

JOBS, HOMES AND SERVICES FOR ALL



SMASH RACISM

NICK CHAFFEY

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Tens of thousands of workers and youth have come out onto the streets to confront attempts by the far right to mobilise racist protests. This magnificent show of solidarity shows the way forward in tackling racism and the problems facing communities which have suffered decades of cuts and rising poverty.

The cost-of-living crisis, low wages and high rents, the collapse of public services. These are the results of funding cuts and privatisation carried out by the Tory government, big business and local Labour councils.

The Socialist Party calls for a united working-class fight for jobs, homes and public services for all, against racist division. We live in the world's sixth-richest country. The money is there; we need to fight for it.

The Tories' crushing general election defeat showed the huge anger at the crisis facing working-class communities. It followed the huge strike wave and mass protests against the war on Gaza which have brought workers and their communities together in a common struggle.

The trade unions, representing over 6 million workers, must use their authority and build a mass campaign in every workplace, which should include calling a national demonstration demanding an end to racism, a £15-an-hour minimum wage, rent controls and full funding for public services.

Facing defeat, the Tories turned to the tactics of divide and rule. For them, racism is a means to scapegoat others for the failings of the capitalist system they defend. Rather than challenging the Tories, Starmer's Labour joined in the anti-immigration rhetoric.

We need an alternative that represents the interests of the working class. The election of five Reform MPs, who have fanned the flames of racism, is a warning of what is to come if the workers' movement does not fulfil the task of creating a political alternative.

The Socialist Party is fighting for the trade unions to call a conference of trade unionists, anti-racists, socialists, including Jeremy Corbyn, the anti-war independent MPs, those excluded from Labour for opposing the two-child benefit cap, to discuss the way forward. A new mass party for the working class with socialist policies, to answer the lies of the racist far right, would be a huge step forward. It would build confidence that we can fight back and put an end to this rotten system, and the racism and division it breeds, with a new socialist world.

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

‘The enemy is the ruling class’ – Liverpool TUC president addresses anti-racist demo

Below is a speech to the anti-racist counter-demonstration in Liverpool on 3 August 2024, delivered by Dave Walsh, president of Liverpool Trades Union Council and Socialist Party member

“ We know who the real enemy is. The enemy is the ruling class, and we’ve learned those lessons time after time. Liverpool Trades Council is the oldest in the country - 175 years old. Workers organised across all the different trade unions to work together to fight for working-class communities.

It played a role in 1911 in this city, in the great transport strike, a general strike that was successful, but we knew who the enemy was because they shot dead two of those striking workers. The ruling class did that. We’ve learned those lessons time after time.

In the 1980s, the city council in Liverpool made a stand against Thatcher, refused to implement austerity. 47 of them carted off to court and surcharged. We learnt again who the enemy is: the establishment, the ruling class.

After the Hillsborough disaster, the ruling class made us the problem, we were to blame. Again we’ve learned the lessons, time after time, who the enemy is.

We’ve learned those lessons, but there are a layer of people who are looking for answers to the problems that they are facing, and Tommy Robinson, and Nigel Farage, and the Reform Party, are growing because they are giving them ‘answers’.

They are saying the reason why you can’t get a job and a home, the reason why you can’t get a hospital appointment and a doctor and a dentist, it’s

because of migrants, it’s immigrants, it’s because of trans people, it’s because of every minority... The young, the old - they’ll divide us on any lines they can. That’s why they’re growing. So we’ve got to answer those questions with real answers, that address those problems. Labour have just won a landslide victory, but that landslide victory was built on the smallest turnout since 1918, the lowest vote for a government since 1918. It’s tenuous. It’s paper thin.

But they’ve got an opportunity in power to win those people back that have lost all faith, that have lost confidence that are disenfranchised. Labour have got an opportunity to win them back: Create the jobs, build the houses, build the infrastructure, give the youth the future. Address the problems with the environment, get rid of the private owners of water, stop them ruining our lakes, our rivers, our seas. Take it all back into public ownership!

Last week, a motion was put to Parliament to get rid of the two-child benefit cap. Keir Starmer said he can’t afford it. £4 billion too much. Put that in perspective, last year the richest hundred people in the country got richer by £40 billion. 10% of that and you can take a quarter of a million kids out of poverty, give them a future, give them a decent life: food, a warm home.

The money is there
£4 billion is affordable, just take it off the rich. They’ve been taking it off us for 40 years! The way to take it off them? Break from Tory policies, don’t stick by their fiscal rules, by their spending plans.

Get rid of privatisation. Reverse it! Get rid of austerity. Reverse it!

Get rid of the anti-trade union laws. Give the workers the power back to win back what’s ours - what we build, what we make. That’s how



Dave Walsh addressing the demo LIVERPOOL SP

the Labour Party could win back the working class.

But if they’re not willing to do that, then the trade unions have got to ask themselves a question. I’m in Unite, Labour’s biggest donor. Are we going to give all our money and resources to a party if it does not give us the policies that can address the problems we’re facing?

[‘No way!’ shouts from the crowd]
I want to make this point. Over the two-child benefit cap, Labour went as far as to suspend seven Labour MPs for having the temerity to vote for that motion. Ian Byrne is here and he is one of them.

Let’s call on the Labour Party to take these actions forward. But if

they’re not willing to do that, then the trade union movement, with six and a half million workers - with all its money and resources. Take those resources and organise a conference of the working class so we can debate these issues. Because it was the trade unions that created the Labour Party. If they’ve left us, that’s okay. We can create another party. We can create a party with socialist policies!

Trade unions: don’t let the Labour Party hand over millions of votes to Reform. Call on the Labour Party to deliver a socialist programme. If they’re not willing, then organise us a big conference, to build a new workers’ party.



Model trade union motion

This union branch/trades council condemns the violent protests called by far-right and fascist groups

- They have sought to exploit the horrific incident in Southport on 29th July
- We send support and solidarity to all those affected by that attack, especially the families of those killed or injured
- With absolutely no evidence and on the basis of deliberate misinformation, the far-right have targeted refugees, migrant workers and the Black and Asian and Muslim communities

This union branch/trades council believes:

- That it is essential that the trade union movement plays the leading role in building a united movement against the far-right. This is especially the case as history

- has shown, the far-right and fascist forces have targeted unions and striking workers
- With 6.5 million members, across all working-class communities, the unions can unite workers against racist division which weakens our movement and only assists the bosses
- But this requires a militant industrial and political programme
- The strike wave over the last few years has shown that workers and their unions are prepared and able to fight to defend jobs and living standards, and when they do so, they become a pole of attraction for all those suffering from austerity
- The vote for Reform is a warning of how vital it is to build a working-class political voice that fights for socialist policies. The new Starmer-led Labour government has announced cuts affecting parents and pensioners, showing its intention of continuing austerity.

A party based on the organised working class that fought for anti-racist, anti-war, socialist policies – for the pay, jobs, homes and services we all need in order to prevent the far-right harnessing growing anger of working-class people with Starmer’s Labour

- It is therefore necessary that such a movement fights for the policies that can transform the lives of working-class people, including on jobs, pay, housing, the NHS and education, after decades of neo-liberal policies of successive governments. Motion 44 passed at TUC Congress in 2018 launched a “Jobs, Homes, Not Racism campaign to unite the wider trade union movement and to campaign effectively against the far right.”

This union branch/trades council demands:

- That the TUC and the unions call an emergency national Saturday demonstration on the theme: ‘Workers unity not division – jobs and homes not racism’

- That where the far-right call protests in localities, the trade union movement – including unions, regional TUCs, local union branches and trades councils – takes the lead in organising counter-protests, linking up with migrant, refugees and any targeted communities as well as anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations
- That all such protests are well stewarded by trade unions to guard against any threat from far-right groups
- That the unions fight to compel the Labour Government to implement pro-worker policies and if it does not do so, the unions will call a conference to discuss the building of a political vehicle for workers

● If your union branch/trades council passes this motion let us know
● Send an email to editors@socialistparty.org.uk

END RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA – FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

After over a week of horrific violent racist and Islamophobic attacks, huge numbers took to the streets in counter-protests on 7 August. Millions of Black and Asian people, especially Muslims, have been living in fear. That is the desired effect of the hardcore far-right agitators stoking violence and intimidation.

The huge scale of the anti-racist protests - over 10,000 in Walthamstow, east London and 3,000 in Newcastle on a Wednesday evening at short notice - should give confidence that the overwhelming majority of people in society reject the dangerous and detestable ideas of the far right. And that there are many prepared to mobilise to defend our communities from racist attacks.

As evidence of the popular revulsion to the far-right violence, even the right-wing Daily Mail newspaper, under pressure to reflect the mood of its readers, carried the front page headline: “Night anti-hate marchers faced down the thugs” on 8 August.

Just 2% of those surveyed by YouGov on 5-6 August “Strongly support the unrest at protests”, including only 5% of those who voted for Reform UK in the general election.

The trend is for survey respondents in Britain to say they feel more comfortable living side by side with Black people Muslims and immigrants. But like on every issue, attitudes and ideas are mixed and complex. A majority want to take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants, a majority also want to do more to help refugees, for example.

