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the Socialist

Issue 1321

15-21 May 2025

formerly **Militant**

SAVE OUR NHS

From Labour cuts

HEALTH WORKER AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

NHS bosses are planning swingeing cuts across the NHS with vital jobs and services, including mental health and addiction support, facing the axe. They described the cuts in terms like 'eye-watering' and 'previously unthinkable'. The population must be thinking: 'Did we elect a Labour government last year?'

NHS Trusts report looking to 'shed' 5% of their workforce. A workforce that is already significantly depleted, with staff often

covering two or three roles as more and more NHS staff leave.

Many NHS workers will have believed that their working conditions would improve under a Labour government. What they have experienced instead is increased privatisation, lack of equipment, and no real improvement to their pay or conditions. The same Labour Party which, in opposition, crowed at the Tories to fully fund the NHS has responded to NHS bosses: "The extra funding provided should be enough". Should? Have they checked? The answer is it won't be enough!

The decade of Tory cuts, now continued by Starmer's Labour, begs the question: what will the NHS be able to provide? When will the vultures decide enough is enough? Only when the private profiteers have full control of the NHS and the profits to be made.

This wilful destruction of our NHS, created to ensure free access to treatment at the point of need, will lead to deaths. Already an NHS

leader has had to report at an inquest: "We were short staffed".

Many NHS staff are teetering on the edge of the national minimum wage. Over the last few years, NHS pay has dropped so much that, this year, emergency pay increases have had to be applied to prevent Trusts illegally paying workers less than the minimum wage.

It certainly doesn't feel to us like the NHS is 'bloated'. Only a fully democratic review by workers, patients and community groups will provide an answer to what the NHS delivers and ensures it is funded to be able to do that. Relying on the bosses - who just look at cost and their profits - will only mean cuts for us and cake for the rich. A Labour government demanding cuts to services and staff when there are still massive waiting lists seems inconceivable; but of course it is conceivable when the Labour Party is wedded to the capitalist class and dances to its tune. Kick out the privateers and nationalise the pharmaceutical

companies - who made £12 billion of 'excess' profits from their NHS contracts in 2023.

What the NHS can achieve is under no doubt after the incredible response of its workers to the Covid pandemic. Just imagine what healthcare we could all expect under a socialist system with workers and users planning and implementing what is needed for all.

A clash is coming, NHS workers care about our service and our patients, and have shown that we will fight using strike action for patient safety and their livelihoods. We will fight for a socialist NHS, free at the point of use, fully funded and under democratic control, using the vast wealth that exists in society but is currently in the pockets of the super-rich.

Do you agree?
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the**Socialist**

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Issue 1321
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Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.
The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

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The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International
socialistparty.org.uk
socialistworld.net

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ISSN 1366-9621
Published by Socialist Publications,
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT
Registered as a newspaper
at the Post Office
Printed by trade union labour
at Reach Printing Services

Militant issue 1: 1 October 1964
The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997

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

Welsh Labour facing electoral disaster

Workers’ party needed

DAVE REID
SOCIALIST PARTY WALES SECRETARY

Eluned Morgan, Labour First Minister of Wales, took the first steps to distance Welsh Labour from the historically unpopular Starmer-led Westminster government, declaring that she would “call out” UK Labour if they undermined Wales. She called for Starmer to halt part of the UK government’s plans to cut disability benefits, rethink cuts to the winter fuel allowance, and demanded Wales benefit more from wind power via the Crown Estate.

The reason for this sudden distancing from UK Labour could be seen in an ITV poll published the day after Morgan’s speech. Senedd (the Welsh parliament) elections are due in twelve months and, as 18th Century writer Samuel Johnson observed, “when a person knows they are to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates their mind wonderfully.” The poll put Labour in third place on just 18% and Reform on 25% but top of the poll was Plaid Cymru on 30%.

The polls confirm the UK-wide fracturing of support for the main parties – the Tories in Wales were fourth with 13% of the vote. But in Wales, as well as Reform, Welsh nationalist Plaid Cymru provides an outlet for the mounting anger with the status quo.



Keir Starmer and Eluned Morgan
WELSH GOVERNMENT/CC

Clear red water?
Morgan’s declaration to pursue a “red Welsh way” echoes the declaration of Rhodri Morgan, one of her predecessors, who promised in 2002 “clear, red water” between Welsh Labour and Tony Blair’s government. In reality the differences were small and came during a period of increased public spending. Now, after 15 years of austerity, the effects of the “clear red water” are invisible. In every important social measure Welsh public services are at the bottom of the UK league table: worst health and education outcomes, highest poverty levels, highest prison incarceration rates.

In a nation hit hard by deindustrialisation, the effects of Tory austerity were bound to hit hardest, but Welsh Labour did nothing to fight austerity, effectively administering spending cuts in Wales on behalf of the Tories. And now Starmer’s Labour is piling on even more misery.

Morgan points out correctly that Wales will be hit hardest by Labour’s benefit cuts - disability cuts for example are likely to hit “six times more proportionally in some areas of Wales, compared to England”, for example. She described the budgeting of HS2 as an England and Wales project “as a massive injustice”.

Reform UK
Reform has won some council by-elections in seats that have never been lost by Labour before. Its increased vote does not reflect a simple swing to the right in Wales. More, it shows the absolute anger, bordering on hatred, that is felt for all the establishment parties (including Welsh

Labour) that have inflicted this misery on working people. The Financial Times comment that Britain “does not have a populist problem. It has an unpopularist problem” applies to Wales too. And when there appears to be a viable left alternative in the form of Plaid Cymru most of the dissatisfaction spills to Plaid.

Plaid Cymru
Plaid-run councils like Carmarthen and Gwynedd have carried out cuts in exactly the same way as Welsh Labour councils. In 2007 it very comfortably joined a coalition government with Labour and probably will after the next Senedd election. It is a nationalist party that supports independence as a long-term aim, but, despite the growing support for independence, Plaid’s leader Rhun Iwan Iorwerth has promised that a Plaid government would not even call an independence referendum in its first term.

But in opposition in the Senedd it has been able to criticise Labour attacks on public services and benefits. Its support is more to do with its posing as an alternative to Labour from the left. Growing interest in Welsh independence and its appearance of being ‘left’ has given it its highest poll figures ever.

Port Talbot steel

It has not been lost on Welsh workers that Labour responded to the threat to the British Steel plant in Scunthorpe by calling an emergency week-end session of parliament to rush through the effective nationalisation

of the plant, but allowed thousands of jobs to be lost at the Tata plant in Port Talbot. However Plaid Cymru, like Welsh Labour, did not campaign for nationalisation. Socialist Party Wales consistently campaigned for the nationalisation of Tata at Port Talbot and Llanwern. Our members fought for the trade unions to adopt this demand and called on the Welsh government to act to save jobs. The demand was dismissed by Welsh Labour, Plaid and trade union leaders as “unrealistic”.

The truth is none of the establishment parties, including Reform, that work within the confines of decrepit British capitalism can turn around the managed decline of Welsh

society and improve the lives of our communities.

The working class needs its own party in the Senedd elections, that can fight for its interests and implement socialist policies. The potential for that party can be seen in the huge support that councillor Anthony Wedlake has received from his constituents in Wrexham after he resigned from Labour and joined the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. Socialist Party members are fighting in the trade unions to stop coat-tailing discredited Welsh Labour and return to their traditions by coming together to discuss the next steps to form a party that represents the working class.

SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party
May’s issue includes...

- **Lessons of Syriza**
Hannah Sell draws out the lessons from the election of the anti-austerity Syriza government in Greece ten years ago and its betrayal of the Greek working class
- **Cass report on trans healthcare**
Sarah Sachs-Eldridge looks at the report one year on and the tasks needed to fight for trans rights
- **Trump’s tariffs**
The editorial looks at the trade war and how the workers’ movement should respond to Trump’s protectionist policies

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Water companies ‘proud’ of profits: Nationalise them!

Thames Water’s previous owner, investment bank Macquarie, is proud of its record managing the privatised utility. During its ownership and since, billions of pounds of debt was laden onto the water company, now stumbling from financial crisis to crisis. No wonder Macquarie is proud of its record – in the same time Thames Water paid out dividends worth £2.6 billion. Macquarie is proud of looking after its balance sheets, while we pay the price for decades of under-investment and higher bills while private profiteers siphoned money away.

Meanwhile, water companies continue to pump sewage into our waterways. Water companies are responsible for monitoring their own pollution, so it’s no wonder the body representing them has warned it is undermining the public’s trust in them. While they’re marking their

Starmer’s immigration white paper

Trade union struggle needed to fully fund services and end race to the bottom

WHAT WE THINK

Labour suffered a humiliating defeat in the 1 May local elections, exposing the deep unpopularity of the Keir Starmer government.

But far from cutting across electoral support for Nigel Farage’s right-populist Reform UK, Labour’s ‘Restoring control over the immigration system’ white paper will lead many Reform voters to conclude that they have succeeded in getting the government to whistle Farage’s tune.

In the local elections, a section of the population picked up Reform as a weapon to express anger, not primarily against migrants, but against Labour’s cut to pensioners’ winter fuel allowance, attacks on disabled peoples’ benefits, and plans for yet more cuts.

