have just completed 24 days of strike action. Now they are no longer on their own and we are pleased to announce that the North West and South West regions will be embarking on a consultative ballot for action.



Sanctuary strikers support the junior doctors NICK AUVACHE

# Bolivia Failed right-wing coup attempt

TONY SAUNOIS  
CWI SECRETARY

Bolivia has once again been thrust into a political crisis with an attempted coup on 26 June. Reflecting powerful revolutionary traditions, the main trade union confederation COB rapidly declared an indefinite general strike. The attempted coup appeared to collapse after only three hours as workers and others took to the streets in protest. Bolivia's turbulent convulsive history is reflected in 190 military coups or revolutionary uprisings since independence in 1825.

However, what forces were actually involved seems unclear. The government of President Luis Arce of the left-wing MAS party has swung further to the right since it eventually replaced the MAS government led by Evo Morales, after it was itself overthrown by a US-backed coup in 2019. Morales fled the country rather than lead a mass struggle against the white, mestizo racist elite regime which ousted him. Luis Arce took office on 8 November 2020 having defeated the right-wing backed regime which ousted Morales. Arce, an economist educated in Oxford, only returned to the country in 2020.

Now both Morales and Arce have been locked into a struggle as both have declared their intention to stand for the Presidency in 2025 as the MAS candidate.

Since the coup collapsed, 17 coup plotters have been arrested, including its leader General Juan Jose Zuniga and Rear Admiral Juan Arnez Salvador, chief of the navy in a country landlocked for 140 years since losing a war with Chile. The military forces attempted to seize the governmental palace, Palacio Quemado.

Zuniga appears to have been sacked by the government a day earlier, which he reportedly readily accepted as a 'loyal soldier of the homeland'. Supporters of Morales and the right-wing opposition have since alleged the coup was instigated with the support of Arce in an attempted



'autogolpe', a self-coup, to consolidate his regime in power. Such allegations in the past would have seemed fanciful, but in the current era of instability and polarisation such a claim cannot simply be discounted.

Despite swinging further to the right and provoking struggles by workers and others, Arce's government has presided over attacks on the working class as the economy has entered crisis, triggered partly by a massive fall in gas production and exports. At the same time it has also collided with the interests of Western imperialism through increased links with China.

New discoveries have pushed Bolivia to the top rank of countries with lithium deposits, crucial for the production of electric vehicle (EV) car batteries. In June it agreed a deal, with the Russian state nuclear conglomerate Rosatom and the Chinese CITIC Guoan company, to mine 45,000 tons of lithium. Between January and November 2022 Bolivia only mined 635.5 tons. CITIC Guoan is considering producing lithium batteries and EVs in

President Luis Arce  
PLURINATIONAL LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY/CC

Bolivia, which would have a significant effect on the development of some industry in the country. Developments that would also heighten tensions with western imperialist powers.

The mobilisations which took place against the coup illustrated that, despite the right-wing shift of the Arce government, the working class and mass of the indigenous population, which are a majority in Bolivia, are not prepared to accept a return to the repression and discrimination which was rife in Bolivia prior to Morales initially coming to power.

The same is true in most of Latin America at this stage. However, this does not mean that repression and an eventual recourse to military or Bonapartist regimes will not take place if the working class and masses threaten the interests and rule of the capitalist class. The attempted coup in Bolivia illustrates the need for a struggle to break with capitalism and establish a government of the working class and the oppressed remains a crucial necessity.



## French election Workers and youth must unite to take on far right

The first round of parliamentary elections in France saw Marine Le Pen's far-right RN taking the largest vote, at 33.2%, ahead of the New Popular Front on 28% and President Emmanuel Macron's Ensemble alliance on 22.4%. We carry a brief commentary from **Gauche Révolutionnaire (CWI in France)** on the results and what workers and youth need to do now to stop the RN and also the policies of Macron.

Bardella and Le Pen are not on our side! No to racism and division!

**To stop the RN, Macron and the capitalists: young people and workers, let's unite and mobilise!**

President Macron has created an even more explosive situation. The far-right National Rally party (RN, Rassemblement National) is well ahead in the first round of the parliamentary elections. There is the possibility of a RN government on Sunday 7 July, the day of the second round.

Macron, with his policies for the bosses, systematically destroyed public services and allowed the capitalists to line their pockets by keeping wages far too low in the face of rising prices. So, he created the breeding ground

of precariousness and anger that laid the basis for the rise of the far right.