Is it any wonder? Britain is more diverse than ever, one in five British people are not ‘white British’. Picket lines throughout the strike wave brought together workers of all backgrounds to fight against the Tories and bosses.

Racist division

On the other hand, capitalist politicians of all varieties and backgrounds have used racist scapegoating of immigrants to distract from the failure of their profit system to provide decent pay, homes, services and a future for young people.

Reform’s Nigel Farage is one particularly odious politician who consistently spouts divisive anti-migrant rhetoric. But to focus entirely on him and his party lets the rest of the capitalist politicians off the hook. The Tories spent the last years in government talking incessantly about migrants on small boats and taking part in the expensive political theatre of



Protesters in Walthamstow, East London PHOTO: ISAI MARJERIA



The way to mobilise maximum numbers to fight against racism is to link the struggle to the fight for jobs, homes, services and a decent future for young people

Rwanda deportation flight plans. In an interview with the Sun ‘newspaper’ ahead of the general election, now Labour prime minister Keir Starmer singled out people from Bangladesh as an example of migrants who should be ‘removed’.

Meanwhile, all of these politicians support privatisation and cutbacks to public services, and do nothing of substance to address falling living standards, or the housing and cost-of-living crises.

This latest surge of racist violence serves as a warning as to what can develop under a Labour government which is continuing with the Tories’ austerity policies – already cutting pensioners’ winter fuel payment and promising billions of pounds of further cuts. The election of five Reform MPs is a warning too.

Protests against racism

The thousands of young people and others marching against racist hate are motivated to bring about change so that we can live in a society free from racism, Islamophobia and division.

The way to mobilise maximum numbers to fight for that kind of change is to link the struggle against racism to the fight for jobs, homes, services and a decent future for young people. That’s why the Socialist Party has taken our placards with the slogan: ‘Jobs, homes and services for all – smash racism’ to the protests.

If the 6.5 million strong trade union movement was to lead a struggle for those things – bringing together workers and young people from all backgrounds – it would give an expression to the huge anger and

discontent that exists under the surface in society.

It is that anger and discontent at the establishment that explains the mass abstentionism in elections, some of the electoral support for Reform in the general election, and is also expressed by many of the working-class young people drawn into the fringes of the some of the rioting.

Trade unions must act

Socialist Party members have been campaigning for the trade unions nationally to use their substantial numbers and resources, as well as their political authority, to mobilise members to join the anti-racist protests. Our members who have elected positions on national executives of the trade unions have been pressing the demand for the Trades Union Congress to call a Saturday demonstration, in its own name, calling for jobs, homes and services, not racism. A mass national mobilisation would be a show of strength, boosting workers’ confidence.

It is also necessary to organise to defend our local communities when they come under attack. A feature of the recent far-right attacks has been the huge number of threats and potential targets, fuelled by posts on different social media platforms. This presents challenges in organising counter-protests at short notice.

To meet these challenges, there can be no shortcut past the need to strengthen and consolidate working-class organisation. In many areas, well-organised local trades union councils, with delegates representing thousands of workers in a city or area, have been crucial in mobilising



There can be no shortcut past the need to strengthen and consolidate working-class organisation

workers to support counter-demonstrations. This needs to be further developed – including trade union stewarding of counter-protests for safety and effective tactical coordination.

The task of defending our communities from racist attacks, building united workers’ struggle for all the things we need, undermining the support for and fighting against reactionary ideas of all kinds, strengthening the level of organisation of the working class and developing a workers’ political voice - all go hand in hand.

We are building a party which takes part in all those struggles, fighting for the socialist transformation of society, based on bringing the commanding heights of the economy and the banks into democratic public ownership. Under the democratic control and management of the working-class majority, society’s wealth and resources could be put to good use to meet all of our needs. That is a necessary component of the fight to end racism and inequality for good. If you want to help us build that party then join the Socialist Party.

Join the fightback

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Public sector pay: NEU Schools funding and pay not enough

SHEILA CAFFEY

NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

After a year in which school buildings have literally been crumbling around our ears from the horror of RAAC concrete, when 40,000 teachers have left teaching for reasons other than retirement, and with 70% of schools having less funding in real terms now that they did in 2010, we certainly do not have an education system that is encouraging people to work in it!

That, along with the national strike days taken by the National Education Union (NEU) last year, made the Tory government-appointed teachers' pay review board (the STRB) recommend a 5.5% pay rise for teachers this year. Other school staff sit within the local government pay offer, made by the Tories, which on average will equate to a 4.5% increase – already rejected by support staff in an indicative ballot before summer. The new Labour government is sticking to these offers.

Both of these are currently above inflation and Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the NEU, correctly states this is a step in the right direction for pay restoration. However, it is such a tiny step after well over a decade of below-inflation pay deals, that it won't do much to stem the tide of education workers leaving.

The funding needed to cover the pay offers is about £1.1 billion, which



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

the government has claimed to be providing. But what does that mean in reality? £683 million already has apparently been put in school budgets, referred to as 'headroom'. This is incomprehensible to education staff who see the reality of school budgets every day.

The School Cuts website states: "In total, we need £12.2 billion from the government to stop the crisis in our schools from getting any worse." So, this 'headroom' simply does not exist and will again lead to cuts and redundancies in many schools.

And the Labour government says that a third of the 'new' money will come from other government pots of money. Asking Peter to pay Paul is divisive. There is £40 billion of unpaid taxes from the super-rich every year. There is plenty of money in society to cover the funding needed for education, health and all other public services!

The 5.5% pay deal with its limited funding is being put to the 300,000 teachers in the NEU to vote on in September. The National Executive met last week to decide whether to put forward an 'accept' or 'reject' position. Socialist Party exec members, alongside other socialist activists, argued for a 'reject' vote, and to ballot members to fight for better funding, linking that to workload and to keep up the pressure on pay restoration. NEU could take the lead in a campaign of all education workers across all education unions.

Although Daniel Kebede admitted there were some concerns around funding, the majority of the executive voted to recommend members accept.

If this is accepted in September,

it will signal the end to the fight on pay and funding for the second year running.

'Why?' is a question many members would ask – when action improved the pay and funding offered last year, from the Tories! Unfortunately, some on the executive have illusions that Labour will be kinder to the unions in the future if there is no fight now.

However, Socialist Party members stand with a small group on the executive who put forward the idea that 'If you don't fight, you won't win'. We will campaign for a 'reject' vote in September. By leading, with a fighting programme, we could build a union that would fight to win.

The majority on the executive currently are in the 'NEU Left' grouping. That includes members of the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP). Over the premature ending of the pay battle in the summer of 2023, and then over whether to fight for more funding in autumn 2023, the NEU Left was split, with the SWP arguing on the same side as the Socialist Party on the exec.

In this August executive meeting it was split yet again, as the SWP argued, with us, for a 'reject' vote. But then when that position was lost, the SWP went on to vote for the majority 'accept' motion, which Socialist Party members did not.

If the NEU Left leadership cannot give a lead on the most crucial issues we face as a union, it clearly poses the need to draw together those who want to build a fighting union into a new left. There will be elections to the executive in spring next year, and we appeal to all those who want to build a fighting union to agree to support candidates who stand on that programme.

Public sector pay: NHS workers in Unite Branches should campaign to reject

LEN HOCKEY

SECRETARY, UNITE BARTS HEALTH BRANCH

My Unite the Union branch meeting considered the 5.5% pay award for NHS workers by the pay review body, and the decision was made, following a vote, to recommend rejection to our members in the coming consultation by the national union.

Unite has submitted a claim for a restorative pay increase, like the junior doctors. It calculated that in the last 14 years, NHS pay has risen 31.5% (median value) but that the RPI inflation increase for the same period is 72.8%!

Our meeting commended the 22% the junior doctors have been offered in response to their restorative claim for 35%, and which the BMA leaders are recommending in their current ballot. That has been achieved through action.

Our members thought all health-care staff should be treated equally, avoiding any division in our collective strength. We should all get the same as the junior doctors! It was noted that the increase of 5.5% was higher than current inflation by 2.2%. But inflation rose to over 11% previously, and those prices never came down!

This award in no way reflects the scale of the crisis and the urgent response required to the dire situation our service is suffering. Millions are awaiting treatment. There is a recruitment and retention crisis that's seeing the loss of valuable experience, as workers leave the service, face burn-out and struggle to pay bills.

Our meeting expressed further

concern that the award was to be partly funded, possibly by as much as a third, out of trust budgets. This can only lead to potential further downward pressure on both staff and quality of service.

Unite's Health National Industrial Sector Committee will be organising a consultation of members from 6 August to 16 September, but disappointingly it has adopted a neutral position on the award and will not be recommending rejection.

The new Labour government, in making the award, said it wants to avoid more strikes. That reflects the collective power as workers that we have, exemplified in the junior doctors' offer.

Saving our NHS means massive, urgent investment and that starts with wages to attract workers. The money is there. Britain is the sixth richest country on the planet.