The policies in Labour’s paper aim to scapegoat migrants for the crises working-class people face every day, made worse by this Labour government. Starmer’s press conference was full of divisive anti-migrant rhetoric, clearly put out to cause divisions between sections of workers in an attempt to undermine the united working-class fightback his government would be threatened by. His language of “take back control” otherwise Britain will become “an island of strangers” is appalling, outrageous and dangerous. It will embolden the far-right groups and parties.

Labour’s new policies to bring down net migration include abolishing the care visa route, reducing work permits for international students, and imposing levies on universities’ overseas student income. Migrants



would have to wait ten years before applying for the right to stay. There are also further hostile policies designed to make migrant workers feel like outsiders.

Austerity
Nothing in the 82 pages of this paper, or anything else coming from this Labour government, offers a solution to the crises in social care, universities, and across our public services.

Decades of Tory and Labour austerity have left the social care sector in ruins. It, like the NHS, is suffering from chronic understaffing - approximately 70,000 domestic care workers have left the sector over the past two years. Already, a fall in the number of international students coming to the UK is a contributing factor to the university financial crisis. Even before any further reductions in numbers, 43% of universities in England are expected to be in deficit.

Trade unions representing

members in both social care and higher education have responded, pointing to how the white paper’s policies would be disastrous for both sectors. The unions should be fighting to end low pay and casualisation in social care by organising action and demanding a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all, without exemptions, and for social care services to be brought back in to public ownership – fully funded and under democratic working-class control and management. Similarly, universities should be fully funded, with tuition fees scrapped and living maintenance grants made available to students.

A trade union-led struggle for these and other socialist policies, to address the needs of the whole working class, is what can end the race to the bottom. Linked to that, the trade unions should take steps towards developing their own mass political force as an alternative to Labour austerity and division.

Two Northamptonshire hospitals ask staff to take voluntary redundancies

Who are the real victims?

AMY FOSTER
NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY AND FORMER NHS WORKER

Northampton and Kettering general hospitals have both issued non-patient-facing staff the ‘opportunity’ to take voluntary redundancy, but what does this mean for staff leaving, those staying, and patients?

During the Covid pandemic it was clear how important every NHS staff member is, from the orthopaedic surgeons to ward clerks and house-keeping teams. In the NHS everyone has their role, but all members of the team provide holistic care for patients. To work for the NHS is a difficult experience to explain to anyone who hasn’t done it.

Lately there have been calls to make improvements to both hospitals. Kettering General requires improvement according to the Care Quality Commission. Northampton General has an overall rating of good but requires improvement in medical and maternity care. How is this to be improved by reducing staff?

Some may think that reducing office staff would be a good way to reduce costs, however that means patient-facing staff being pulled away from patients to answer phones, assist in discharges or fill in paperwork that the office staff do. Those things won’t stop needing to be done. Patient care will suffer and more will be put on our already stressed staff.

What of the staff who take the

WHAT’S YOUR VIEW?

editors@socialistparty.org.uk



UK-US trade deal not a win for workers

CALLUM JOYCE

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Apparently ‘historic’ trade deal between the US and UK was signed on 8 May, the first the US had agreed with any country following the chaos unleashed by Trump’s sweeping tariffs in April. Many of the specifics of the deal are still very vague, but it will result in planned tariffs of 25% on UK aluminium and steel being removed and a tariff of 27.5% on UK cars reduced to 10% for the first 100,000 sold to the US each year. In return, the US will be granted greater freedom to export beef to UK markets as well as the UK removing its tariff on US ethanol.

But the reality of the deal is far less impressive than the government suggests. The basic 10% tariff on all other British goods sold to the US is still in place and there has been no suggestion that this will be removed. Even with the promised reduction in tariffs on cars and metals, the average tariff rate on UK products will still be 11%, only a 2% reduction on what the rate was before this deal. Contrast this with the tariff rate of 1% that was in place before Trump unleashed his protectionist policies!

However, the British capitalists in the automotive and metal sectors will no doubt feel some relief. They will use any excuse to justify going on the offensive against the wages and working conditions of their workers. Starmer has claimed the deal will protect thousands of jobs in those industries. But in the capitalist bosses’ hands, no jobs are safe.

Clearly the deal does not signal a return to the era of ‘free trade’ that British capitalism has been used to and dependent on. In reality, Trump has used the threat of worse tariffs to exact economic concessions from Starmer; this will likely be repeated



PHOTO: NUMBER 10/CC

in US trade deals with other countries. As one commentator in the Financial Times put it: “The pact is closer to a protection payment to a mob boss than a liberalising agreement between sovereign countries”.

All of this will only contribute to a continuing pessimism about British capitalism and its complete inability to create economic growth, regardless of whatever deals it may make globally. An economist quoted in the Financial Times said of the trade deal: “We do not expect this to lead to a noticeable impact on UK GDP”. The same is true for the recently announced trade deal with India which is estimated to only increase UK GDP by 0.1% - by 2040! All of this will lead to more pressure on Starmer and Reeves to further cut public spending and continue their austerity offensive against the working class.



Starmer has claimed the deal will protect thousands of jobs in those industries. But in the capitalist bosses’ hands, no jobs are safe

Neither protectionism nor free trade will serve the interests of the working class, they are both based on a capitalist system that profits from our exploitation. The way to protect jobs and services in Britain and internationally is not through trade wars or free trade agreements, but through trade union struggle for decent wages and working conditions, through the nationalisation under democratic workers’ control of companies, and through fighting for a socialist planned economy where the vast wealth that exists can be employed in the interests of the majority.

● **Read more ‘Trade wars and the workers’ movement’ online at socialistparty.org.uk, first published in the May edition of Socialism Today**

Peter Taaffe’s last meeting

Over 300 attended Peter Taaffe’s funeral in East London on Tuesday 13 May. And over 150 watched the service online, including many internationally.

Peter’s last meeting heard moving tributes from friends, family and comrades.

Donations can be made in Peter’s memory online: socialistparty.org.uk/peter-taaffe-memorial-fund

The Socialist will publish further tributes to Peter’s life and ideas in the coming weeks and months. The June issue of Socialism Today, our sister publication, will be a special edition made up of a selection of articles written by Peter.

Read Peter’s obituary ‘Peter Taaffe – International Trotskyist theoretician and fighter for socialism’ at socialistparty.org.uk



ISRAELI STATE ESCALATES GAZA SUFFERING

Mass workers’ struggle can open way forward



WHAT WE THINK

At many times since the start of the war on Gaza it has seemed that the situation in the strip couldn’t become much worse. But following the Israeli government’s renewal of bombardments in early March and blockade of all food, water, medicines and other necessities, a new level of trauma and agony is being reached.

Mass starvation and homelessness, on top of an estimated minimum of 77,000 deaths during the war, according to the Economist, is escalating the suffering.

The Israeli cabinet’s course of action is to condense Gaza’s population into vast tent encampments in the south of the strip, while increasing the death toll and making living conditions unbearable enough to force as many Palestinians as possible out of the strip. According to the public pronouncements of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, this horrific collective punishment is to enable the isolation and destruction of remaining Hamas fighters and obtain the release of the remaining Israeli captives.

These aims are rightly seen by most people worldwide - including a majority of Israelis - as subterfuge. The hostages won’t be released through further bombardment and the extreme brutality cannot completely destroy Hamas, which in any case exists outside Gaza too. The same Netanyahu who today declares the need to wipe out Hamas previously encouraged Qatar to send \$30 million a month to that very same Hamas, one illustration of the manoeuvring he has engaged in to suit his objectives.

Rather, underlying Netanyahu’s plan is the Israeli right’s desire for Israel to encompass all the Palestinian territories, and also the determination of virtually the entire Israeli ruling class and its political representatives to ward off conditions that could lead to the setting up of a genuine neighbouring Palestinian state. Also, Netanyahu is spurred on by the motive of holding his governing coalition together by satisfying the demands of the far-right parties within it.

The plan for Gaza is accompanied by furthering Israeli annexation in the West Bank. With far-right government minister Bezalel Smotrich leading that project, messianic Jewish settlers have been encouraged to expand their armed groups, increase violence against Palestinians and develop new settlements. This has gone hand in hand with Israeli state military invasions into the Palestinian refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarm,



PHOTO: IOANNIS

demolitions of Palestinian homes, forced displacement of an estimated 40,000 West Bank Palestinians, and economic strangulation of the Palestinian Authority.

World response

The global response reflects the class divide in societies everywhere. On the one hand, enraged and shocked ordinary people, and on the other hand governments - representing capitalist interests - that refuse to take meaningful action against the war.

This week, US president Trump is sealing deals worth hundreds of billions of dollars with Arab elites, during a tour of several Arab countries. The massive amounts being flaunted include a possible ‘gift’ of a \$400 million luxury jumbo jet to Trump from the autocratic ruler of Qatar. At the same time, Trump’s administration has agreed to participate in Netanyahu’s obscene drive to starve, decimate and expel the population of Gaza, dressing up US participation as a humanitarian operation which will provide \$1.3 meals as a palliative.

The lull in anti-war movements internationally isn’t due to lack of outrage at the war but rather reflects frustration that the mass opposition so far hasn’t managed to stop it. This doesn’t mean there won’t be a new wave of protests in coming weeks, or that they can’t be effective in stepping up the necessary pressure. Capitalist governments worldwide, whether friendly to Netanyahu’s regime or critical, are constantly weighing up how much inaction they can get away with regarding Gaza, in front of their home audience.