Many young people and workers, having previously voted for La France Insoumise (LFI), strengthened the vote for the left candidates of the New Popular Front, to say no to Bardella and Le Pen, the RN leaders, but also against Macron and his policies. But it was not enough.

A significant section of the middle class, but also of workers and young people, voted for Bardella and RN to inflict a defeat on Macron. Added to that is racist propaganda, which was at the heart of this campaign, as it is at the heart of the policies of Macron, minister of the interior, Darmanin, and in the media. And faced with the deterioration in our living conditions,

Marine Le Pen  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT/CC

racism has taken hold among a whole section of the population as a response to the current crisis. But those who are responsible for the turmoil and deterioration in living conditions are Macron and the capitalists, not immigrants!

**No Macron-Bardella government! Let's massively mobilise in the streets now!**

Young people and workers have no common interests with Bardella and Le Pen. No votes from our camp should go to the RN and its allies. Its policies are on the right, in line with those of the capitalists and with Macron. RN's policies do not attack the ultra-rich and the bosses, who will be able to increase their profits, reduce public services, and inflict privatisation. They are authoritarian policies that are racist, sexist and discriminatory in their society.

We know it and we feel it, the situation is tense. We must organise! An electoral victory will not be enough. It is through our struggles in workplaces, in neighbourhoods, and with everyone together in the streets, that the real barrier to the RN will be created! And it's necessary to get organised from now!

Since Sunday 30 June, small gatherings have taken place. All the young people who have been mobilising for weeks against the war in Gaza and for three weeks against the RN must step up their mobilisation in the streets.

Gauche Révolutionnaire (GR - the CWI in France) will be present! Trade unions, left parties and associations must call for mass mobilisations throughout this week. We need demonstrations but we must go further!

Faced with the threat of a RN government that will carry out even more brutal attacks against all workers, let's discuss the organisation of strikes in our workplaces and unions!

- No votes of workers and young people for the RN!
- Against the RN, for a massive vote for the New Popular Front candidates!
- For a programme of struggle by workers and young people!

In reality, Macron and Le Pen are not opponents but walk hand in hand for the interests of the capitalists and against the interests of workers, young people and the majority of the

population. There will not be a significant improvement in our living and working conditions without workers getting involved and organising independently of the parties that manage affairs for the capitalists.

We fight for the unity of all those young people and workers who reject the RN and Macron. To be strong, let's come together around workers' demands such as:

- An increase in the minimum wage
- The total nationalisation of energy to stop the rise in prices
- For the repeal of racist laws, against discrimination

A real government serving workers and young people should take such measures because it is not a question of putting back the likes of Edouard Philippe (one of Macron's prime ministers) or Hollande (the former 'Socialist' president) into government to again suffer their anti-social policies which are the breeding ground for the RN.

We need a common front on a clear basis; the only way of strengthening our camp. That is what will allow us to be stronger to remove Bardella and Macron and engage in a decisive battle against the capitalist system which is at the root of inequality, poverty and exploitation. Because to put an end to the threat of the RN and pro-capitalist policies, we must fight against their entire system. Gauche Révolutionnaire fights for a socialist society, the only society capable of putting an end to exploitation, racism and wars.



**Faced with the threat of a RN government that will carry out even more brutal attacks against all workers, let's discuss the organisation of strikes in our workplaces and unions!**



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

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



### WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.
- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.

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

mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

### ENVIRONMENT

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

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

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a

fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich!
- For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid

only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.

- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206** to find out more today!



# £88,422 raised for a fighting, socialist alternative to Starmer's Labour

**JOSH ASKER**  
EDITOR OF THE SOCIALIST

Before the general election was called, the Socialist Party launched its general election fund campaign. We set the aim of reaching £50,000 to fund 30-40 Socialist Party members, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), as well as our party's campaigning nationwide.

A sign of the huge enthusiasm for it, and the fighting determination of our members and supporters, £97,772.60 has been pledged as the Socialist goes to press!

## Lives and livelihoods

We took part in the general election as crucial preparation for what is to come – more working-class and young people learning through experience that, to defend and extend our lives and livelihoods, we need a party of our own, fighting for a socialist programme.

Thanks to your donations helping to fund our Royal Mail mailouts, our campaign material reached two million households, presenting socialist ideas, and how they can be fought for. The Socialist Party hosted dozens of public meetings, inviting people to come and discuss with us the way forward.