Coordinated national strike action by NHS workers and their unions can win more money from the newly elected Labour government, who are scandalously wedded to the previous Tory government's spending plans.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

• editors@socialistparty.org.uk

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

Public sector pay: NHS workers in Unison Despite the right-wing leadership, socialists in Unison say: Reject the pay offer

STEVE BELL

UNISON HEALTH SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

With the junior doctors balloting on an approximate 22% pay rise over two years, public sector union Unison's Health Service Group Executive (SGE) met to discuss its response to the pay offer to other NHS workers. The new Labour government is implementing the pay review body (PRB) award of 5.5%.

Unison campaigned this year on gaining a significant pay rise. While 5.5% is one of the largest awards recommended by the PRB, it goes nowhere to restoring the pay lost during the Tory austerity years, with our lowest-paid workers currently getting only one penny above the minimum wage! This pay rise does take it to nearer the 'real living wage', but is nowhere near Unison's policy position of £15 an hour. With shop workers and others in the care sector now earning more than NHS staff, it will do little to improve staff shortages.

It also remains unclear as to how



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

sanctions because of this legislation, we convene an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee to consider options for providing practical, industrial, financial and/or political backing to that union... Call an urgent demonstration in the event a work notice is deployed and a union or worker is sanctioned in relation to a work notice." It even raised taking illegal action by stating that the unions would "refuse to tell our members to cross a picket line".

It was the train drivers' union ASLEF that effectively rendered the Act inoperable. An attempt to issue a work notice at train operator LNER, which had fallen into government control, was met with the union escalating its strike action from one to five days. LNER management, and behind them the Tories, capitulated.

Starmer's commitment to repeal the Act, while welcome, is on its own totally inadequate. It is essential that unions now demand the repeal of the 2016 Trade Union Act and all other Tory anti-union laws, going back to Thatcher.

The Trade Union Act enshrines undemocratic strike ballot thresholds, which means that no matter how many union members vote for action, it cannot go ahead unless

the turnout is at least 50%. Yet if this had been applied in the general election, 58 MPs would have been barred from office, including Keir Starmer's deputy, Angela Rayner. Starmer himself was only elected on a 54% turnout!

But the Tory anti-union laws go much further. For instance, they prevent solidarity action, even in the same workplace if workers are in a different union or, for example, in the same hospital but working for an outsourced company. Also, the POA prison officers' union has correctly demanded that its members' right to strike is brought back, after the last Labour government restored the Tory strike ban in 2007. That shameful act is a reminder that Thatcher and Major's anti-union laws were, disgracefully, largely kept intact through 13 years of New Labour governments.

The unions must demand the repeal of all the anti-union legislation, and if such an undertaking isn't given by TUC Congress in September, it must set out a militant strategy to mobilise union members for action.

The NSSN lobby of the TUC on 8 September will put those demands on the trade union leaders – setting out the policies workers need and what is necessary to fight for them.

it's going to be funded. At the SGE we were provided with a paper that said one third had to be found through 'efficiency savings'. We were told that the ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) were getting full funding, but most ICBs in England are already in huge debt and demanding savings, with job freezes widespread.

So it appears that the workforce will be paying for part of this increase, either through working harder or by seeing terms and conditions slashed. The award also did not mention the shorter working week or any of the other demands that Unison had raised.

Many staff will welcome the 5.5% rise that they are likely to see in their pay packet in October, as they have been waiting six months already. But we should be demanding more.

The left members on the SGE, including Socialist Party members, argued that we should demand more and go for negotiations with the new government, as we will get the 5.5% anyway. If we wait until next year, based on what Labour is saying about spending plans, we will not see a rise to recuperate what we have lost. Our union does not support pay being decided by a so-called independent review body – we want direct discussion with the government.

In the SGE discussions, the

right-wing majority hid behind the Tory anti-trade union laws, saying we couldn't get the 50% threshold last time, so why would we get it this time. It was pointed out that the Labour Party said it would repeal the 2016 anti-trade union act. But it appears that even Starmer-supporting Labour Party members on the SGE don't believe this will happen – and aren't prepared to challenge it!

One would have thought that with the increasing number of strikes Unison is organising over support workers' pay, that there might be some recognition that low-paid workers are prepared to struggle and fight to improve pay, terms and conditions.

Unfortunately the left lost the vote two to one on the executive, so in Unison's consultation it will be asking members to accept the award. The leadership will be giving an uninspiring message – despite their own admission that the union has lost members in Wales and elsewhere, including to other unions.

The left will continue to fight for better pay, terms and conditions, but it's also clear that the union leadership tied to Labour needs to be fought as well. They are holding back the aspirations of many workers in the health service.

LOBBY THE TUC

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR A WORKERS' MANIFESTO

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Civil Service: Keep the fight going on pay - 5% is not enough!

● **Left Unity motion to end pay campaign voted down by NEC**

● **President rules out motion with fighting strategy, leaving PCS without a position on pay**

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN PCS

On 29 July, the Cabinet Office published the civil service pay remit. This allowed departments to increase pay budgets by an average of 5%. This figure, still not enough, is the concrete result of brave workers, including PCS union members, taking determined and sustained industrial action. Chancellor Rachel Reeves has made the government's position very clear: "There is a cost to not settling, a cost of further industrial action".

There is no additional money in departmental budgets to cover the pay increase. Budgets were set in 2021, before the spike in inflation; there has been no movement on pay progression; and thousands of members remain in a continuous cycle of low pay, many on the minimum wage. Separately, 2% savings in admin budgets have been announced (job cuts) as has the government's intent to shave £3 billion off departmental budgets.

A special National Executive Committee (NEC) was called for 12 August to discuss the union's strategy.

The Left coalition majority submitted a motion which set out in detail a response to the pay remit guidance, together with a clear strategy to put to members and reps. This strategy included:

- A firm rejection of the 5% and an instruction that our national negotiators go back into talks for more: we should not accept the first offer
- That demands are placed on pay, but also on issues such as jobs, working environment, pensions and a claim for those members who come under the DDAT pay framework
- A major programme to re-engage members and reps across the whole union, rebuild the confidence to fight and win, including discussions with members and reps in the devolved areas to determine their involvement in a fresh campaign on

pay, jobs and conditions. It is crucial we rebuild the confidence lost by the actions of the outgoing leadership that we can fight, and we can win

- That the levy continues in the immediate, but at a very reduced rate for our lowest-paid members, whilst a more thorough review (already agreed but not yet actioned by the machine) is undertaken to replenish our campaign funds
- That strike mandates should not be triggered but left on the table to review as the picture unfolds
- That reps are urgently consulted about the remit, the levy and whether we engage in delegated talks
- A further NEC is called following that to review if/how we need to adapt our tactics and if/when a Special Delegate Conference is called to discuss this issue, but also our anti-racism and anti-fascism strategy together with the whole issue of democracy and who is running the union – the elected NEC or the machine

What happened at the NEC?

The NEC had barely started when the national president ruled this motion out of order, therefore vetoing - yet again - any discussion voicing disagreement with a paper from the general secretary (GS).

The GS paper, published hours before the deadline for amendments, amounted to total surrender of the union's national campaign and pushed any serious challenge to government into the long grass. This is in blatant defiance of the policy set by PCS conference in May 2024, and replicates events in 2023 when they called off the national campaign.

The 5% pay remit is unfunded. To agree an unfunded mandate would mean welcoming job cuts. In some departments, such as Transport and Education, those job cuts are already being put into motion. We will need a major campaign to save jobs.

Our national pay team should go back into discussion with the Cabinet



PCS members on strike in 2023 LONDON SP

Office to argue for more, to argue that it should be funded, and to insist that pay not be contingent upon job cuts.

We should not agree to delegated pay talks going ahead at departmental level at this stage. We should delay these while we seek further movement at Cabinet Office level. Meanwhile, we should be using this threat to jobs, and the impact of pay cuts, to mobilise members for a strike ballot.

We understand that some members will, at least initially, think that 5% is passable. But once this results in job cuts and workload increases, this view is likely to dissipate.

We can win more

The key thing, however, is whether members believe their union can fight and win more. We have argued

consistently that we need to win the activist layer, win the members and pivot to a re-ballot, taking action in those areas with a mandate (with full discussion with reps and members in those areas) to create momentum and pressure on the government.

The majority left coalition motion to the NEC allowed for consideration of a Special Delegate Conference this year, to reconvene Conference, given the change in situation since our pre-general election May 2024 annual conference.

The president's decision to veto the entire alternative strategy makes a Special Delegate Conference absolutely imperative because, with the GS motion defeated, PCS has effectively no position on pay.

PCS is rapidly losing our once-proud claim to be a member-led union. Decisions are increasingly being taken outside the NEC, and not even reported back to the elected leaders of the union.

● **Socialist Party members in PCS are part of the Broad Left Network. Read more at bln.org.uk**

Royal Fleet Auxiliary seafarers strike again

ALEX MOORE
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

RMT union members at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary took their third day of strike action on 1 August in the UK and overseas. In a warm show of solidarity, the RMT picket in Darwin, Australia, was supported by the Mariners Union of Australia.