Movements from below that could develop to challenge their interests are the biggest threat they face. Aware of that, the Financial Times warned them in an editorial on 7 May: “US and European countries that tout Israel as an ally that shares their values have issued barely a word of condemnation. They should be ashamed of their silence, and stop enabling Netanyahu to act with impunity”. It went on to criticise Arab leaders too, for doing nothing for Gaza while they “fete Trump at lavish

ceremonies with promises of multi-billion-dollar investments and arms deals”, and concluded: “Those who remain silent or cowed from speaking out will be complicit”.

Clearly ‘speaking out’ is not enough; the Western powers must be forced to take measures against the war - such as by depriving Israel’s military apparatus of arms imports - through building working-class pressure and action with that aim. The Arab masses too have immense potential power, including the ability to bring economies to a halt that are vital for world trade routes and energy supplies. On the doorstep of the Israeli regime are the seven million Palestinians across the occupied territories and inside Israel who also have great potential power, through developing collective, democratic organising at working-class level against the war and occupation.

Israeli workers

Pivotal too, is for the Israeli working class to bring its organised weight to bear - against being made to pay

the price of the war, against the war itself and the West Bank repression, and also against the Israeli regime’s military interventions elsewhere. It has been bombarding south Lebanon and Yemen, and in Syria has seized territory, along with attempting to foster division, leaning on the Druze population and certain other minorities.

Many Israeli workers - both Jews and Palestinians - took part in a general strike last September against the refusal of the government to create the necessary conditions for a hostage release deal. A well-prepared programme of escalating action by the Israeli workers’ movement would be able to force an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and remove Netanyahu’s government from office. Significantly, a teachers’ strike broke out in Israel last week, against wage cuts imposed on public sector workers. Other ‘war economy’ austerity measures are impacting on workers as well, such as a 1% increase in VAT.

“It is a toxic brew: the government is asking its citizens for big sacrifices even as those citizens despair of their government”, said the Economist on 26 March. The discontent includes army reservists: in some military units only half of them have turned up for duty when called up.

So the class divide is becoming more exposed in Israel, a welcome development that will need to be accompanied by workers moving to create their own mass party, independent of capitalist interests. Through such a party taking up socialist ideas, and a similar process developing in the Palestinian territories and in surrounding Arab countries, a way forward will be opened up towards ending the cycles of war, and for all the region’s peoples to be able to arrive at mutually beneficial solutions to all the nightmare conditions that are unsolvable under capitalism.

The Socialist Party fights for:

- **End the siege of Gaza and the occupation of all the Palestinian territories. For the permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from those areas**
- **The release of the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli prisons and the Israeli captives held in Gaza**
- **A mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for liberation**
- **The building of independent workers’ parties in Palestine and Israel and links between them**
- **An independent, socialist Palestinian state, alongside a socialist Israel, with guaranteed democratic rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East**
- **No trust in capitalist politicians internationally. Fight to build workers’ parties that stand for socialism and internationalism**

PCS conference: Socialists gear up for battle despite elections defeat

DAVE SEMPLE

PCS VICE PRESIDENT 2024-25, PERSONAL CAPACITY

National election results were declared on Friday 9 May in the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS). The left 'coalition for change', in which the Broad Left Network and the Socialist Party participate, was defeated, dropping from 19 seats on the 35-seat National Executive Committee (NEC) to seven. The left retained the post of deputy president, and Socialist Party members Fiona Brittle and Marion Lloyd were re-elected to the executive.

Turnout overall was significantly down on last year's elections.

A left majority was victorious in the 2024 national elections, winning 19 of 35 seats but not winning the union's presidency. The president, Martin Cavanagh, re-elected in the 2025 elections with a much-reduced vote, spent the year vetoing any serious moves towards a genuine fight on pay, pensions, jobs, office closures and working conditions.

Cavanagh and his misnamed 'Left Unity' faction attempted to win votes of PCS members by promising to refund to them the £3-£5 per month they had been paying into a national strike levy from August 2024 until it was suspended in February 2025 – which many activists have seen as a bribe. Cavanagh et al also, ironically, blamed the outgoing NEC for inaction over the electoral year since May 2024 – inaction directly caused by presidential vetoes of moves to action.

Concerning from the point of view of union democracy, Left Unity candidates attempted to launch a 'red scare' in their election addresses, accusing the coalition for change of being a fig-leaf for the Socialist Party and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. This does not seem to have got much of an echo amongst members, but it is indicative of the continuing rightward shift of Cavanagh and Left Unity.

Uncertain mood amongst government workers

Socialist Party members who are also PCS members and union reps were active across the UK during the national elections, leafleting workplaces and running members' meetings to discuss out the issues facing civil servants in Westminster and the devolved governments, as well as private sector members.

Workers know that this government is not their friend. But the lack of any serious action in PCS since June 2023 – when Cavanagh and his allies collapsed the previous national campaign – has led to uncertainty about whether we can fight and win.

In other areas, such as the heroic resistance of the Birmingham bin workers to pay cuts, the attack is pressing and workers have quickly understood they need to fight. In this 'phony war' period, central government workers are still not certain that



Above: PCS members on strike in defence of victimised reps at Benton Park View
Below: Facilities Management strikers at the Cabinet Office (Marion Lloyd centre)

SOCIALIST PARTY

they have to dig in and fight, or that they can fight – a mood exacerbated by the general secretary and president's complacency.

Ready or not, Labour is coming for us

For socialists, it is clear that the Labour government is preparing major attacks on the civil service. Budget cuts began in July, when Rachel Reeves announced 2% cuts. This escalated in the October Budget with a further 5% cuts announced. In the Spring Statement in March, a further 15% cuts to "administrative budgets" were announced.

The impact of this will be on pay and jobs.

In the Cabinet Office, 1,200 job cuts have already been announced, out of total staffing of 6,500. Labour government minister Pat McFadden has called this "leading by example".

Recent announcements indicate coming attacks on civil service executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies (known as Arm's Length Bodies) and further attacks on the number of civil service jobs in London.

All attempts to restrict budgets will inevitably have an impact on civil service pay.

From the beginning of the last electoral year, in May 2024, Socialist Party members elected to the union's NEC persistently argued that we needed to put the case for a fight to members.

That we had to put forward a clear industrial strategy that would deserve the confidence of reps and members, to 're-win' our campaign arguments. Basic steps like this weren't simply vetoed, they were buried by inaction.

ADC 2025 can be a turning point: build the union, build the campaign

The PCS annual delegate conference (ADC) meets from Tuesday 20 May. Conference will have the opportunity to set course to prepare the union for the fights that are coming. This is the immediate task for all activists across the union. The incoming leadership – who are the same leadership that was ousted in May 2024 – have already proven that they are not capable of building a serious fight. They will have to be pressured.

Current uncertainty notwithstanding, members will very shortly be demanding that their union acts to protect their pay and jobs. There are already signs of a broader move across the other trade unions, including doctors, nurses and teachers, towards a fight. An organised left within PCS will play a crucial role in holding the feet of the NEC to the fire.

The Socialist Party will continue to fight for a leadership that stands up to Starmer instead of providing cover for this austerity government. We should continue to place demands on Labour, but we believe there is a need for a new party which will serve

the interests of workers. The trade unions, including PCS, must rise to that challenge.

The PCS NEC needs to call in its parliamentary group, to explain to members where they stand on our union's policies. Doing that, and also contacting all pro-worker MPs, including the independents and suspended Labour MPs, will enable us to form a parliamentary bloc that champions our policies. That would strengthen our industrial fight. PCS should also discuss with other unions in order to call a conference to debate launching a new working-class party to fight for socialist policies.

We urge all activists across PCS to join the PCS Broad Left Network, in which Socialist Party members take part, and to commit to the fight our members need in 2025.

Socialist Party fringe meeting at PCS conference:

Tuesday 20 May, 5.30pm (or end of conference)

Gresham Suite, The Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Road, BN1 1NR

Hear from: Marion Lloyd and Fiona Brittle, PCS NEC members; Dave Semple, 2024-25 Vice President; Rob Williams, Socialist Party Executive Committee



Huge picket in support of Birmingham bin strike



WILLIAM DOWNS

BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

The Unite Birmingham bin strike has entered its ninth week, and the determination of the striking workers has only grown stronger. What began as a response to the Labour council's decision to axe a vital role within the city's refuse and recycling service – impacting pay by as much as £8,000 per worker – has evolved into a powerful display of national solidarity and grassroots resistance.

As Socialist Party members have warned, this is not just about bin workers; it's about the future of all public sector workers and the communities they serve.

On Friday 9 May, a mass picket at the Lifford Lane depot brought together hundreds of striking bin workers, trade unionists, and community supporters from across the UK.

The picket effectively shut down the depot, with only one van attempting – and failing – to leave the site. The scale and spirit of the action reflected the growing anger at a council determined to impose cuts despite the devastating effects on public services and workers' livelihoods.

Despite the council invoking a major incident and deploying Section 14 of the Public Order Act to stifle pickets, the strike continues to gather momentum. The Labour council has even enlisted army planners and agency labour to undermine the strike.

As FBU general secretary Steve Wright pointed out, in response to suggestions that firefighters could be drafted in to clear rubbish, "You have more chance getting firefighters to put petrol on fires than getting them to break the strikes."