The working class has defeated the Tories. Now the struggle is on for workers' interests under Keir

Starmer's Labour government. Socialist ideas will be vital, and your donations have put us in a stronger position to fight for them.

If you haven't already, pay in your pledge as soon as possible. And redouble your efforts to fight for a socialist future together.



## Walthamstow hustings Socialist Nancy rattles capitalist politicians with our campaigning record

Nancy Taafe was placed between Reform UK and an evangelical anti-abortionist at the Walthamstow hustings. Socialist Party member Nancy – standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) – gave great responses to all the questions, and drew tremendous applause several times.

She rattled current Labour MP Stella Creasy. And the Green representative had a lot to say. Both are riding high in the polls.

But Nancy pointed out that it was our campaign, without any help from the Greens or the MP, that saved the avenue of lime trees by the market, and much of the public green space, as part of our eight-year-long Save our Square campaign.

When there was a question about the incinerator, Nancy was able to point out that it was our Socialist Party members, Ken Douglas and Paula Mitchell, who led the campaign that defeated the first attempt to build it.

Nancy had a chance to highlight the need for nationalisation. But then Creasy proclaimed herself “to be more radical than Nancy”.

She repeated the Labour manifesto proposal to set up an energy company. But this idea is a repetition of what councils are already doing – using funds to speculate on property, or set up their own property companies, many with disastrous consequences. We need real democracy, through public ownership with working-class control and management.

The incumbent MP tried to laud the cooperative ethic, as standing above nationalisation. But Nancy explained how, in earlier times, workers supported the co-op ideal. But it was the 1945 Labour government that had the power to actually set about nationalising utilities, and building millions of council homes. And that's what we need now!

As the meeting broke up, several people came forward to shake Nancy's hand. But a man approached wearing a Labour sticker, and aggressively declared that Nancy was wrong about the co-ops.

Nancy suggested we organise a debate, between them and us. Let's air these ideas, and have a serious debate. He resentfully declined.

We are certain that all these ideas are going to come back big-time, as



Mansfield socialists campaigning

a Labour government grapples with these, and many more issues. Then it will be time for really robust debates, and very serious action.

**LINDA TAAFFE**  
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

## Kurdish and Turkish community election meeting

The newly formed 'Kurdish and Turkish Electoral Alternative' in north London held a meeting on 26 June about the candidates they advocate support for in the general election.

Their statement included a list of clear demands – against attacks on the rights of migrants and trade unionists, an end to war, the eradication of poverty, no to privatisation, renationalisation of the railways and water, and for equal pay, justice, equality, and freedom.

They have produced a postcard promoting candidates in ten north London constituencies that agree with those demands. All the candidates or their representatives were invited to speak.

Paula Mitchell – representing the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates Nancy Taafe in Walthamstow, and Karl Vidol in Southgate and Wood Green – endorsed all the demands.

She delighted the audience with the idea that “the Tories – the oldest capitalist party in the world – are going to get smashed!” But she also warned that Labour under Keir Starmer,

having wiped out the manifesto drawn up under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, would carry on with Tory policy, including over the war in Gaza.

Paula spoke of the 2014 TUSC campaign in London when, in Haringey, socialists and Kurdish and Turkish activists campaigned together. They condemned Labour councillors passing on Tory cuts, and got 4,166 votes. “The fight is on to build a working-class political voice”, she concluded to enthusiastic applause.

Ibrahim, in the chair, concluded the meeting by explaining that the new organisation will continue the vital campaign “for a party that will really benefit the interests of the working class.”

**CLARE DOYLE**  
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

## Socialist demands – jobs, homes, and services – challenge right-wing Reform

Mansfield's Caribbean Carnival was marked by Reform UK trying to canvass for the election. We had people coming over to our Socialist Party campaign stall, telling us what they had said to the canvassers – negative feedback for them – and how Reform didn't like hearing it. This was boosted by young people coming over wanting to know what we stand for.

People were glad we were there, and wanted to tell us how frightened or angry Reform made them. People said that their dilemma in who to vote for was for our Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate, versus unenthusiastically Labour, so the Tories don't get in. But also worried about Reform's rise. Not your usual carnival chat!

Our demand of ‘jobs, homes, and services, not racism’ brought people over to allow us to discuss why we are standing, and have no trust in Keir Starmer's Labour.