Plymouth Socialist Party members attended the picket at the Albert Dock entrance to Devonport Naval dockyard, and brought with us the GMB picket captain from the

G4S strike at the Department for Work and Pensions to address the seafarers.

The mood on the picket line was determined and confident. It was reported that talks with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) had ended with nothing put on the table by the employer to help resolve the dispute. All the talk on the picket line was of the need to escalate to all-out indefinite action.

The next strike is set to take place on 16 August, following a one-day strike on 15 August by the officers'

union Nautilus, who are also in dispute over pay.

- Socialist Party members in RMT are supporting NEC member and Plymouth RMT Number 1 secretary Dave Goard, standing for election for the relief regional organiser (Southern Region)

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Water bosses' bonus bonanza Nationalise!

BILL MURRAY
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

While it is becoming more and more clear that privatisation of England's water industry has been a disaster from both a cost-of-living and an environmental perspective, the Financial Times published an article announcing that Yorkshire Water CEO Nicola Shaw's pay for this year was £1.03 million. This includes a £371,000 bonus despite being criticised by watchdog Ofwat after a burst pipe limited supplies to 12,700 households for a fortnight last year without even providing bottled water. Of course, Yorkshire residents have also suffered pollution as well just like the rest of the country.

We shouldn't be too critical of Ms Shaw's bonus though as it is only 42.2% of the maximum allowable! She will also get an undisclosed payment from Yorkshire Water's Jersey-registered parent company, as well as from International Airlines Group where she is a non-executive director.

According to Kate Bayliss, a water expert at the University of London, there is no evidence that higher CEO salaries lead to better social and environmental outcomes. She further

£84.1 million
dividends paid to Yorkshire Water shareholders this year, not invested in improving water supply

added that water executives seem to be unaware of the disdain the public hold them in.

While Nicola Shaw and her colleagues are raking it in, Ofwat has provisionally agreed a 25% increase in Yorkshire Water bills.

Yorkshire Water paid £84.1 million in dividends this year, up from £62.3 million the previous year, although they go to great pains to state that the 'ultimate shareholders' (including a Singaporean wealth fund) have not received a dividend for eight years. Of course, all readers of The Socialist will sympathise with their plight!

It isn't just Yorkshire Water who have been paying their senior management obscene bonuses, completely unrelated to performance. Almost bankrupt Thames Water, Severn Trent and Southern

Water have also paid out substantial bonuses.

Yorkshire Water said that its bonus scheme took into account "customer service and environmental measures as well as considering the wider performance of the business in the round", and went on to say: "Over the past year we've been making great strides to improve our performance as a company, and the hard work is beginning to pay off." So the bosses give themselves an early reward and their customers are rewarded with inflation-busting bills to fund investment that should have been made while they were having a bonus bonanza.

It is absolutely clear that the system of regulating utilities is as broken as the private ownership model of the industries themselves. They are either toothless, gutless, don't have the necessary powers or are just too close to those they are supposed to regulate. Instead of the tougher regulation that Keir Starmer would probably attempt to introduce, we need public ownership of all utilities under the control of customers, workers and the wider trade union movement - with no compensation for the polluting fat cats, only on the basis of proven need.

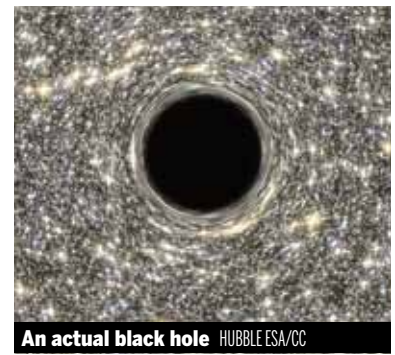


MARTIN DAWES/CC

Reeves's black hole reality

CLIVE WALDER
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Rachel Reeves's discovery of the £22 million 'black hole' which she used to justify scrapping of winter fuel payments to 10 million pensioners is



An actual black hole HUBBLE ESA/CC

typical of how Starmer's Labour government will frame arguments to try and extinguish any expectations of improvements in peoples' lives.

£22 billion is a lot of money to you and me. It is being used to paint a picture of a bankrupt country that can't afford to look after the less advantaged. In fact, it is a mere 1.79% of the government's budget. Hardly a massive black hole

The government is cynically manipulating arguments to get us to believe a decent retirement, decent pay and well funded public services are unaffordable.

Our demand to open the books when poverty is pleaded is as important where the government is concerned as it is with privately owned businesses.



PLYMOUTH SP

Labour scraps universal winter fuel allowance

We all need pensions we can live on

ANDY BEADLE
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Chancellor Rachel Reeves has announced that winter fuel payments to pensioners are being scrapped in England and Wales, except for those on means-tested benefits, including Pension Credit. The slogan before her read, 'Fixing the foundations'. In reality, it was a declaration that this Labour government will remove support from some of the most vulnerable. It showed they have no intention of reversing the chronic transfer of wealth from working-class and poor people to the bosses.

21% of pensioners currently get means-tested benefits. A further 800,000 are eligible but don't claim them, perhaps because they are unaware, or they wish to avoid the intrusive means test. This winter, the large majority will no longer receive either

the £200 for single pensioners or the £300 for couples.

The charity Age UK has produced a petition which already has hundreds of thousands of signatures. It says, the change gives "virtually no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners."

Like others, pensioners have long been hit by cuts to council services. I no longer go swimming regularly

800,000
low-income pensioners could, but don't claim pension credit. They face losing their winter fuel payments

because my local council stopped the free sessions for pensioners.

We don't want special treatment: everybody should be entitled to look forward to a decent pension and a good retirement. Fighting for good services, care, housing, in fact a decent life, are demands that can unite all working-class people.

This is a wealthy country and the resources exist. But the distribution of wealth is skewed towards the super-rich. The only force that can change that is the organised working class.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?
● editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Labour: 'Childhood inequality baked in' What are you going to do about it?

New Labour education minister Bridget Phillipson has said inequality is "baked in" to our schools and universities. And it's no wonder that the attainment gap between more affluent pupils has increased in the last decade. Tory cuts have meant larger class sizes, crumbling school buildings and children hunger as poverty has increased.

And if students get to university the inequality is clear to see - a maintenance loan that doesn't even cover the sky-high rents, and that's before food, transport and other costs. Some students rely on the

bank of mum and dad - the rest have to work part-time, distracting from studies, or drop out.

So, will the new Labour government take steps to end inequality? Will they fully fund our schools, pay teachers what they deserve and scrap the two-child benefit cap? Will they scrap tuition fees and offer free education with support students can actually live on?

Well if we don't fight for it, they certainly won't. So let's get organised in workplaces, on university campuses and in our schools and colleges.



PLYMOUTH SP

East London protest celebrates the fall of Sheikh Hasina



THOMAS KING
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

On 5 August, proud members of the Bangladeshi community and Socialist Party members gathered in the historic Altab Ali Park in Whitechapel. Named after a Bangladeshi victim of a tragic racially motivated murder in 1978, the park has long symbolised resistance and unity for the Bangladeshi community in London.

Nearly a thousand people assembled to celebrate the fall of Sheikh Hasina, following earlier events in Dhaka where many had stormed her

official residence, the Ganabhaban, with demands that won the end of her 15-year tenure in power.

The celebration was set to begin in the evening, but it was evident upon arrival that support had been building throughout the afternoon. Hundreds surrounded a large Bangladesh flag that covered much of the park while various speakers addressed the crowd with passionate and emotional speeches. Many waved flags, honked car horns in the street, and held signs celebrating Hasina's removal from power. Some placards displayed crossed-out images of Hasina, while

others tore apart an effigy of the former leader that was initially tied to a lamppost. As the evening progressed, numbers refused to slow, and red and green hues continued to cover the park as flames were lit to the sound of unity.

Over 40 years have passed since 7,000 Bangladeshis marched behind a vehicle carrying Altab Ali's coffin, holding signs that read, "here to stay, here to fight." This determination to fight for justice, as strong as it was then, remains - this time in the face of brutal state violence that has potentially claimed thousands of innocent lives.

Tower Hamlets public meeting on Bangladesh

RAFI ABDULLAH KAZI
NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Prior to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation in Bangladesh, massive student protests took place worldwide in solidarity with the movement, including at Altab Ali Park in Bethnal Green, in which our members participated.

At out our public meeting of 30 people, experienced Bangladeshi campaigners shed a light on the misinformation regarding death toll figures, with official numbers stating lower counts than reality. They spoke of personal worries about family members; and spoke of the political climate, recent developments and the lack of alternatives.

I am a Bangladeshi, with relatives and friends who live there, and could not contact them during the government-imposed internet shutdown, so I could understand the anxiety and frustration that they had.

Socialist Party members spoke about the corruption of the main dynastic political parties, their illegitimacy and lack of democracy. They put forward why out of this student movement, a truly democratic party founded on principles of socialism,



Tower Hamlets meeting PHOTO: IAN PATTISON

BANGLADESH MASS PROTESTS TOPPLE GOVERNMENT – NO TRUST IN THE CAPITALIST ELITES

TU SENAN
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL,
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

The revolutionary mass movement in Bangladesh is at a critical juncture. A 17-member interim government has been established, including in it a few young leaders who emerged from the mass protests which toppled the government.