From the National Education Union to train drivers' union Aslef, from NHS campaigners to refuse workers in Sheffield who have been on strike

One of the Labour council's strikebreaking attempts is to bring in scab bin lorries from other areas. On 8 May, Socialist Party members were among those who held up lorries bound for Birmingham in Ryton, Coventry. Here, Dave Nellist, former Labour MP and Socialist Party councillor, discusses with drivers



COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

UCU education demo must be a step towards concerted national fightback on cuts

ADAM POWELL DAVIES

SOCIALIST STUDENTS NATIONAL ORGANISER

Around 500 rallied in London on Saturday 10 May for the UCU 'Protect Education Now' national demonstration. The protest brought together workers from across the education sector to demand an end to cuts in universities, colleges and prison education.

Socialist Students brought solidarity, with members travelling from across the UK to attend. Our placard slogans and chants included 'fund not fees, no staff redundancies', and 'money for jobs and education, not for war and occupation'.

Post-16 education faces its deepest funding crisis in decades. Currently one in two universities are cutting jobs and courses.

This Labour government, acting in defence of the capitalists' profit interests, is determined to squeeze funding for education and all our public services. Only a mass campaign bringing together workers across sectors will be able to win the public funding that is needed to save post-16 education from the current crisis of marketisation.

That's why this demonstration was significant – it was a glimpse of what

can be done when a national lead is given. It was positive that UCU general secretary Jo Grady told the rally that the 10 May demo will not be the last national action in the campaign to stop the cuts.

Socialist Students supports calls by activists in UCU for 10 May to be a step towards building a concerted fightback, including properly preparing for UK-wide action, coordinated with other education unions.

The demo heard from UCU activists from Cardiff and Dundee universities, where staff have taken strike action and successfully halted compulsory redundancies this year. This shows the potential for UK-wide strike action to halt cuts. Any industrial action should be linked to a political strategy that demands full public funding, paid for by the super-rich.

Several speakers called for more lobbying of MPs. Socialist Students agrees with this approach, as it can help clarify who is on the side of our movement. But that has to be combined with a call for action from those MPs who claim they stand with us – like demanding they raise our campaigns in parliament.

Socialist Students has been organising lobbies of MPs through the Funding Not Fees campaign

this year. In the run-up to the 11 June government spending review, we will be contacting MPs to ask that they submit an anti-cuts, free education amendment – to demand the super-rich pays for the crisis in post-16 education, not students and workers.

Socialist Students societies have also been busy organising Funding Not Fees protests and meetings around the country. This week at Bradford Uni we held a successful day of action against the cuts, with support from UCU and Union branches (see page 11).

Unfortunately, Socialist Students did not get the opportunity to address the 10 May demo. Two of our members asked to speak, to bring solidarity to UCU and talk about our campaigning. But despite being told there might be time at the end, the rally was cut short by 40 minutes without explanation.

There was one speaker bringing solidarity from students, NUS president Amira Campbell. Members of the Socialist Students steering committee will be meeting with Amira and NUS vice-president (Higher Education) Alex Stanley to discuss how to build a student movement alongside staff to end the crisis in higher education.

Socialist Party members joined the protest, including two UCU NEC members, Duncan Moore and newly elected Marco Tesel. Unfortunately they were also not brought in to speak, but did distribute a leaflet outlining a national strategy and way forward, including the need to apply pressure on the UCU leadership to ensure members' decisions are implemented and that members have full democratic control over disputes.

● Our leaflet invited UCU members to discuss with us at the Socialist Party fringe meeting at UCU Congress: Leonardo Hotel Liverpool – 1pm, Sunday 25 May, or via Zoom meeting ID: 87642443351



ADAM POWELL DAVIES

£15 AN HOUR: IS IT ENOUGH? HOW CAN IT BE WON?

HELEN PATTISON
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On 1 April 2025, a government press release stated: “Pay slip boost for millions as new minimum wage rates take effect”. It’s not as if the Low Pay Commission, an ‘independent advisor body’ to the government, doesn’t suggest a small increase to the minimum wage every year.

In fact, if it wasn’t on the government website, you might have thought it was an April fool. Especially as the business secretary Jonathan Reynolds also commented: “We promised to make low pay a thing of the past”.

2.7 million claimants of Universal Credit are in work, and still rely on that extra support to get by. Even this latest increase of the minimum wage to £12.21 an hour for people over the age of 25 won’t change the daily struggle people experience. Misnamed the ‘National Living Wage’, it leaves single individuals about £4,000 short each year on what the Living Wage Foundation calculates is needed to live. A couple with two children, both working on the minimum wage, will be about £14,000 short. Around 68% of Universal Credit recipients who were in work went without essentials such as toiletries and prescriptions in a six-month period in 2024. Millions use food banks despite being in work.

The recent increase to the minimum wage has not changed this dire picture. Of course, the low pay facing many isn’t just a reflection of Britain’s economic weakness, or the historically low productivity growth in industry, either in services or distribution. Since the 1980s, wealth inequality has been on the increase.

Rich keep getting richer

The share of the wealth owned by the top 0.1% doubled from 1984 to 2013, reaching 9%. In 2013 the wealthiest 1% owned £3,315 billion, by 2019 that had increased to £4,682 billion. During those decades, the British economy has been through both growth and recession – but the rich keep getting richer while increasing numbers are forced to scrape by on low pay.

When the minimum wage was first introduced in 1999 the number of people paid at that level was only about 500,000, but that number has been increasing. In 2001 around 2% of workers earned the minimum wage. While figures vary, today it is closer to 6.5%, with around 15.7% earning the real living wage – of £12.60 nationally and £13.85 in London – or below.

The workers’ and trade union movement now has to ask how can low pay be challenged?

Part of that is clearly a demand on the minimum wage to be increased. The Trades Union Congress, which brings together the big majority of trade unions in Britain, voted in 2021 to adopt a policy in favour of a £15-an-hour minimum wage to be implemented as quickly as possible.

But, despite the Labour government being elected pledging to ‘make work pay’, including a policy to “change the

Low Pay Commission’s remit so... the minimum wage will for the first time reflect the need for pay to take into account the cost of living”, the remit published just weeks into the new government also urged consideration of ‘the impact on business’ and ‘competitiveness’. The minimum wage is still just over £12 an hour.

The fight for £15 an hour, will need an organised and concerted campaign by the trade union movement. Including appealing to and organising new layers of workers on low pay, and drawing them into the workers’ movement.

Increasing the minimum wage to £15 an hour would impact over 5.3 million workers. It would represent a huge victory for the working class. It would signify that, despite all the talk of low growth, there is still huge wealth in society which can be redistributed. Such a victory would likely have a snowball effect; if the ruling capitalist class could be forced to increase pay for millions, could it be forced the fix the NHS, the housing crisis, reverse sky-high tuition fees?

An increase to £15 an hour would represent a transfer of wealth of around £2 billion a month from the capitalist class to the working class.

On the one hand, this is a drop in the ocean of the huge wealth that exists and is hoarded by a tiny few. The 50 richest families in the UK have wealth totalling £466 billion. It’s estimated that 20 energy companies made over £480 billion profits since the beginning of the energy crisis.

At the same time, Rachel Reeves is demanding £2 billion of cuts to civil service spending which could result in as many as 10,000 job losses in the sector. British capitalism teeters on the edge of recession, with high government debt and rising borrowing costs. The capitalists have many excuses as to why they cannot meet workers’ demands to end low pay, not least that it could unleash a growing appetite for change.

Organised fight

So to win a decent minimum wage will need struggle. It will require an organised fight, industrial and political, using the huge weight of the workers’ movement to force concessions from Reeves, Starmer and the bosses. It would mean copying and expanding the actions of, for example, Amazon workers in Coventry, and sections of fast-food workers, who have campaigned in their workplaces, and won people to the union to get organised for the first time around demands for a decent pay rise.

It would also include encouraging all workers already organised and discussing taking action to adopt £15 an hour as their demand. There are already examples of this, for example the local government unions’ 2025-26 pay claim is for a £3,000 a year rise for all staff and a minimum wage of £15 an hour. Sections of workers could take action and win £15 before the government is forced to increase the minimum wage. This would be a victory for those workers but also the



PHOTO: HORNBEAM ARTS

£4,000

the amount the misnamed ‘National Living Wage’ leaves individuals short of what the Living Wage Foundation calculates is needed to live on



Winning a decent minimum wage will require an organised fight, industrial and political, using the huge weight of the workers’ movement to force concessions from Reeves, Starmer and the bosses

movement as a whole.

Building a movement for £15 an hour could include demonstrations outside parliament to demand an increase. It could mean making low pay and the minimum wage an election issue, with thousands of council seats up for election next year. Low-paid workers should be encouraged to stand as candidates who will fight for councils to become £15-an-hour employers, including any outsourced workers, for example. All as part of the struggle against low pay.

Strike wave

A big chunk of the strike wave in 2022-23 was the action taken by nurses, not least because we had just come out of the most serious phases of the pandemic, which they had been on the sharp edge of, and yet many were struggling under the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis. On their demonstrations, workers held placards saying “you clapped us, now pay us”, among other Covid-related messages.