Then, on the last Saturday before the general election, we had a four-hour campaign stall, with supporters handing out hundreds of leaflets, and many discussions.

**PAUL TOOLEY-OKONKWO**  
MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

## Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](https://socialistparty.org.uk/donate) or call **020 8988 8777**
- or make cheques payable to Socialist Party, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



Kurdish and Turkish Electoral Alternative meeting CLARE DOYLE



Walthamstow hustings MARY FINCH



Pro-working class candidates and their supporters that 'Kurdish and Turkish Electoral Alternative' is backing CLARE DOYLE

# COME AND DISCUSS: HOW TO BUILD THE SOCIALIST OPPOSITION

**F**ully funded public services, a decent pay rise, and an end to the cost-of-living crisis... How can this be fought for with Keir Starmer's Labour in office? The Socialist Party is organising public meetings up and down the country to discuss just that.

During the election campaign, we weren't just asking for people to vote for our candidates, part of the 40-strong list standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), we invited them to come and discuss with us what way forward. Hundreds of new people came to a Socialist Party meeting for the first time, and lots of them have agreed to join the Socialist Party too.

## Plymouth – low pay but fighting back

We heard from a care worker who struggles with desperately low wages. She also is a carer for her husband, and has had to fight for every scrap of help in the face of years of austerity cuts to services.

The local University and College Union (UCU) secretary said: "It was great to see the solidarity of the Socialist Party consistently on our picket all the time we were striking. Now we want to show our support for you."

TUSC candidate Alex Moore had stood with them, unlike the Labour MP for the area, Luke Pollard.

There was plenty of interest in what we stand for and what our programme is. The discussion continued after the meeting had closed, and will continue after the election.

ALEX SAMPSON

## Gateshead – Labour and Reform run and hide

One member of the audience, a former Labour councillor, and still a Labour Party member, declared: "Here's £20 – I'm hoping this gets me kicked out of the Labour Party".

It seems that TUSC were the only ones standing in Gateshead Central and Whickham constituency with the confidence in our ideas to hold a public meeting. Labour and Reform didn't even attend local hustings!

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

## Leicester – future for young people

Saada Mohamed spoke about her experience as a young person. Ayomide Akinsinmide, a new Socialist Party member and student, spoke movingly about why she joined the Socialist Party, and the need for socialism for a better future.

One of the most enthusiastic responses was to our candidate Steve Score pointing to the combined wealth of the 350 richest individuals in the country – over £795 billion.

People at the meeting were disappointed with Labour's business-centred manifesto, with a watered-down 'new deal for workers', little focus on nationalisation, and broken pledges during Keir Starmer's leadership.

Of the 26 people, 11 weren't yet members of the Socialist Party, and five had never attended a Socialist Party event before.

ALEX GILLHAM

## Only election meeting in Coventry

Unlike any other political party in the area, we were the only ones to hold a public meeting. Support from independents in Foleshill added to the meeting.

Coventry organised two meetings in five days, with 55 people attending. Leeds also organised two meetings – for the start and end of the campaign – attracting 11 new people.

Four striking junior doctors attended in Smethwick. New people meant Socialist Party members were a minority in Chorley, Folkestone, and Hillingdon.

In Chorley, 20 of the 25 attendees were not yet Socialist Party members. In Hillingdon, 29 of the 38 people there were new.

Almost all of the 20 people in Folkestone were new people we've met recently. Leicester – as well as Walthamstow, Enfield, and Newham in London – all had 10 or more new people attending.

Four of the five brand new people in Leicester immediately agreed to join the Socialist Party. Alongside our candidate in Liverpool, nurse Jess Dean, a new member of the Socialist Party, got the chance to speak to the audience from our platform.

In Walthamstow, east London, a number of people joined both our meeting, and the local hustings on the same night. See the great response to our socialist candidate Nancy on the opposite page.

The Swansea meeting raised £340 for our fighting fund. In total, our general election fund is close to reaching £100,000, smashing our original target.

## Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

The Socialist Party has regular meetings in towns and cities across the country.

If you would like to participate:

- Go to [socialistparty.org.uk/events](https://socialistparty.org.uk/events)
- Or text 07761 818206 with your name and postcode.