Instead, Yunus remains an ally of both domestic capitalists and western capitalism, particularly US capitalism. His approach - seeking to 'liberate' people one microloan at a time - has so far grossly failed. He has long dismissed revolution as method to bring about change. Ironically, he now finds himself as the head of state following a revolutionary uprising. He cannot be allowed to oversee the transfer of power back to a section of the capitalist elite.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on 6 August, protesters stormed her residence. But her party, the Awami League, and its allies involved in corruption, remain largely intact. Meanwhile, the equally corrupt and undemocratic opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a right-wing party that has a history of implementing policies against workers and youth, is also waiting to seize any opportunity that arises.

The continuation of the current situation, without decisive action to transfer power to democratically controlled committees of protesters, workers, and the poor, could enable reactionary forces to gradually regain strength. The student protesters already had to intervene on 9 August when a full court was convened, which they saw as an attempted "judicial coup", undermining the new interim government. The Chief Justice resigned only after protesters surrounded the court.

Meanwhile, the Awami League has begun plotting its return, with Hasina's son declaring on 10 August that she would return since she had not formally resigned before fleeing.

The interim government, sworn in on 8 August under the leadership of Muhammad Yunus, offers little in the way of a meaningful path forward. Yunus is known for his Nobel Prize-winning work in microcredit and microfinance. He envisioned these tools for a new form of capitalism but, in practice, they have only deepened poverty and widened the wealth gap in Bangladesh and other poor countries. Yunus, now a multimillionaire, largely due to profits made from the poorest women in Bangladesh, still enjoys support from those who benefited from microfinance. His profile and past persecution by Hasina led to his selection as interim head by the Students Against Discrimination, an umbrella organisation of student protesters.

Discontent

The movement that began in June, initially sparked by the implementation of a 30% quota for the descendants of freedom fighters, has evolved far beyond the simple demand for quota reform. In an attempt to counter the opposition's use of historical grievances, and the influence of freedom fighters' families against her in the 2023 elections, Sheikh Hasina tried to shore up her support by increasing the quota. However, this backfired, igniting widespread discontent.

Opposition to the privileged families had been growing for years due to blatant corruption, manipulation of national exams, and other injustices that benefited only a segment of the middle class and the capitalist elite who dominate public offices. Millions have been left out of the so-called



Mass student protests in Bangladesh PHOTOS: RAYHANDO AND NAFIS24/CC



'Bangladesh miracle' of economic growth.

Textile workers, who were the backbone of this growth - helping Bangladesh become the world's second-largest textile exporter - remain in dire, insecure working conditions, earning meagre wages. Hasina, who came to power promising more democracy, better welfare, and social reforms, initially created some hope and expectations among some people. However, these hopes were quickly shattered as her rule saw many further plunged into poverty while her family and allies enriched themselves through corruption and plunder. The accumulated anger and despair found an outlet when she chose to confront the mass opposition with brutal force, leading to the deaths of hundreds of protesters.

The crackdown provoked a revolutionary mood across the country, ultimately leading to her ousting. Although Hasina was forced to flee, the movement has so far failed to organise itself to push forward with clear demands that truly express the anger and aspirations of the masses. Simply handing power back to one faction of the capitalist elite or another will not bring about real change.

Lessons from Sri Lanka & Sudan

The movement in Bangladesh has much to learn from recent uprisings in Sudan, Sri Lanka, Chile, and elsewhere. These movements demonstrated the power to overthrow ruling elites and establish new societies. However, the realisation of this potential has been limited by two key factors, among other complications: the lack of democratically organised structures and a far-sighted programme.

A mass movement cannot be controlled like a tap, turning the flow of water on and off at will. When it surges, it reveals tremendous power - greater than any state or its institutions - capable of rendering these institutions powerless in a very short time. However, the movement alone will not automatically resolve the question of power.

Once the masses disperse, sections of the establishment, or what remains of it, will step in to fill the vacuum, effectively restoring the continuity of the old order. During this interim period, some protesters, particularly those who do not fully challenge the ruling elite and the capitalist order directly, may give the impression of sharing power.

Groups of so-called 'professionals', whether in Myanmar, Sudan, or the advisory committees established in Sri Lanka or Bangladesh, will not be allowed to hold power independently. They are often used as temporary solutions to quell the power of the streets or are absorbed into the establishment, sometimes even delivering blows to workers that the capitalist elite itself might avoid - similar to what we have seen in Chile under Gabriel Boric's government. The only way to prevent this is to channel the energy, anger, and desires of the mass movement into organised, democratically-run structures.

Democratic organisation

The formation of committees in workplaces, universities, and among farmers, united at the national level through democratically

elected representatives, is a crucial step in maintaining the connection to the masses and ensuring their presence in deciding the future they want. These structures must articulate the key demands of the movement and put forward a strategy and plan to achieve them. These demands and programme should express the aspirations of the masses and be discussed at all levels of such committees.

A programme could include the implementation of an emergency economic plan. The governor of Bangladesh's central bank has now resigned. Instead of replacing him with another capitalist, the student movement could put forward a demand that banks and other key sectors of the economy are nationalised and put under workers' control.

In addition, it could advance demands such as cancellation of all micro- and macro-debts, and the full nationalisation of health and education, bringing them under the control of democratically elected committees. Such a structure and programme would have the capacity to fulfil the full aspirations of the mass movement, going beyond immediate demands to establish a planned economy in the interests of all - a socialist society that could serve as a beacon for all those in struggle across the region and beyond.

Such an organised approach has not yet emerged or been articulated in Bangladesh. At the very least, the current student leaders should advocate for dismantling all corrupt private influences within the education sector and beyond, while calling for the election of a constituent assembly - an assembly of representatives from all sectors of society to oversee the creation of a new constitution and governance structure that reflects the will of the masses.

The Bangladeshi diaspora, which is powerful and has so far shown support for the mass movement, could play a significant role as well. An international solidarity committee of the diaspora could be established to support and participate in the discussions within the country, helping to articulate a way forward. This committee could also take action and advance policies that align with the interests of the masses in their host countries, breaking with those who support the wealthy and corrupt elites.

The elite's grip on Bangladeshi society must be challenged by building opposition from below, building a workers' party, and adopting a far-sighted socialist programme. The revolutionary mass movement has opened up new opportunities to achieve this.



Tens of thousands march to oppose racist attacks

Tens of thousands of anti-racist counter-protesters have taken to the streets to oppose a wave of violent racist attacks and to counter planned far-right ‘demos’. In most cases, at short notice, counter-protesters have far outnumbered those wanting to spread racist hatred. Socialist Party members had been building in our communities and trade unions to boost the numbers, making the case for the 6.5 million-strong trade unions to take the lead. Reports can be read in full at socialistparty.org.uk

Enormous Walthamstow protest sends strong message

There was an eerie quiet on the streets of central Walthamstow on 7 August. And then they came. Hundreds, then thousands – ten thousand anti-racist protesters at least at its height. The mood shifted from nervous to determined. “Whose streets? Our streets!”

The police had a cordon around the immigration bureau, dividing the street in two. The counter-protest had grown on both sides.

Thousands to the left, mostly from the Asian community, on the side that the far right were suspected to arrive from. And thousands to the right, where the main anti-racist demo had been called.

The counter-protest had inadvertently ‘kettled’ the police, who had to withdraw. The two wings surged forward, and held the ground together.

By 8pm, the alleged time for the far-right arrival, there was no sign of anyone foolish enough to challenge the ten thousand. Determination changed to jubilation. Cheers and laughter, a festival atmosphere.

Socialist Party members on Waltham Forest Trades Council, the coordinating body for the borough’s trade unions, had argued for the unions to stamp their presence on the movement. This helped lead to three

local union branches, and the trades council itself, co-sponsoring the counter-protest and getting the word out. We also argued for the trade union movement to have democratic control over the political demands and organisation of the protest, including democratic control of stewarding.

Demands

Ten thousand there were furious at far-right terror, but also the relentless squeeze on the working and middle classes, driving anger in all directions. Ten thousand were asking: how do we stop this happening again? How do we win a future worth living in?

While the official organisers – Stand Up to Racism, with the Socialist Workers Party in a leading role – turned down this opportunity to show a way forward, the Socialist Party did not. Our team of more than 30 members and supporters sold over 100 copies of the Socialist newspaper, and ran clean out of leaflets proposing next steps.

We proposed that the unions launch a struggle for “jobs and homes, not racism” – to undercut the misery the far right preys on. We called for a new, mass party, based on the organised working class, to coordinate campaigns against



Some of the Socialist Party members in Walthamstow
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

austerity and racism, and fight for socialist change.

Our ideas went down well, especially as the crowd started to leave, thinking “what next?” Meanwhile, the sheer numbers might have cowed far-right elements in the area – but safety was not automatic.

Thankfully we saw no incidents – but the stewarding would not have been sufficient in case of provocation or attack, especially as numbers fell. Democratic control of planning and stewarding by the trade union

movement would vastly improve that in future.