It’s also clear that the vital role they played during that period gave them a confidence to demand a meaningful pay rise after years of real-terms pay cuts and wage freezes in the NHS and public sector. The Royal College of Nursing put forward a claim of 12.5%. These qualified workers, who are now also forced to take on university debt after attacks on the nurses’ bursary scheme, earn just a few pounds above the minimum wage, even despite their recent heroic struggle against the Tory government and their partial victory.

Other workers in the health service, who also play a vital role preventing the spread of infection and ensure the smooth running of our hospitals, such as cleaners, catering and porters, are paid just 15p above the legal minimum wage. All these workers could be won to a struggle for a £15 an hour.

Before £15, the campaign for £10 an hour had been a beacon for the workers’ movement. With inflation driving up prices and driving down the value of workers’ pay, the demand was increased.

Campaigns such as the National Shop Stewards Network, which coordinates some of the most fighting union leaders and trade union activists, highlighted the need for a £10 minimum wage at that time too, against the backdrop of increasing anger at low pay. Activists, including from the Socialist Party, took part in ‘guerrilla leafleting’, slipping into high street shops and restaurants, known for their low pay and corrupt practices, to leaflet staff about how to get organised and get involved.

And this movement had victories. It didn’t win its overall demand. But charting the percentage increases of the national minimum wage and its level in comparison to the median hourly pay, shows that, under pressure, they have been forced to increase the minimum wage faster.

The Tory government was even forced to co-opt the idea of a ‘living wage’, distorting its meaning and re-branding the minimum wage for over

25s as the ‘National Living Wage’. This was a reflection of the enthusiasm for a rise, and of the enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn’s policies as the then leader of the Labour Party.

In 2019, ahead of his Labour Party leadership bid, posing as being supportive of the demand, even Keir Starmer was forced to stand on a picket line with McDonald’s workers holding signs demanding £15 an hour.

Today, the huge disparity in minimum wage levels for younger workers plays a useful role for the bosses. Campaigners often make the point that 20-year-olds don’t get money off their bills, despite getting substantially lower pay for the same work. But the bosses exploit younger workers, threatening to replace ‘more expensive’ older workers with ‘cheaper’ younger ones. It’s why the Socialist Party’s demand for ‘no exemptions’ to a £15 an hour minimum wage is so important.

While it wasn’t a panacea, looking at the 1970s and 80s shows what is possible, on the basis of working-class industrial and political organisation. At its height in the 1970s, 82% of workers’ wages were set by collective bargaining agreements, compared to around 26% today.

Collective bargaining

Linked to big changes in the global economic and political circumstances, in Britain, a huge change between the 1970s and today, has been the transformation of the Labour Party into an out-and-out capitalist party and, connected to that, the massive pushing back of working-class organisation.

The level of political and industrial organisation of the working class acts as a counterweight in society, in the collective interests of the working class against the bosses. If the working class in Britain is to change the trajectory of growing poverty and the continued enrichment of a tiny minority, it will mean transforming and rebuilding the mass organisations of the working class and engaging in struggle.

The Socialist Party demands ‘a trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand of a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher’. It is just part of our programme of demands to address the multiple crises capitalism inflicts on the working class – all linked to the need for the working class to struggle to end the exploitative capitalist system and bring about socialist change in Britain and internationally.

What do you think the minimum wage should be, and how can it be fought for?

We welcome your views. Send us your thoughts and experiences to editors@socialistparty.org.uk – if possible, please keep submissions to 500 words or fewer



Cruel Labour austerity brings people to Socialist paper

SAM SMITHSON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

One way we get our ideas across in Waltham Forest, like Socialist Party branches up and down country, is by selling our newspaper – the Socialist – throughout the borough. 119 people bought our Socialist paper in the final week of April.

The popularity of our paper comes as no surprise to us. The response we get from local people is anger and frustration at the Labour government’s cruel austerity.

Cuts and more cuts

The local Labour-run council plans to make £18 million cuts this year, with a further £23 million cuts over the next three years, despite a 5% council tax increase on local residents, after years and years of cuts.

These cuts will worsen already-struggling local services. Council

workers will face job losses, free parking in busy shopping areas will end, and hiring freezes will reduce job opportunities and put more strain on the remaining workforce.

Services for disabled people are also being cut. The disgraceful decision to close the Markhouse Centre was recently upheld by the Labour council.

This is a crucial facility for disabled people and their caregivers. We fought to save it with the people that use it.

Our socialist programme

As a result of this dire situation, people are eager to hear the socialist programme put forward in our paper – halting all council cuts and demanding budgets that actually reflect our needs.

We have been selling the Socialist at local tube and train stations, as well as on our campaign stalls. I urge you to try this too.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND									
AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2025					DEADLINE: 30 JUNE 2025	
North West	1,039	1,200						87%	
South West	1,741	2,100						83%	
Wales	1,242	2,400							
East Midlands	1,037	2,050							
Yorkshire	887	2,650							
West Midlands	851	2,700							
Southern & SE	727	2,400							
Northern	219	800							
London	1,210	5,000							
Eastern	295	1,300							
Other	853	2,400							
TOTAL	10,100	25,000							

After beating job cuts... ...domestic violence worker speaks to the Socialist

Domestic violence advocates at charity Solace successfully beat job cuts this year. Tower Hamlets Socialist Party member, Skye Mincher, reports her discussion with one of the workers.

The independent domestic violence advocate I spoke to told me that she provides intervention support for victims and survivors over a three-month period, and also advises on issues service users may be facing, such as housing, finances, benefits etc.

Often, Solace workers advocate for the service user to other organisations, such as local authorities, GPs, police, and social services. Their main role being to make sure these organisations are being proactive in helping those in need of support.

This is an extremely important job. They are already under extreme pressure.

The proposed cuts would’ve left one third of the workers jobless. It would’ve inhibited even more victims and survivors from receiving the help that they need.

The Solace worker said that the charity had a £174,000 deficit. She said that Solace blamed council cuts.

Who is to blame?

Tower Hamlets council is run by the independent Aspire party, which has introduced popular policies, like free school meals. Back in February, when the workers first proposed strikes, the council stated that it had not cut funding. But, since then, the workers’ campaign has forced the Aspire council to cover the missing funding.

The domestic violence advocates worked with their union, United Voices of the World (UVW), to organise two protests against Solace, and also propose strikes. The latter, luckily, didn’t have to take place.

The worker I spoke to said that her



Skye on the first protest to save Solace workers' jobs

and her team reached out to UVW, which proposed these ideas. These measures were extremely important for the withdrawal of cuts. This highlights the importance of unions for workers, to enable them to have a voice.

The Solace worker said that they were in shock when cuts were announced. “It was two and a half weeks warning, and we were either going to be there or not.”

They weren’t just worried about their jobs. They had service users to think about.

“We would most likely have to start turning people away. When a service hits full capacity, it puts a strain on the remaining workers, and puts people in danger.”

Commenting on the withdrawal of cuts, she said that Solace has said the

funding had been “secured”. But there has been no official statement on the plan moving forward.

‘It’s worth fighting’

“Don’t take anything as face value. There is always something worth fighting for, big or small. As long as it’s important to you and the people around you, then it’s definitely worth fighting for. And join a union.”

“The goal is that one day the system supports victims and survivors so well that we’re not required to be there. So, we fight for our jobs now.

But, hopefully, one day, we won’t have to. Because we won’t be needed.”

We are happy that the Solace workers have won. We are ready to fight alongside them against future cuts, and as part of the wider battle to end gender-based violence.

Barking residents say: ‘Reverse 34% rent hike’

PETE MASON
BARKING REACH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION CHAIR

Argent House tenants on the Barking Riverside estate in east London face a shocking 34% rent increase over two years – with a 20% rise this April alone. This is just 13 months after a 14% increase in March 2024.

Residents, many on the minimum wage, say the hikes are unaffordable, leaving some paying 81% of their income in rent. A full-time worker, earning the new minimum wage, would be left with just £352 for food, bills, childcare, and everything else, after rent.

Unlike previous years, tenants received no advance notice of the increase, leaving them no time to seek alternatives. When challenged, L&Q’s

property manager claimed the rise was based on “current market rates”. The Barking Reach Residents Association calls this an “extortion racket”, due to homebuilders’ land banking, and profit-driven landlords pushing rents beyond reach.

Despite promising social housing tenants a 2.7% cap (CPI inflation + 1%), L&Q’s private rental arm imposed far higher increases to its shorthold tenants. With £1.1 billion in annual turnover – partly funded by housing benefits – residents argue L&Q can afford to freeze rents.

Barking Reach Residents Association demands:

- Immediate reversal of the 20% increase
- Rent rises capped at 2.7%, in line with L&Q’s social housing policy



Barking residents on a previous protest campaigning to make their homes safe MARY FINCH

- Long-term solutions, including public ownership of housing associations, to ensure affordability
- Homebuilders and housing associations should be nationalised, under the democratic control of the working

class. No one should spend 80% of their wages on rent, while landlords profit and homelessness rises.

With more tenants fearing similar hikes, pressure is mounting on L&Q to act.

Wakefield – With Banners Held High festival

JOE SNOWDEN
LEEDS AND WEST YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

A renewed sense of optimism was in the air. Over 500 attended the annual With Banners Held High event.

The Socialist Party participated in the event that celebrates unions and socialist organisations. There were also a notably large pro-Palestine presence.

The event started with its usual banner march through the streets of Wakefield. Unions from all over the north of England were present – proudly raising their banner in solidarity for the common cause.