Socialist Party public meetings, left to right, top to bottom: Enfield, Folkestone, Leeds, Plymouth, Swansea, Gateshead, Northampton, Leicester, Walthamstow, Hillingdon PHOTOS: SOCIALIST PARTY

A supporter highlighted the increasing burden on Coventry residents, detailing how the people are paying more in council tax, bills, and food, yet receiving less in public services and quality of life.

Another central issue was the critical state of the NHS. Sheila, a nurse, said: "We don't have a shortage of nurses in Britain. We have a shortage of nurses in the NHS". The call for the NHS to be truly owned and managed by the people who rely on its services, and the professionals who sustain it, resonated.

There were questions raised about how we take up the main capitalist parties on immigration.

The meeting underscored that socialist ideas are not abstract theories, but practical solutions for everyday life.

MILA HUGHES

## Leeds – what next with Tories gone?

Sadly, the venue we booked was locked. But, instead, going to nearby Woodhouse Square, the atmospheric park stage actually worked to our advantage.

TUSC candidate Louie Fulton made a very passionate speech. He perfectly summed up our platform, why it is so important to see working-class representation in Parliament, as well as running on a platform of socialist ideas, when both of the front runners are staunch capitalist parties, which will just increase inequality and poverty.

We were asked about our workers' wage pledge, highlighting how popular it is among people who have heard about it.

The discussion was around the results, what a Keir Starmer victory will mean to the working class, and opposing Labour's right-wing turn in the wake of public euphoria over the end of this dreaded Tory government.

TOM GIBSON

## Northampton – what's the alternative to Tory failure?

TUSC were the only ones in Northampton South standing a candidate on a no-cuts platform, representing the interests of the working class.

We heard from people who are fed up with a cutting council, which fails to deliver on its promises of affordable housing, and continues to outsource public sector services to private firms through rip-off PFI schemes. These schemes have led to unacceptable standards for Northampton schools, letting down families, and charging us extortionate interest rates for the privilege.

People don't feel that the local Tory council or Tory central government represent them, and there was a clear lack of faith in a Labour government to offer anything different.

YASMIN HOWIE

## Leeds Little Owls nurseries Labour exec backing closure won't stop campaign

SAVE LITTLE OWLS CAMPAIGNER

The executive board of Leeds Labour council has voted to press on with closing three council-run Little Owls nurseries, and exploring privatising 12 others.

This is despite pleas from some Labour councillors to delay the decision, especially since Labour nationally announced plans to increase nursery places by converting empty school classrooms. As the campaign has put it, why convert classrooms when you have purpose-built facilities that just need saving?

This decision follows a council 'engagement exercise', where not a single response to an email address

for comments supported the council's proposals. The council is justifying cuts and privatisation on the grounds that sufficient alternative childcare places exist. But even its own document "accepts" that provision will not be as good as is currently provided.

But the fight by parents and carers to save the nurseries doesn't stop here. Following this vote, the executive's decision has been 'called in' to go before the council's scrutiny committee.

The campaign has a deputation to the full council meeting on 10 July, the first meeting allowing deputations since the proposals were announced back in March!

## Leeds school strike at Oulton Academy

IAIN DALTON  
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Teachers began strike action at Oulton Academy in Leeds on Friday 26 June in a dispute over terms and conditions.

The school was forced into becoming an academy due to receiving 'inadequate' or 'needs improvement' grades from Ofsted. This was done through the Falcon Academy Trust, set up by the government as an academy trust of last resort when other chains refuse to take on a school.

The school is now rated as 'Outstanding'. The reward for staff? Takeover by a new academy chain, Carlton - only interested now the hard work has been done.

Though there are some protections

for transferred staff (TUPE), the new contracts include lesser sick pay provision and no maternity policy. Staff going onto such a contract (eg if they change role in the school) would be put on probation, but there is no probation policy, so it is all at management discretion.

The first day of the strike was well supported by teachers, closing the school for the day. If the academy chain senior leadership doesn't resolve these issues, then further strike action has been called in the run-up to the end of the school year.

• **Socialist Party members in the NEU call for the end of academisation, and for a new national contract for education staff**

## Royal Fleet Auxiliary strike

ROB ROONEY  
CORNWALL SOCIALIST PARTY

Overworked and underpaid - RMT seafarers treated as second-class citizens by the Tory government were out on strike at Torpoint in Cornwall on 25 June.

About 20 crew members on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessel mounted a picket at the entrance to the village before joining another picket at Plymouth, across the River Tamar.