The size of our protest was no accident. Millions have learnt from the strike wave and anti-war movement that the working class has influence when it takes matters into its own hands. And Walthamstow in particular has built a tradition of struggle over many years.

The local community and trade unions forced the English Defence League (EDL) off these streets in 2012. This included the Socialist



SWANSEA AND WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY

Party working with DayMer Kurdish and Turkish community organisation, and others, to lead a breakout through police lines to join local youth surging to stop the far right marching.

Since then, trade union and community campaigns have fought public service cuts, council evictions, unaffordable housing, low pay and more. All have had involvement from Waltham Forest Socialist Party; some of them we led.

Who pushed back the far right on Wednesday 7 August? Not the Metropolitan Police, who looked understandably relieved at their absence.

Not the pro-big business, racist New Labour government. Certainly not its local MP Stella Creasy – who called for everyone to stay away, to allow the far right to go unanswered – then when she was rightly ignored and the victory was clear, shamelessly emerged for selfies!

It was the workers and residents of Walthamstow and London that did this. To consolidate it and win more, we need trade union struggle for better conditions and a united political voice for the working class.

JAMES
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Nottingham gets organised

We heard about what the far right were planning on the Wednesday: held an organising committee involving various organisations and individuals, including Socialist Party members, on Thursday; and succeeded in mobilising our event on Saturday.

At the rally, alongside others, Socialist Party members spoke on behalf of the Nottinghamshire Trades Union Council, and the Save our Services campaign.

We put forward a class approach of building unity to defend services, pointing to the huge strike wave in the last couple of years to show the potential for building a mass movement, the dangers of feeding the fears of more people, and the potential for the far right under a Labour government that attacks the working class.

The campaign did correctly organise stewarding. But one lesson for the future is that more are needed.

After events organised by the far right in 2020, the trades union council agreed it would organise a campaign in the unions, going to speak on the issue to union branches. That plan needs to be revived.

This would help explain the issues, mobilise numbers, and boost a stewarding force.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

DANIEL
TEESSIDE SOCIALIST PARTY

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that the trade unions need to play a key role in doing this, and a sense that the main capitalist parties offered no solutions to racism and islamophobia.

Later, 600 people showed up to protect an immigration office.

I attended both of these activities, as part of a delegation from the local National Education Union (NEU). I addressed the rally, emphasising the importance of trade unions leading the fight against fascism. I also raised the need for socialist politics to cut across the far right, calling for jobs, homes, pay rises, and fully funded public services.

JAMES
NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION (NEU) REP

Tiny Lancashire far right dejected

Twice local trade unionists and community campaigners have easily outnumbered far-right events.

In Preston, they could only gather a small group of racists, and some confused youth – even some Black youth. But that meant we could engage a few of them in discussion, to explain that they were being conned by the wealthy to divide the working class. One even ended up apologising to

us, and took away our Socialist Party leaflet.

In Lancaster, they were unable to assemble on the steps of the town hall, because over 200 of us had already occupied them.

We kept up lively chanting for hours, making sure the racists below us knew that “there are many, many more of us than you”. They marched off through the town, looking dejected, then returned to find that their numbers had dwindled, but ours hadn’t!

MARTIN
LANCASHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Racists didn’t dare confront hundreds in Brentford

Groups, including Ealing Trades Union Council, hastily organised the counter-protest of 300 people on 7 August. A good turnout, considering there was only 48 hours to get it done.

There was a communal atmosphere, as chants were bellowed to the hooting of horns from passing cars. Socialist Party members were present, leafleting protesters, handing out posters, and selling our Socialist paper with the ideas to fight

the far right. If they were any far right present, none were ‘brave’ enough to confront the hundreds of counter-demonstrators.

John, a member of West London NHS Unison union and the Socialist Party, gave a short speech: “We demand jobs and homes, not racism.”

“This is the sixth richest country on earth. And there are children now with rickets. There are adults being admitted to our mental health units with malnutrition, because they can’t afford to feed themselves.

“We know more children are going hungry. Teachers are increasingly having to find the money to buy breakfast to feed those children. And racism and fascism is not the answer.”

DARA
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Birmingham – ‘bring people together who are struggling, like us’

One speaker said: “My grandparents came to this country to work and contribute to society. They’ve never had a problem with trying to get on and integrate with the rest of the community. And now politicians and news channels are trying to whip up hatred against people like us.”

A women we spoke to at the demo also said: “Society is splitting more and more into two – the people with money, and the rest of us. We need to bring together the people who are struggling, like us.”

BILL
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Crawley

Crawley residents rose to the occasion and came out in our hundreds to oppose the far right on 9 August, in what could only be described as a very proud moment for our town.

We were joined by hundreds more from across the region. Amongst those were Socialist Party members

from London and Brighton, the same people who stood with their communities just days before. Equipped with our banner, leaflets and copies of the Socialist, our mission was to do more than just ‘stand with Crawley’, but to help organise its working class for the fight ahead.

In the end, only one so-called anti-immigration protester made an appearance, only to be escorted away from the roaring crowd by police. A wave given to us from a small child inside the hotel threatened with attack was a sobering reminder of why we fight against such evil.

BASIL
BRIGHTON AND WEST SUSSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

Swindon – ‘make super-rich pay – I agree with that’

We want to revive Swindon’s defunct trades union council. A body like that could organise and coordinate opposition to the far right democratically.

I had a particularly good discussion with two older men, who at first expressed some sympathy towards the anti-immigration protesters. One of them, seeing the front page of the Socialist – ‘Make the super-rich pay: Fully fund public services’ – simply said: “I agree with that.”

They asked what I thought about Nigel Farage and Reform UK. I talked about how right-wing populists identify some real issues – low pay, underfunded public services etc – but then offer no real solutions. They both supported our call for a new mass workers’ party, based on the trade unions.

This conversation was a powerful demonstration in miniature of how a workers’ party, armed with a fighting socialist programme, could undercut right-wing support, as Jeremy Corbyn demonstrated in 2017, when he won over a million Ukip voters to Labour.

SCOTT
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Lessons must be learnt from Rotherham

It was clear that the anti-racist counter-demonstration was unprepared and disorganised to deal with the growing crowds on the other side, in Rotherham on 4 August.

Led by Stand Up to Racism and Rotherham Trades Union Council (TUC), with limited stewards – only 2-3 for the 200 in attendance – it left counter-protesters vulnerable and at risk.

The police made little effort to control the far right, and quickly we were surrounded with no safe exit, with projectiles being thrown at us

Rotherham TUC and the police were forced to plan an immediate retreat.

Democratically organised stewarding is essential. The trade unions, representing tens of thousands of workers in Rotherham, have the power to mobilise people to protest safely and to drive the far right off our streets by strength of numbers and organisation.

The ineffectiveness of the counter-demo meant that the hotel was left vulnerable to the events which occurred, with police seriously outnumbered.

From smashing windows to arson, the far right threw bricks, chairs, and wood at police. Not to mention inflicting serious traumatic harm to those within the hotel – there was a clear attempt to set the hotel alight, with families inside.

The chants used at the Rotherham

protest were vague, and did not raise the improvements needed for working class. Socialist Party members called for workers’ unity for jobs, homes, and services for all. When we made suggestions, it was ignored by the Stand Up to Racism organisers with the megaphone.

MADDIE
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Hartlepool – grim picture, but there’s hope

A far-right mob attempted to descend on the small local mosque

on 31 July. Police were pelted with bricks, the window of a local butcher’s was smashed, and an Asian man was assaulted whilst walking home to a chorus of laughs from the crowds.

Many from the area also remember the racist abuse of Dover Athletic footballer Inih Effiong during a Hartlepool United match five years ago. I was only a few rows behind the perpetrators of the abuse.

Although I have painted a grim picture, there is hope. At the following game the stands of the football ground were flooded with signs that read: “Love ‘pools’, hate racism”.

Hartlepool was once a bastion of the Labour Party and trade unions, but deindustrialisation and the ineptitude and arrogance of local Labour MPs, have taken their toll.

We need to unite across communities on the idea that working-class

people, from whatever background, have far more in common with each other than they do with people who want to divide and rule on behalf of their paymasters in big business.

DANIEL
TEESSIDE SOCIALIST PARTY

Kirkby campaign opposes housebuilding without infrastructure

NEILL DUNNE
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

A campaign in Kirkby, Merseyside is opposing the construction of 807 houses in one of the most deprived towns in Britain.

In Kirkby, there used to be three senior schools, now there are two. Both are full.

In the wider borough, Knowsley has gone from 16 high schools and colleges, to eight. Seven are privately run academies.

Kids go by bus to towns miles away to access school. In many towns, doctor's surgeries have amalgamated, meaning further to travel and longer waits.

Dentistry has become an exclusive club. Many are forced to go outside their town, or even further. This is happening in Kirkby at a critical level.

Of the 807 new properties, only 80 will be for social housing, which will not alleviate the property pool problems in Knowsley. Many local residents cannot afford to buy or rent the remaining 720 properties, meaning gentrification – forced out to find cheaper housing.