A reminder that the fight is just beginning.

Staff and students unite against Bradford uni austerity



Socialist Students protest at Bradford uni IAIN DALTON

TJ DINIZ MOTA
LEEDS SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students held a successful day of action on 13 May, building a visible and defiant stand against devastating cuts proposed by university management.

Many shared sadness and disbelief at the university's decision to axe its media and television course during Bradford's tenure as the UK City of Culture. Culture means little to profit vultures.

There are proposals to stop their flagship chemistry course, close down the university nursery, and slash 300 jobs – an eye-watering 20% of the workforce.

The protest was backed by the

University and College Union (UCU) branch. And staff from across the university came out in support.

Further solidarity was shown online by Unison union at Leeds uni, which promoted the protest in the days prior. Supporters of Bradford and Shipley Trades Union Council also attended.

Anger is growing

This action was the result of weeks of consistent organising. Through weekly campaign stalls, online promotion, and raising the issue at local trade union meetings, we heard the frustration and growing anger from staff and students.

Support wasn't just garnered from the university community. Cars going

by our action blared their horns in support, crowds across the street shouted their sympathies, and passers-by commended our efforts.

All of this just goes to show the growing awareness of austerity and the national crisis in higher education funding. Uni vice-chancellors are earning more than the prime minister, and making decisions at the cost of student's futures and staff livelihoods.

There was overwhelming support for strike action in Bradford UCU's indicative ballot. Socialist Students continues to organise, raise awareness, demand no redundancies, no austerity budgets, and free, fully funded education for all. Because a post-16 education is not a commodity.



RMT MEMBER
WEST MIDLANDS TRAINS

Guards at West Midlands Trains are to be balloted for strike action, and action short of a strike, over the company's failure to offer any kind of pay enhancement for overtime or rest-day work.

Known by its 'London North-western Railway' or 'West Midlands Railway' brands, last autumn, the company granted its train drivers a significant uplift in pay rates for overtime. This reflects the value the company places on being able to squeeze every last drop out of the workforce, rather than investing in more staff to ensure all shifts are covered.

'We've had enough'

The company has so far failed to offer anything comparable to any other grades involved in operating the train service. And now the guards have had enough!

Resolutions have been passed at several branches of transport union RMT, condemning discrimination in rewarding one grade of staff over all others – highlighting that managers are frequently utilised to cover vacant

guards shifts, being paid a premium rate for doing so.

Contrary to the company's arguments, this fact alone proves that money is there to fund improvements to our rates of pay.

Similar improvements for guards and other staff have been won after RMT has balloted for action at Cross Country, East Midlands Railway, and, after taking several days of strike action, Avanti West Coast.

Our rest days

No worker should need to work on their rest day in order to make ends meet. The railway should recruit enough staff to operate the timetable, without having to rely on overtime.

There are principles at stake here. A driver's time off work is just as precious as a guard's, a cleaner's, or a customer service assistant's. If we don't respond to this blatant act of pay discrimination seriously, the company will sense weakness, and more attacks will come in the future.

Ballot papers are being sent out on 16 May. Vote 'yes' for strike action, and action short of a strike, and return your ballot straightaway.

Socialists help build Oxford trans rights protest

HANNAH CHAPMAN
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

The trans rights movement made a historic mark in Oxford on 27 April. A relatively new group – Oxford for Trans Rights – mobilised 1,000 workers and young people against the Supreme Court ruling.

This march rivalled the scale of Oxford's 'corporate' pride celebrations. And it featured a far more explicitly political programme. Many speakers advocated a working-class response, and offered solidarity to the Birmingham bin workers on strike.

One of the demo organisers and speakers was Oxford Socialist Party member Rachel Cox. Her influence ensured that the event was more orientated towards a programme like that.

Our demands

In her speech, she emphasised how Labour, Reform, and other capitalist parties rely on reactionary and divisive rhetoric and policies, that must be opposed. She argued for



Oxford trans rights protest RAE COX

organising within trade unions, and demanding a political party of the working class, for the working class, that would oppose all cuts to services and housing. The crowd was receptive to our demands.

As Socialist Party members stated, the next steps for 'Oxford for Trans Rights' must be to reinforce the links it has built with trade unions in the city, and to fight for a workers' electoral alternative to Labour and Reform's

divide and rule. Otherwise, we risk missing this opportunity.

The recent proposal of an in-person assembly is a definitive step in the right direction. Clearly, our work is not over yet.

● Unite Notts calls for political representation discussion

There was unanimous support at Unite's Nottinghamshire Area Activists meeting for a motion calling for a discussion on our union's political representation. I moved a motion from the Unite health branch, supporting the 18 Broxtowe councillors who left the Labour Party a few months ago.

The motion called on Unite East Midlands Regional Committee to invite the councillors for a discussion. It pointed out their programme against cuts was similar to Unite's.

Meanwhile, Labour councillors have made Unite members redundant in Nottingham and elsewhere, and are trying to cut Unite members' pay in Birmingham bins. The motion was seconded by a Nottingham worker, whose team of specialised carers was closed down by the Labour council.

JON DALE
MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY



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 trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand of a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, 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.

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Shady company’s ‘opportunity’ is just exploitation of workers



JEFFERSON H

I recently volunteered for an unpaid trial shift at a garden centre - something I’ve done before, typically involving two to four hours of paperwork, shadowing, and meeting the team. But this time was different. It was a stark reminder of systemic worker abuse under the guise of ‘opportunity’.

The company used a litmus test: an eight-hour unpaid shift - far beyond what I’d previously experienced and legally grey under the Minimum Wage Act. And there was a three-week training period before signing a probationary contract on completion. When I emailed HR with concerns, they dodged the question, likely to avoid a paper trail. The onsite manager, however, was blunt: “Work eight hours unpaid or leave.” This isn’t a glitch in capitalism; it’s a tactic. Unpaid trials proliferate in low-wage sectors.

There were fingerprint scanners for ‘safety’, but clock-in times are at the manager’s discretion, fines for



It’s shit, and I hate it

administrative errors, docking an hour’s wage as ‘admin fees’. A manager ‘joked’: “You won’t be saying ‘nice to meet you’ later.” Ominous, to say the least.

This isn’t just bad management - it’s the inevitable result of a system that treats workers as disposable. The owner’s Lamborghini (flaunted in reviews) isn’t a reward for innovation; it’s loot extracted from exploited labour.

Every unchallenged unpaid hour, every policy that strips dignity from workers, undermines our collective power. Capitalism thrives on desperation, but it fractures when we say no.

Ten minutes before leaving, I asked a staff member their thoughts on the company. “It’s shit, and I hate it.” Our task is to turn that anger into action.



TV Review: Louis Theroux’s ‘The Settlers’

ELLEN KENYON PEERS

WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Horse-wrangler Malkiel Bar Hai lives in a dilapidated trailer and tarp-covered shack with his wife and eight children. Setting the tone for his latest documentary about the Jewish-Israeli settler movement, Louis Theroux gently presses Malkiel’s wife on her desire to live here, in abject poverty, in the desert. She talks about this place, ‘Judea’, which was ‘promised to the Jews’ as the camera pans over their chaotic, cramped home in the occupied West Bank. The appeal of cheap housing is often overlooked by those trying to unpick the hows and whys of the bloody conflict in the Middle East. Israel has the highest cost of living of all OECD countries, with the minimum wage equating to £1,300 per month and the average four-bed flat valued at over £1 million.

In another scene, Louis meets Issa Amro, a Palestinian activist who was born and lives in Hebron, which Louis notes he first visited in 2010. The occupied areas have grown in the intervening 14 years, leading to the extreme curtailment of free movement for the city’s remaining Palestinian population. In one clip, an occupation soldier forbids Issa from proceeding further down the street. There is no explanation as to why.

Issa has to circumnavigate a further two checkpoints in order to return to his own home. The street he is now forbidden from walking, in his own city, is webbed by strings of

Israel flags and anti-Arab propaganda, including racist stickers which conflate all Arabs with terrorism and advise, in Hebrew, against their employment. These litter the ancient architecture of what Issa describes as a once-busy Palestinian marketplace, where he held his father’s hand tightly for fear of being lost in the crowd.

In perhaps one of the most enlightening moments of the film, checkpoint guards emerge in balaclavas and greet Issa by name; sarcastically enquiring as to his health whilst squaring him up. If they were not obviously armed, it would be recognisable as the thuggish behaviour of teenage boys. It is important to note that the Israeli occupation forces are stuffed-full of school leavers who, at 18, are compelled to complete military service unless they have a medical or religious exemption. Historically, these exemptions have also stoked the flames of the secular-religious divide in Israel, an area where The Settlers falls short.

Theroux’s superficial interrogation of the Settler mindset ends up propagating the rhetoric that it is only those from ultra-orthodox sects that seek to occupy land, aided by far-right campaigners. The belief in Jewish-Israeli superiority extends far beyond a particular religious sect and has been perpetuated by organisations across Israel’s political spectrum, legitimised by a very real fear of antisemitism which spans centuries.