The Royal Navy has a recruitment crisis and these workers are feeling the strain, RMT assistant national

secretary, Mark Carden told pickets. "The key thing for us is the massive recruitment and retention problem. It's now critical.

"We've exhausted all the avenues, right through to ACAS last December. It was like 'talk to the hand."

Crew member Skye Allen, who has been with the RFA for eight years, said the working week is often 75 hours. They work four weeks on, three weeks off - when everybody else in the merchant navy works one month on, one month off.

Skye said: "They talk about 'One Navy', but marines get housing, free dental treatment and they had a 5% pay rise when we have 4.5%."

This is a group of workers that expects a Labour government to address their grievances - or the fight will still be on!

## Socialists challenge anti-Pride Tories and Labour failure



PHOTO: JAMES IVENS

JASPER DAVID CHAPLIN  
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members participated in London Pride. Like other years, the march was huge, over 30,000 people.

Our Socialist Party leaflets were especially well-received by young people, and prompted regular cries of "Fuck the Tories". We made it clear that Keir Starmer cannot be trusted with our rights either.

Many people attending identified strongly with socialist values, and know that neither the Tories nor Labour will stand up for LGBTQ+ rights, especially given Rishi Sunak's

vile anti-transgender comments. The positive political discussions we had with people who stopped to chat shows the desire for a workers' political alternative is strong in people's minds.

Pride is political. Both main capitalist parties have made it clear during their election campaigns that their policies are not for us, and won't result in any material improvement in the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

Both Tory and Labour politicians' involvement in the 'transgender culture war', and their failure to properly condemn conversion therapy, speaks volumes about their inability,

and unwillingness, to make real, positive change for LGBTQ+ people.

LGBTQ+ liberation and workers' struggle go hand in hand. The rights of both groups would not be as they are today without mass organising and campaigning by the working class.

Capitalist politicians will not gift us our rights to marriage equality, bodily autonomy, fair pay, and decent living standards, we need a workers' movement that will stand up and fight for them. The Socialist Party is part of that movement - fighting for the needs of the working class, and a society where LGBTQ+ people are free to be themselves.

## Trouble continues to brew at Brewdog

DANIEL  
TEESSIDE SOCIALIST PARTY AND UNITE HOSPITALITY

'Do as we say not as we do' - this appears to be the order of the day from the bosses at Brewdog, as rebellion grows in Brewdog bars from London to Aberdeen.

Months ago, Brewdog bosses abandoned their pledge to pay their employees at least the 'real living wage' (slightly higher than the national minimum wage), causing outcry from workers.

It is with this background that the latest round of controversy has emerged. It was kick-started by Brewdog's shameful sacking of an Asian worker at one of its London bars, after they complained about the presence of the racist English Defence League (EDL) in the bar.

Unite Hospitality's subsequent social media exposure of this sacking reached tens of thousands of people on X (formerly Twitter) alone. Scores of workers from eleven Brewdog bars have submitted a collective formal

grievance, at the time of writing. All but ignored by CEO James Watt, apart from a weak self-justification sent out to staff, spiced at the end by some good old-fashioned victim blaming!

The time is now for a unionisation drive within Brewdog, alongside a campaign to win the sacked worker her job back. This must also be followed by a fight to end the bullying and misogyny in the company which has been reported by many workers, among other things. Only with militant, fighting trade unions can these practices be made memories, rather than the grim realities that they currently are.

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## Liverpool bus drivers strike for pay parity

JOHN WOOLLEY  
LIVERPOOL AND MERSEYSIDE SOCIALIST PARTY  
AND UNITE MEMBER

Bus drivers based at Stagecoach Gillmoss garage in Liverpool started a two-day strike on Monday 24 June, with more planned stoppages throughout July.

The Unite members justly demand a 9% pay increase. This would give them parity with drivers from local Arriva garages, who operate identical routes on the same service network, but Stagecoach drivers are left well behind on the hourly pay rate.

Speaking to rank-and-file members on the picket line, they are also concerned with the prospect of subtle changes to time allocated to 'walk around' safety checks, and erosions of their terms and conditions.

The drivers are determined to win a positive outcome, and they are also encouraged by the support they are receiving from the general public.

Even though Stagecoach has shipped in a network of well-paid scabs to try and break the strike, it appears that many people will boycott Stagecoach and use other operators.