The proposed land that these houses will be built on is the old college campus, which was closed down, and also my old senior school, which was knocked down during

the academisation period. It was deemed “unfit for purpose”, while it was in fantastic shape.

The white asbestos that resides under the ground in the vicinity of the college campus is also in the vicinity of many housing estates, including Whinberry Grange, and very close to the shopping centre. This provides its own drastic health concerns.

Kirkby campaigns are already active in preventing a harmful waste incinerator plant being built.

Knowsley Labour council appears to be completely unwilling to build a senior school to deal with the increased demand in the area. The council is unwilling to regulate rents, and there's very little action against landlords whose properties lack basic maintenance.

The town's amenities and infrastructure have fallen behind accessible levels. The campaign in Kirkby calling on the council to put the construction of essential services first.

We need new council homes. Building expensive private homes in densely populated areas is not the solution.

The failure of Thatcherism and 'right to buy', carried on by successive Tory and Labour governments, reduced the supply of housing with an increasing population, which in turn forced rents up. This was hugely detrimental, while wages stagnated.

Why I joined the Socialist Party

RHYS SONES
READING SOCIALIST PARTY

At my first Reading Socialist Party meeting after I joined, people asked why I decided to. It's easy to think of a dozen reasons off the top of my head.

I like socialism as a framework for society, and agree with the Socialist Party that fighting for a mass workers' party is a key demand. But I think a big part of me deciding to join comes down to the way the Socialist Party treats its members.

As a young person, I am increasingly isolated from the current political leaders, as well as a government which exists less as a voice for the people, and more as a voice for those with economic power.

The Socialist Party is where I feel I can be represented, alongside my fellow workers, to create changes that benefit everyone, not just the 1%.

Instead of just having the weight of responsibility placed on my shoulders by people with an idealised version of the ways that young people can 'save the future', I'm able to go out and help create that change myself.

So, why did I join the Socialist Party? Because, after years of struggling under a government that only pretends to care about people like me, I want to start doing things to make society better. And there are very few political groups that are willing to take the steps to do that.



Rhys (left) campaigning in Reading READING SP

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- or text your name and postcode to 07761 818 206

to find out more about joining us today!



Rallying against job losses LONDON SP



Goldsmiths UCU on strike against job losses earlier this year LONDON SP

Goldsmiths Uni Stop job cuts on queer and Black academic courses

RAIN HOWARD
GOLDSMITHS QUEER HISTORY GRADUATE

People rallied at Goldsmiths, University of London, responding to the university's decision to cut 97 jobs. This has sparked outrage, particularly because it threatens three MA degree programmes: Queer History, Black British History, and Black British Literature. This follows the dismissal of academic figures, including Dr Justin Bengry.

Speakers from a broad spectrum of the community – union representatives, tutors, students, alumni, and community activists – gathered to condemn management's actions as an act of vandalism against the university's rich academic and cultural heritage.

The rally was a collective outcry against the erosion of educational integrity. The university's focus on financial survival overshadows its commitment to academic excellence and diversity.

Management's 'Transformation Programme' – in reality cuts – is purportedly designed to address a financial shortfall due to declining student enrolment, particularly international students. New government policies, restricting international students

from bringing their families, exacerbate its decline.

Course closures, departmental restructuring, and redundancies etc simply prioritise short-term financial manoeuvres over the long-term health and mission of the university.

Worse university experience

The entire cohort of incoming Queer History students now face uncertainty regarding their education. The potential reassignment of supervision to staff outside of their specialised fields raises concerns about the loss of critical knowledge and representation.

Representation by those with lived experience is not merely academic. It is essential for preserving the integrity and depth of these specialised programmes. Goldsmiths has a storied history of academic rigour and collective activism, often standing as a beacon in times of educational and financial crisis.

The current predicament also reflects more profound systemic failures in higher education. The drive to marketisation has led to cuts, and a shift in focus from students as scholars to students as revenue streams – an undervaluation of education's true purpose, where capitalist

interests undermine the intrinsic value of learning.

There is an urgent need for a societal shift to a model of higher education that is free, fully state-funded, and accessible to all.

The threats to the Queer History and Black British academic programmes are taking place at a time of rising anti-trans and racist rhetoric, emboldened by far-right groups, and abetted by the capitalist media and government policies.

Defending these programmes, as part of the broader struggle against oppression and discrimination is crucial. This rally at Goldsmiths underscored the necessity of collective action and solidarity.

Join the student fightback: join...

socialist students

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



West Ham's London Stadium CIARAN O'DONOGHUE

Reinstate concession tickets at West Ham Reclaim the game

CIARAN O'DONOGHUE
WEST HAM SEASON TICKET HOLDER

The board of West Ham United Football Club has scrapped concession prices for match tickets, and fans are rightfully outraged. They've done the same for new season tickets too. Now children and pensioners will have to pay full adult prices.

Many with young children have said that they will not be able to take them to watch West Ham. Many have called for a boycott of the pre-season match against Celta Vigo, with a poor turnout of fans.

Bubbling

It is not the first time that the anger of West Ham fans has bubbled to the surface. The current ownership has been disliked and mistrusted since taking over the club in 2010.

David Sullivan and the late David Gold set about moving the club from Upton Park to the Olympic Stadium. This was widely criticised by fans.

Grievances include the obscene prices of tickets, food, and drink, the distance between the pitch and the stands, and the loss of the renowned atmosphere that was a feature of Upton Park. It has, for many, sucked the joy out of watching football.

This came to a head in 2018 in a match against Burnley. Fuelled by these grievances and the poor performance on the pitch, many fans charged onto the pitch.

Fans also gathered below the

director's box, and made it abundantly clear to the board what they thought of them. Many other small-scale protests have been called in the years following, with anti-board stickers reading 'GSB Out' found across east London.

These issues are not unique to West Ham. Liverpool's owners have raised ticket prices. Clubs like Bury have gone out of existence, while hundreds of millions of pounds pass through the owners of Premier League clubs.

Fans have had enough. The Socialist Party supports the campaign fighting for £20 maximum ticket prices.

Football reflects society under capitalism, dominated by big business. The Socialist Party was at the protests over the Super League in 2021 – when the owners of the richest clubs attempted to break away to carve out even more wealth for themselves.

Fan protest

Fan protest shelved those plans. But the threat is not gone, as long as football clubs are run by capitalists.

Most football clubs have their origins in the working class. Football clubs need to become democratically run, by fans, staff, and local communities. Big business needs to be kicked out of football.

We must reclaim the game, and fight to remove the rotten capitalist system.

Bethnal Green Working Men's Club - Victory for campaign to save venue - Let's press on for more

ROBBIE DAVIDSON
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

Solidarity to 'Friends of the Bethnal Green Working Men's Club'. Following a successful campaign, which has brought in locals and unions together to reject austerity and gentrification in east London, Bethnal Green Working Men's Club has been granted status as

an asset of community value. This will hopefully protect workers, and the drag and queer nights hosted in the venue, going forward.

The fight is not over, however. Supported by the Socialist Party and performing arts union Equity, protesters continue their campaign to raise money for a community purchase.

For us this is not enough. It's time

to put pressure on the council, led by local independent party Aspire, to put money towards a stake in the club, if not purchase it outright. Our venues will only be safe when they belong to working-class locals.

● Read what we said before – 'Save Bethnal Green Working Men's Club' at socialistparty.org.uk

Wakefield Pride – 'Starmers' not much different to the Tories'

Socialist Party members were amongst the over 1,000 people marching.

Although the march was led by the 'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' banner, marking the anniversary of the 1984-85 miners' strike, it was

followed by corporate floats and contingents such as Coca-Cola.

The largest section of the parade included contingents marching with banners from the unions – RMT, Unison and Unite. We had the best response to our socialist placards and

leaflets from this section, with them snapped up rapidly.

On our Socialist Party stall before the march, we asked people, as they signed petitions on funding the NHS, defending trans rights, and scrapping the two-child benefit cap, what they thought of the new Keir Starmer government? "They're not much different to the Tories", was the most common answer, which is why the Socialist Party is fighting to build a new mass workers' party.

IAIN DALTON
SOCIALIST PARTY YORKSHIRE

Busy Socialist Party stand at Black Pride in east London IAN PATTISON



Fantastic hearing for socialists at Black Pride

JAY COWARD
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

I thought that criticism of Black Pride's sponsors, for their close proximity to the Israeli state, would make it quite a tense atmosphere, and a challenge to initiate conversation. But I was completely mistaken.

The mood this year was not of celebrating the victory of a new Labour government, not an animosity towards Black Pride for its choice of sponsors, and hesitance to release that information, but an attitude and air of wanting more.

People we in the Socialist Party spoke to thought Keir Starmer will bring nothing new to working-class people. People were hungry to hear our view of what the next steps are.

Palestine is on all minds globally. Labour is in government in Britain. But is this enough to achieve everlasting change? The verdict was absolutely not.

There was cynicism towards the system at large. And there was a lot of jabs against the fact that Labour and the Lib Dems chose to attend.