Theroux’s signature style of interviewing, just a notch above fly-on-the-wall, is no match for Daniella Weiss, the so-called ‘godmother of

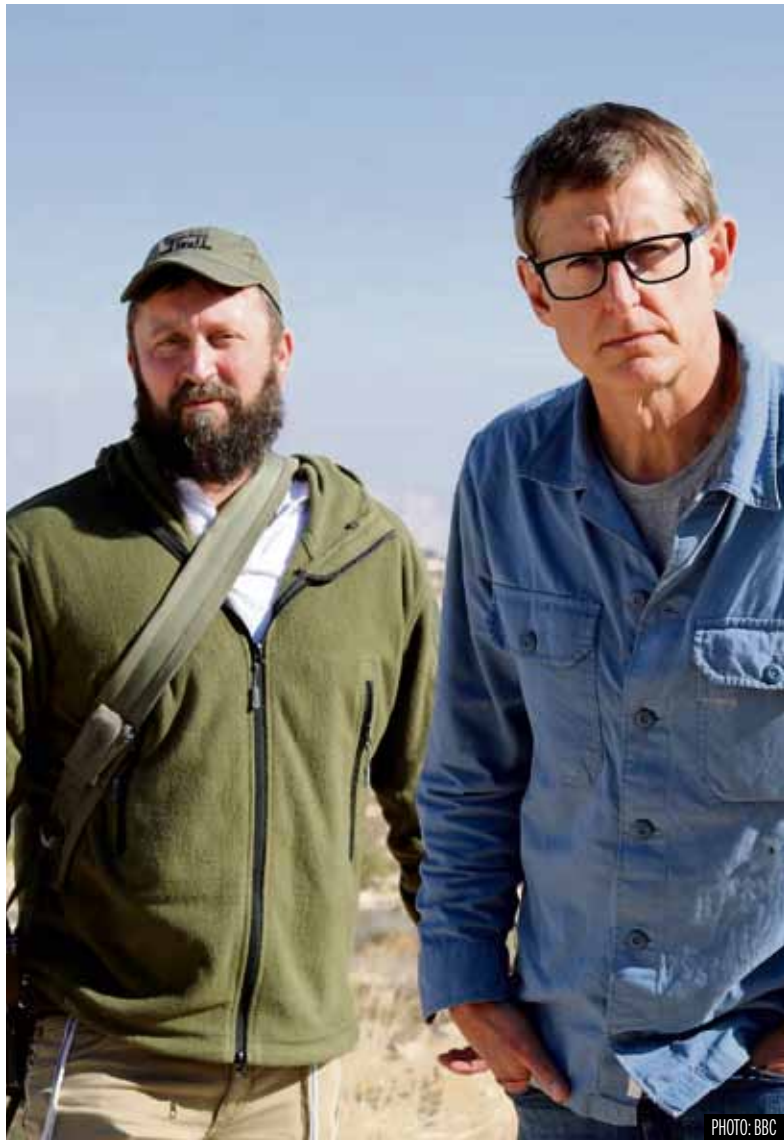


PHOTO: BBC

the settler movement, who is clearly media trained and dances easily around Louis’s liberal line of questioning. Happy to provide vox pops to local news crews regarding her vision - “Arabs disappear from Gaza (...) lose their right to live in this holy place”

Weiss takes obvious pleasure in the controversy of her views. Speaking from the kitchen table of a large house in the long-settled Kedumim, the contrast is sharp between her own surroundings and those of the dishevelled shacks inhabited by recent settlers.

There are rare moments of humility too. For example, as an olive farmer is harassed by occupation forces, Israeli peace activists help him to gather his meagre harvest. Fearing for his safety, he leaves on their instruction. Subsequent to a superfluous passport check - one of many that punctuate the film - Theroux questions the soldiers as to how the situation might have progressed had the farmer not acquiesced and fled? Gun at hip, one responds that he is ‘glad it didn’t get to that part’, the shame apparent in his troubled expression. Fear, substantiated or not, rules the lives of all.

In my opinion, Theroux’s exploration of the Settler phenomenon is a little surface level, a little safe. It is easy to document the extremes of one such society, so viewers might recoil in horror, comforted by our separation. But look carefully and you can see evidence of the complexities and contradictions in Israeli society, including deep inequality and poverty within both the Israeli and Palestinian populations, which only a struggle for socialist change in the region can address.

- The Settlers can be watched on BBC iPlayer

Review: Made in Dagenham ‘An inspiring piece of theatre for anyone engaged in struggle’

MARTIN REYNOLDS

WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Firstly, I only realised this was a musical the day before I went to see it, and everyone who knows me, knows I hate musicals! Made in Dagenham, performed by the Loughton Operatic Society, is a musical based on the true story of the 1968 Ford sewing machinists’ strike in Dagenham, and the 2010 film about it. The musical highlights the challenges faced by women in the workplace and their determination to achieve equality.

Equal pay

This strike was instrumental in the fight for equal pay for women, leading to the Equal Pay Act introduced in 1970. The Loughton Operatic Society put on a great performance that took me back to the days when I worked in factories as a young man from the age of 16 to 28, with the cutting, sarcastic humour punctuated with the colourful language.

Made in Dagenham tells the story of Rita O’Grady, a sewing machinist and a working-class mum who becomes an unexpected leader in the fight for equal pay. The musical captures perfectly the attitudes and divisions encouraged by the capitalists and bosses among working-class people, in order to maximise profits and, in this case, to try and prevent



Socialist Party member Lois Austin was a member of the chorus, pictured far-right side PHOTO: MARTIN REYNOLDS

a united struggle between male and female workers.

Made in Dagenham is a beautiful example of collective action and a fight for equality by these female machinists. The humour, music, and historical significance makes it a must-watch piece of theatre that will inspire and give confidence to

anybody who is engaged in the struggle for a better world, a world where workers are given the pay and respect they deserve.

57 years on from this important struggle for equal pay, women still earn 87% of the pay that their male workmates get for doing the same, or similar, jobs. And no doubt many

women today can still relate to this important strike. Sadly, it only ran for four days, but its obvious popularity, with packed-out shows, will hopefully mean it is rerun, and performed in a theatre near you. Keep a lookout for it.

After having a great time, I’ve decided that I may actually like musicals now.

- See Linda Taaffe’s review of the 2010 film at socialismtoday.org/archive/143/dagenham

WHAT’S YOUR VIEW?

editors@socialistparty.org.uk



Germany: Merz fails in first round parliament election to become chancellor

SASCHA STANIC
SOL FEDERAL SPOKESPERSON

In an historically unprecedented development, the Christian Democratic candidate Friedrich Merz was unexpectedly not elected Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the first ballot for the position. This is the first time this has happened in the Federal Republic's history. 18 members of parliament from the planned CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria) and SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) coalition did not vote for him. This slap in the face is more than deserved for this capitalist lackey, who is hostile to workers, women and migrants, and we cannot help but smile.

None of the dissenters revealed themselves. We can only speculate whether the refusal to vote came from career-hungry conservative politicians who had hoped for a

position in the cabinet but were not considered by Merz; whether it was protest from within the CDU/CSU against the watering down of the 'debt brake'; or protest from SPD MPs with a remnant of social democratic conscience.

Ultimately, that is secondary. The fact is what counts. Elected on the second ballot, it makes Merz the weakest chancellor in the history of the republic. The CDU/CSU and SPD coalition is a government that is already in crisis before it has even taken office. After all, the poll ratings for the two prospective governing parties have been steadily declining since the federal election in February.

Those who are now concerned about the new government's ability to govern and its stability, such as the Greens, are concerned about the stability of the continued exploitation of the working class, the ongoing war policy and militarisation, and the racist migration policy. Workers, left activists and trade unionists should rejoice: it will be a few more days before refugees are illegally deported at the borders, war criminal Netanyahu is invited to Germany despite an international arrest warrant, and the planned attacks on the eight-hour working day and on social benefits can be implemented. But these attacks will come, unless trade unions and Die Linke (the Left Party) understand this as a wake-up call to go on the offensive against the not-yet-government.

They should immediately launch a campaign and call for protests that make it clear that not only Merz must go, but also the policies he and the coalition agreement stand for.

Some will say that new elections would strengthen the right populist Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany). That may be true. But Die Linke would also be further strengthened. Also, the AfD will be even stronger after one, two, three or four years of a Merz-Klingbeil coalition.

The task now is to exert maximum pressure so that the new government has as little leeway as possible to take measures against the interests of the working class. That is why trade unions and Die Linke must not participate in the debate about concerns over instability, but should make it clear that the stability the bourgeois parties and media are talking about is the stability of capitalist class rule. It is the task of trade unions and the left to ensure a different kind of stability: stable resistance from the working class against Merz, his government and its planned policies, and for policies in the interests of workers and the socially disadvantaged. These policies include higher wages and lower rents, against militarisation and war policies, for higher taxes on profits and wealth, against racism and all forms of discrimination.

If the working class were mobilised around such demands by the trade unions and Die Linke, this would be the best way not only to weaken Merz and his coalition, but also to take the wind out of the AfD's sails.



Friedrich Merz PHOTO: EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY/CC

'Trump effect' polarises Canadian election

Canada's federal election results, on 28 April, illustrated the polarisation of political ideologies that is continuing to unfold in society. The crisis of capitalism is creating an increased cost of living, a lack of affordable housing, and general economic and social instability. As a result of these developments, uncertainty, fear, anger and frustration among workers and young people continue to grow. Therefore, the question of who to blame and how to solve these issues underlying the narrative of the election campaign.