# KENYA MASS PROTESTS FORCE GOVERNMENT TO RETREAT

DEJI OLAYINKA (SOCIALIST PARTY)  
AND SEAN FIGG (CWI)

**M**ass protests in Kenya have forced the government to withdraw its unpopular tax increases. These amounted to a massive attack on the living standards of the middle class, the working class, the poor and young people. On 26 June, a mass protest forced its way into parliament, setting it alight, and preventing the finance bill from being passed. Politicians had to flee through tunnels to escape the anger of the masses. This was just the latest in a series of attacks by President Ruto, now nicknamed the 'tax collector', and his government, which previously removed fuel subsidies and levied new taxes.

Huge protests in the previous week prevented the finance bill from being passed early and forced the government into a partial retreat. Ministers promised to cancel, for example, the planned tax increases on nappies, cooking oil and bread. This partial victory showed the potential to win more, emboldening protesters to continue with 'Seven Days of Rage', and go further at the act's next reading, this time entering parliament itself. The protesters estimated correctly - Ruto has been forced into a humiliating climbdown. On 26 June he denounced the protests as "treasonous". Barely 12 hours later, he shelved the finance bill in the face of the overwhelming popular opposition and mass mobilisation.

## Youth

The protests are being driven by youth in the towns and cities. Protests were reported in all forty-seven of Kenya's counties. Social media calls, using TikTok in particular, have been used to initiate protests. These calls received a 'spontaneous' mass response, reflecting the depth of anger and opposition to the government. Journalists on the ground report how protests have completely bypassed the existing political parties and there is no identifiable leadership. Some commentators drew parallels with the rapid growth and bloody repression of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

As has been seen before, the state has unleashed severe violence against these protests. Public critics have been abducted from their homes. The police and even the army have been called in and protesters have faced tear gas, water cannons and indiscriminate shooting, resulting in several people being killed and countless more being seriously injured. Last year over 100 people were killed by the police. Previously, Ruto himself was charged

Protest at the Kenyan Embassy in London PHOTO: JUNE KURIA



at the International Criminal Court over his involvement in the death of over 1,200 people after the 2007 general election, charges which were dropped after witnesses changed their statements (New York Times, 10 September 2022). Now, in the course of the 26 June mass protests, the death toll has reached 23 and 300 have been injured.

This repression further enraged protesters, and appears to have provoked some questioning within the state forces of their role. One video shows a policeman quitting after finding out that his brother had been killed during the protests. This shows that, while the state may order the police and army to act against the protests, these officers are not separate from their communities. Sections can split away and play a role in supporting the movement. The army has now been deployed to 'reinforce' the police.

The movement must continue to be built through organising in local communities and workplaces. The development of youth-led 'spontaneous' protests continues to be a feature in the neo-colonial world in this era of capitalist crisis - in Chile in 2019 and Sri Lanka in 2021, the latter forcing the president to resign and flee the country. The scenes of Kenyan youth audaciously storming

the parliament building were reminiscent of the scenes of Sri Lankan youth brazenly occupying the Sri Lankan president's residence.

## Lessons

The lessons of these other protests need to be urgently studied by Kenyan protesters. The demand that the entire government go had begun to emerge in the Kenyan protests - but what would replace it? In Sri Lanka, the lack of organisation, leadership and a clear programme in the mass movement meant that the Sri Lankan ruling class was able to bide its time, gather its forces and move to try to secure its position. There, a deposed prime minister even came back as president!

Ruto, his government, the pro-capitalist MPs and the Kenyan ruling class will now do the same. They will attempt to ride out the storm and re-introduce their attacks on the living standards of the masses under a new cover. Ruto is already laying traps, proposing a 'dialogue' with youth on future austerity, and fostering the false idea that we "are all in it together" by saying austerity can begin with cuts in the office of the presidency.

It is crucial that the movement continues and that it develops strong and democratic organisation. This can begin among the youth currently



tribal and national divisions needs to be adopted in the protest movement.

During his election campaign, President Ruto claimed he would have a 'bottom-up' approach and improve the lives of ordinary Kenyans. But since coming to power he has done the bidding of the capitalist class and imperialist powers in hiking taxes to balance Kenya's budget, guaranteeing debt repayments. These measures are aimed at compliance with an IMF programme that demands the government increases its revenues and cuts spending, both of which hit living standards.