All of this meant that we had a very busy day, filled with people who were

tired of platitudes and inaction. Instead, they were eager to hear our programme and thoughts about ending the conditions that spawn racism. A programme to win back jobs, housing, services and democratic power to the workers for a socialist world.

We had to make extra room as people arrived for our meeting. And three people joined the Socialist Party there and then on the day.

WHAT'S
YOUR VIEW?

editors@socialistparty.org.uk





WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses’ club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers’ organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Crowdstrike global IT outage exposes rotten core of the profit-driven technology sector



ROB PETTEFAR
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY
AND TECH WORKER IN UNITE THE UNION

The costs are still being counted from the catastrophic Crowdstrike global IT outage, with an estimate of \$5 billion in lost business so far. With the impact on the NHS and other health and emergency services unknown, a number of lives will have been lost too. But what happened?

The direct problem was a bad configuration for a sensor working at the deep level of the Windows operating system. Being at such a fundamental level, this required some technical know-how and largely manual procedures to fix. The problem only affected businesses and large organisation, as the Crowdstrike security software is largely a business-level security package.

For an update like this, to systems being run by so many critical infrastructure organisations, you would expect a gradual delivery so that problems can be identified early and the roll-out halted. This didn’t happen. It also happened on a Friday, a day usually avoided for large software updates due to most staff going home over the weekend.

Crowdstrike bosses themselves have said that there was a bug in their testing software that allowed the misconfiguration to pass. Clearly no local testing of the update was performed however, which points to huge holes in the testing and quality assurance procedures. A similar problem in April took down machines running a different operating system, Linux.

Microsoft, which runs the windows operating system, has been allowed to monopolise critical global infrastructure, with companies and

governments incentivised by business costs alone.

Having trusted, well-staffed and funded IT departments means better risk mitigation practices can limit the impact of problems and mean a faster recovery when something eventually does happen. With businesses focused on the bottom line, and governments always looking to cut funding, most organisations see IT as merely a cost to be reduced and outsourced.

Thousands are being laid off in the tech industry globally as rising interest rates bite and bosses axe jobs to save costs. In government, technical expertise is ignored and overlooked while millions is wasted on consultants, with technology changes imposed in a top-down bureaucratic manner.

The capitalist system has shown the limits of its capability to push technology in a direction valuable to the rest of society. Self-driving cars, cryptocurrency, Non-Fungible Tokens, the ‘metaverse’, the gig economy and now generative AI; the tech industry is ridden with speculation.

The tech sector has long been one of the least unionised sectors. But with the recent ‘wall-to-wall’ unionisation of the Bethesda computer game studio and the emerging of tech sections of larger unions, things are starting to change. Tech workers getting organised can begin to hold the tech bosses to account.

But it is by workers having a democratic say over how things are run that the existing advances in technology can be rolled out for the benefit of the whole of society. That means nationalising the big tech firms under democratic workers’ control and management, with no compensation for the fat-cat bosses.

Release Nigerian protesters Two socialists abducted by police for organising anti-government protests

COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS’ INTERNATIONAL (CWI) REPORTERS

During protests against the price increases and the pre-vailing hunger, two members of the Democratic Socialist Movement Nigeria (DSM), the sister organisation of the Socialist Party, and a relative of one of the activists, were arrested by police in their homes in Abuja on the night of 5 August. They were not allowed to call a lawyer and have been in custody without justification.

Under the motto #endbadgovernanceinnigeria, protests began throughout the country at the beginning of August in response to these conditions and widespread corruption. They were also inspired by the previous mass protests in Kenya. Just as ‘7 days of rage’ were proclaimed in Kenya, the protests in Nigeria were called ‘10 days of rage’. Members of the DSM were involved in the protests and one of the detainees, Adaramoye Michael, held a press conference ten hours before his home was stormed, in which he criticised the government and its neoliberal measures and called for peaceful protests.

The Nigerian police took violent action against the initially peaceful thousands-strong protests and at least 13 people were killed by the police. According to reports, they used not only tear gas but also firearms against the demonstrators. Curfews have been imposed in some states. In addition, there are over 400 arrests, including those of Adaramoye Michael, Babatunde Oluajo and Mosiu Sodiq. This repression is part of a whole series of repressive surveillance measures and invasions of the privacy of political activists like Adaramoye Michael.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of our comrades and their relatives as well as all political prisoners! The protests are legitimate and necessary!

The protests in Nigeria are an expression of the catastrophic living conditions for workers, poor and youth in the country. They are the result of an economic crisis driven by neoliberal policies. The neoliberal austerity dictates of institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are consistently implemented by the pro-capitalist corrupt politicians in the Nigerian government, which is steadily worsening the situation. Fuel subsidies have been withdrawn and taxes have been increased, which, for example, will result in a sharp increase in the price of petrol. Basic foodstuffs are experiencing sharp price increases and people are rightly angry that they cannot afford food. The inflation rate in June was 34%, higher than in the last 30 years.

DSM writes about this in a leaflet they are distributing at the protests: “Bad government is nothing new in Nigeria. Sadly, it’s getting worse



and worse. Many Nigerians had believed that the mass suffering under the government of Muhammadu Buhari, which was a monumental failure, could not be surpassed. But the Tinubu government has proven the opposite in just one year. This is because the capitalist policies of de-regulation and devaluation implemented by the Buhari government, which were responsible for the high cost of living at the time, have now been intensified by Tinubu - with a much greater commitment to the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank.

“At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the presidential candidates of the other major parties in the last elections, such as Abubakar Atiku and Peter Obi, advocated the same neoliberal policy of abolishing the so-called fuel subsidy and devaluing the naira. Nigeria would therefore experience the same economic hardship if Atiku or Obi were president. Bad government is nothing new in Nigeria. Sadly, it’s getting worse

crisis, the high prices, the attacks on public education and health care, corruption, etc. must also be linked to the need for a genuine mass party of working people with an alternative economic programme that ensures that the enormous human and material resources that Nigeria is equipped with are used for the benefit of the vast majority and not for the greed of a few.

“This alternative programme is socialism, collective ownership and a truly democratic control over the main sectors of the economy so that the country’s resources are used for the majority. This is what we need to end the bad governance in Nigeria.”

Demands of the protesters and the DSM also include price controls and the reversal of previous price increases, price limits for oil products, an end to police violence, democratic rights and free elections, a new and higher minimum wage and the automatic adjustment of wages to inflation, unemployment benefits for young people who cannot find a job and an end to neoliberal policies.



Solidarity protests

Committee for a Workers’ International activists in Ireland, Germany and Britain have protested at Nigerian embassies demanding the immediate release of local youth leaders and CWI members Babatunde Oluajo and Adaramoye Michael from police detention in Nigeria.

Sol (Germany) says: “We protested against this police and state repression in front of the embassy with speeches, signs and the handing over of a letter of protest. We called on the representatives of the embassy to work for the immediate and unconditional release of Adaramoye Michael, Babatunde Oluajo and Mosiu Sodiq. During the conversation with Embassy representatives, they agreed to pass on our demand to the authorities in Nigeria and to inform them about our protest. Since the protests, Babatunde Oluajo has been freed but Adaramoye Michael is still being detained somewhere in Abuja. We, and other comrades of the Committee for a Workers’ International, will continue to protest throughout Germany and internationally until Adaramoye Michael and Mosiu Sodiq, along with all other detained protesters, are also released.”



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formerly **Militant**

FIGHT FOR A FUTURE

Free education

Decent jobs

Council homes



DEAN YOUNG
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

The housing crisis, the thousands of pounds of student debt, poor access to quality jobs (or indeed any job for many!) and the idea pushed by the bosses that we must accept being poorer, more insecure in housing and work, and having a smaller welfare state than our predecessors.

What future does the capitalist system offer young people receiving their grades this summer?

We don't accept the predicament capitalism in perpetual decline offers. We fight to raise the minimum wage, for all workers regardless of their age, to at least £15 per hour. For an education system from nursery to university funded by the state with grants students can actually live on, not spiralling debt.

The new Labour government on these two issues offers weak, pitiful solutions. It promises, without saying when it'll do it, to end pay disparity for all workers over 18, but what about those below 18? They shouldn't be treated as cheap labour and deserve the same rights as all other workers.

Starmer's Labour say there is not any money to fund properly fund education, that they have no choice but to consider an 'uptick' in university tuition fees to tackle the funding crisis.

In reality, the money does exist. It always has! With the decline of the ability to make profits, with shrinking markets and increased international competition, big business has clawed back previous reforms which made life a bit easier for young workers. To win improvements in our lives we have to fight, organising in trade unions and on our campuses.

Taking the wealth out the hands of the bosses, nationalising the vital industries that dominate the economy - placing them under democratic working-class control - and a mass council house building programme would transform young people's lives for the better. These socialist policies would not just temporarily alleviate stresses on young people but would change the nature of how the economy is run. It must be run by working-class people in our interests, not for the profits of the bosses.

Starmer's Labour is appealing to act in the interest of the bosses, not workers and young people. None of the main parties stand on our side. If you want to fight for socialism, join the Socialist Party.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ►►► see column on p15



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