Under the leadership of the former governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, the Liberal Party was re-elected into a minority parliament. As with other recent election results internationally, such as Australia and Singapore, Trump's tariffs, ideology, and ensuing threats of increased economic instability have been cited for determining how many people used their votes - the 'Trump effect.' In Canada, the proximity, and close economic ties to the USA, in addition to Trump's ongoing

threats to turn Canada into the '51st' state, heavily influenced the direction of the election.

Election polls last year were projecting a Conservative win. However, the Conservative leader, Pierre Poilievre, was widely regarded as being ideologically closer to Trump. Many voters used their votes strategically to either increase or decrease the chance of a Conservative win depending on who they saw themselves as being most ideologically aligned with. As a result, the Liberals won their minority with 168 of the 343 parliamentary seats with the Conservatives winning 143 seats. Despite the fear of a conservative win, the Liberals are also unable to offer an alternative to the issues facing the working class.

What is desperately lacking in Canada, and was evident during the election, is a mass socialist party built democratically by and for the working class to fight capitalism.

● Read the article in full at socialistworld.net

Kashmir conflict: United mass movement needed

A ceasefire was agreed between India and Pakistan on 10 May. We print a leaflet distributed by Socialist Party and CWI activists at a Kashmir solidarity protest taking place in London, before the ceasefire was announced.

Tensions between two nuclear-armed powers - India and Pakistan - are rising, risking an escalation to all-out war. The conflict threatens the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people in the Jammu and Kashmir regions. There has been heavy shelling on both sides of the border, air strikes, as well as military and civilian casualties.

The recent tensions were provoked by an attack on tourists in the Kashmir region on 23 April. Various armed groups opposing Indian rule have operated in Indian-occupied Kashmir for decades, mostly targeting Indian authorities. However, an attack on civilians of this nature was unprecedented.

Indian government agencies claim that the attack was carried out by the Pakistan-sponsored group The Resistance Front. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, on the other hand, denied the existence of such an organisation, or of others named by Indian authorities, claiming they are fabrications.

There is a long history of claims, counterclaims, false propaganda, and disinformation between the two states, particularly concerning the occupied Jammu and Kashmir region. Pakistan claims to possess

conclusive evidence that India is supporting terrorist organisations within Pakistan. In turn, India accuses Pakistan of sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir.

Grievances and dire conditions faced by oppressed communities in this region - as well as in other impoverished areas - are exploited by regional states and international powers to organise militant groups and foster terrorism for their own strategic interests. The horrific levels of repression by Indian authorities in Indian-occupied Kashmir have created fertile ground for terrorism and violence.

In 2019, after the Modi regime abolished Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and made them central government-run 'union territories', a complete lockdown was imposed on the region. A strict curfew was implemented, with orders to shoot on sight. Over 4,000 politicians and leading activists were imprisoned. This lockdown was followed by a full-scale military occupation of major government buildings and streets. Tens of thousands of military and paramilitary personnel were deployed.

The anti-Muslim propaganda of India's Modi government has provided an opportunity for the Pakistani

government to portray Modi's India as "anti-Muslim" and to whip up patriotic support for itself. But the current Pakistani government is among the most brutal towards its own population and is also the weakest in Pakistan's history. Scandals and blatant corruption involving previous prime ministers have led to repeated elections and constant political manoeuvring among the elite for power.

Shehbaz Sharif's appointment as Prime Minister was the result of opportunistic manoeuvring and the formation of a weak coalition of major parties united against Imran Khan's PTI, the former governing party. PTI's strong 'anti-corruption' rhetoric has helped it gain significant support from urban youth and the rural poor. The struggle for power led to intense repression of PTI members and other opposition forces. Khan was imprisoned, other activists have been jailed or banned from political activity.

Corruption among the political elites in both India and Pakistan is rampant. Both governments have implemented policies that have devastated the lives of workers, peasants, and the poor. They frequently hide behind patriotic rhetoric and claims of 'defending the nation' to rally the very masses they continue to exploit.



The Kashmir conflict has consistently been used to consolidate power and build support, particularly during times of domestic weakness and widespread opposition.

Pakistan's extremely fragile government is using the possibility of conflict and war at its borders to tighten its grip on power.

The Pakistani military - which effectively controls the government - is currently no match for India's military. The balance that existed during previous conflicts in terms of economic and military capabilities no longer holds.

The fast-changing global geopolitical landscape following Trump's election in the US has created new complications for Pakistan, unlike in the past when the US fully backed its military and provided substantial subsidies. However, the broader geopolitical dynamics in Asia and South Asia are now dominated by Indo-China relations. The Chinese government's decision to strengthen its support for Pakistan has further added to these complications.

Conflicts and clashes have become a global norm. Wars and unrest are taking place across Africa, the ongoing war in Ukraine continues, Palestinians face a genocidal assault, there is a looming threat of war or a possible attack on the Iranian regime, and tensions over Taiwan continue to escalate. All of this contributes to global instability. Trump's trade war is only deepening global polarisation.

However, the so-called 'Shah/Modi method' of inciting ethnic riots could provoke divisions and escalate reactionary violence. A united struggle against the Indian regime, while also standing firmly against the repressive Pakistani state and other capitalist vultures, is essential to secure rights and dignity for all people in the region.

Appeals must be made to the workers and toiling masses across India to unite in a common struggle against the repressive regime and in defence of democratic rights, including the right of self-determination for Kashmir and the national rights of all minority communities.

Workers and oppressed people in Kashmir, Assam, and other parts of India, Pakistan, and China have more in common with each other than they do with their own capitalist rulers. It is through united struggle that a real challenge can be mounted against regimes that today may seem unchangeable and all-powerful.

A united mass movement can begin to counter and defeat the reactionary ideas that have taken hold among sections of the population. It would also raise the question of how resources in the region should be shared - among the people living there rather than being plundered by capitalist vultures. A socialist Kashmir, as part of a voluntary socialist confederation of nations in the region, would make sure that all cultural, language and national rights are safeguarded and resources can be planned and shared for the benefit of all.

Unless capitalist rule is collectively challenged, such a unifying force cannot be built. That is why the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) argues for the need to build a socialist alternative in all parts of Jammu and Kashmir and beyond, and to link these struggles together to put an end to the suffering and exploitation that capitalism imposes on the masses.

CWI demands

- Immediate end to all attacks!
- End occupation - withdraw all army and paramilitary forces from the region
- Stop repression - release all political activists and protesters
- No trust in the corrupt capitalist rulers - build mass organisations of workers and the poor
- For the right to self-determination for Kashmir
- For a socialist Kashmir as part of a socialist confederation of the sub-continent

● Read the article in full, 'War Looms Over Kashmir' by Tu Senan, published online socialistworld.net on 1 May



Mark Carney meets with Trump PHOTO: WHITE HOUSE/CC



PHOTO: JRAPCZAK/CC

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the Socialist

Issue 1321

15-21 May 2025

formerly **Militant**

END WAR AND OPPRESSION

Build the socialist opposition

SCOTT HUNTER
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Politicians across the world commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of the World War Two in Europe in complete hypocrisy. In Britain, Keir Starmer talked about 'threats' to peace and called for 'national unity'; all the while, his government bangs the war drum, continues to support the Israeli state's ongoing genocidal actions in Gaza, and carries out brutal austerity attacks on the working class at home.

Horror

As Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announces plans to fully occupy and ethnically cleanse the Gaza Strip – no doubt emboldened by Donald Trump's US presidency – we can also add the possibility of conflict between India and Pakistan to the list of horrors. The United Nations warns that the number and intensity of violent conflicts

worldwide is now at its highest level in 80 years.

In whose interests are these wars really being fought? Starmer and other capitalist politicians talk about the 'national interest'. That doesn't exist. There is us, the working class, who face either being caught directly in conflict or face further austerity to pay for the war effort; and then there are the bosses, who profit from war and will never personally suffer its violence and destruction.

Capitalism is a system based on division and exploitation, in which different nation states fight to secure the interests of their own capitalists. We can see this being played out nakedly as Trump openly exchanges 'military aid' for mining rights in Ukraine or talks about building Trump hotels in Gaza.

The so-called 'world leaders', representing the capitalist bosses, offer no solutions. They only tell us that we have to increase military spending – of course, paid for by wage freezes and cuts to public

services – grit our teeth, and fight it out.

But the huge protests against the war in Gaza – in Britain and across the world – show that millions of people are looking for an alternative to war and destruction.

New workers' party

The working class taking action in Britain, including taking steps towards building its own mass party – one with a socialist programme to address the needs of ordinary people, including fully funded public services, decent housing, and a well-paid, secure job – would benefit workers and oppressed people worldwide.

It would raise sights of a future government acting in the interests of the working class – and a future based on international workers' solidarity and collaboration rather than division and war.

Help us build the socialist opposition in Britain and fight for a socialist world.

Join the Socialist Party!

YOUTH WALKOUT AGAINST TRUMP YOUNG PEOPLE FIGHT FOR A FUTURE



We want to show young people in America that we stand with them against Trump – not with Starmer and the Labour government which only promises more austerity and division.

Organise a meeting at your school, college or university on how we can protest and build the walkout on 'Day X', the day Trump visits Parliament, which we will know closer to the time. Get in touch if you would like help organising protests or meetings: Contact Socialist Students: 07403057140 Visit: socialiststudents.org.uk

End Gaza slaughter

● Read what we think – page 5

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



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ISSN 1366-9621