Kenya confirms that the question of sovereign debt in the neocolonial countries can be the trigger for political crises, protests and uprisings. The indebtedness of neocolonial governments has worsened massively in recent years, especially under the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Kenyan ruling class has grown in its importance to the Western imperialist powers in recent years. As a regional power, Kenyan armed forces have played a key role in UN operations in Sudan and in recent days Kenyan police have been deployed to Haiti. While coming from a poor background, and once being a bit of a populist, Ruto is now tied by a thousand threads to the interests of Kenyan capitalism and world imperialism. On 24 June US president Biden formally made Kenya a major US ally.

Ruto has retreated. The idea that 'this government must go!', now that it has been unleashed, will not easily disappear. The question is then posed of what kind of government can replace Ruto's, and on what programme it would govern? On 27 June, some protesters declared that only Ruto's resignation will satisfy them. That is a good demand, but then an answer has to be given as to who will replace him?

Only a government of the working class and poor, armed with a socialist programme that breaks with capitalism and imperialism, can transform the mass anger and opposition to Ruto and his government into a positive programme for the development of Kenya, solving the crises of unemployment, wages, living standards etc. The working class, the poor and the youth will need a party to help organise this struggle - this must urgently be introduced into the debates on the way forward for the struggle in Kenya as the movement takes stock of its latest victory and looks to what will be possible for mass action to achieve in the future.

- Don't pay the debt! IMF out of Kenya! Nationalise the Kenyan banks and financial system under democratic workers' control

- No to austerity in any form - no tax increases and no wage or spending cuts! Organise mass struggle against each and every policy that attempts this. For price controls on all basic commodities determined democratically by communities

- Continue the protests! Organise linked-up committees of struggle in communities, workplaces, universities and schools to democratically organise and plan the movement's next steps

- Ruto must go! Against all pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist and pro-IMF political parties, politicians and MPs. Start to build a mass party of the working class armed with a socialist programme to break with capitalism and imperialism. For a government of workers and the poor

spearheading the movement making the call for the formation of democratic committees in the schools and universities. These should be extended into the wider working class and poor communities and the workplaces to draw in the mighty social power of the working class. That the call for a general strike emerged from the protests shows that there is an understanding of the need to do this amongst some sections of the protesters.

This call should be repeated in the days and weeks ahead. It could initially be organised as a one- or two-day shutdown of the country. This would be an important demonstration of the power of the mass movement and have as its aim drawing in and galvanising new layers of society - especially the working class.

Kenya, like nearly all African countries, has national and tribal divisions. This was shown in the last elections where tribal identity was pushed to the fore in the campaigns. But it seems like this movement has cut across national divisions, which is an important development. However, capitalist politicians will try to exploit these divisions, especially as they try to secure their position, hoping that Ruto's retreat has bought them the space and time to do so. A conscious policy for united struggle across

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# HORROR INFLICTED ON GAZA

## BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO END THE SLAUGHTER

ADAM HARMSWORTH  
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

**E**very day the Israeli state's bombs, bullets and blockades inflict brutal suffering on thousands upon thousands of Palestinians. The Israeli state does so with the backing of capitalist leaders worldwide, including the leaders of Britain's establishment parties Tories and Labour.

The Socialist Party was part of the 40-candidate-strong Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) stand in the election, against Israeli state terror, as well as opposing anti-working-class policies here in Britain too. A record number of independents also stood to challenge Tories and Labour on Gaza and more.

The anti-war movement must continue, grow, and organise beyond the general election. Labour won because the Tories are so hated. But it was clear that a portion of the population are no longer prepared to vote Labour.

Regular protests continue in many cities, and student demos have turned into encampments, inspired by those in the US. Working-class, poor, and oppressed people have to come together and fight for the real change we need.

That is what is needed here in Britain, in Palestine, and the rest of the Middle East.

The Socialist Party fights for the Palestinians' right to their own state. That can only be won on the basis of a democratically organised mass movement, fighting for socialist change - a socialist intifada.

Such a mass movement - with the working class developing its own mass organisations, including mass workers' parties - would be echoed across the region. Including in Israel where, as the war goes on, Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing coalition gets weaker and anti-government protests grow.

A struggle of the working class, fighting for a socialist programme to take power into its own hands, and pushing for socialist change across the Middle East, is the only route by which a real resolution to the conflict is possible.

### The Socialist Party is fighting for:

- End the siege - for the 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 rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East
- No trust in the capitalist politicians, internationally or in Britain. Fight to build a workers' party in Britain that fights for socialism and internationalism

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p6-7



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