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the Socialist

Issue 1330

17-23 July 2025

formerly **Militant**

Cuts, tax rises ...

STARMER WANTS US TO PAY FOR THE BOSSES' CRISIS

WE NEED A NEW WORKING-CLASS PARTY

The Labour government has been forced under pressure to make partial U-turns on cuts to welfare and heating allowances; but they're still determined to make us pay the price. The recent weakening economic figures mean more cuts and tax rises are coming unless we fight.

Prime minister Keir Starmer and chancellor Rachel Reeves have already made clear: it's not the super-rich who'll be paying - it's us, and she is bragging about it!

'Iron discipline' in spending, 'tough choices' - we've heard it all before. It means more overcrowded classrooms, longer NHS waiting lists, more working-class people forced to pay for a crisis we didn't create.

Yet Britain is richer than ever. There is no shortage of wealth - only a crisis of ownership. While public services collapse and rents skyrocket, the capitalist class wallows in record profits. Britain now has 177 billionaires, and the richest 1% own more than 70% of the population combined. That is not mismanagement - it is the logic of capitalism.

Working-class people should demand we take the wealth off the super-rich! Recent speculation is that Labour has not yet ruled out some tax on the rich. Yet, even if they did, it would be tiny and inadequate.

Taxing the rich is just the start, after all they already avoid tax to the tune of billions of pounds. We should nationalise the major banks, energy companies and big businesses. Bring them into public ownership, not to line the pockets of private shareholders, but under democratic workers' control - so we can plan housing, schools, green jobs, and public services to meet need, not profit.

But none of this is coming from Starmer's Labour. Labour's leadership has made its choice. It's a party for the capitalists, not for us.

That's why we need a working-class alternative to the major parties. We need a party that backs strikes, protests, occupations - and unites them behind a socialist programme that says: we won't pay for the ruling elite's crisis.

Workers didn't cause the chaos in this system. We keep society running - and we should run it too. Make the super-rich pay for this crisis. Join us in the fight for socialist change.

MILA HUGHES
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY



**LABOUR ATTACK ON
BIN WORKERS OPENS
UP DEBATE ON UNITE'S
POLITICAL STRATEGY >>> p4-5**



**TRUMP WALKOUT
DATE ANNOUNCED**

**17 SEPTEMBER
SEE PAGE THREE**

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17-23 July 2025

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

Tory says work doesn't pay

Well raise the minimum wage so it does!

ISIS SMYTH
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Tory party leader Kemi Badenoch thinks that Keir Starmer's scaled-back disability benefit cuts aren't harsh enough. Instead of this, the Tory party wants to force disabled people into unfair or even dangerous working conditions by ripping away their benefits.

Badenoch also said that, compared to benefits, work doesn't pay and that the UK needs to develop a stronger work ethic! She's right about one thing: minimum wage work doesn't pay anywhere near enough. The national minimum wage currently stands at £12.21 an hour, or around £23,000 a year working full time. This is simply not enough to live on and Labour's 77p rise is a pittance compared to amount food, rents and everything has increased by.

But Badenoch knows nothing of the struggles that working-class people face. She earns over £90,000 a year!

The minimum wage should be

raised to at least £15 for all age groups, not split into age bands as is the case now. Some young workers earn just £7 an hour now. As of December 2024, 2.7 million workers received Universal Credit (UC) in order to make ends meet. All should be paid a real living wage that would rise in line with the cost of living, so workers don't have to have their wages topped up by UC, effectively subsidising bosses paying poverty wages.

As well as this, no disabled person should have to worry about how they're going to make ends meet should their benefits be snatched from them. Those receiving benefits should feel a sense of security, and they should be able to live on them.

It's becoming increasingly clear to thousands of workers that none of the establishment parties are willing to fight in their interests. In government, Labour and the Tories have attacked the working class just the same. A new mass workers' party, armed with a socialist programme, would fight for the working class and put people over profit.



HOUSE OF COMMONS/CC



We need pensions we can live on

CLIVE WALDER
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Smarting from their forced U-turn on cuts to disability benefits, Keir Starmer's government are considering targeting another group of vulnerable people to plug their financial 'black hole' - pensioners. Pro-austerity politicians and think tanks have started the campaign that the state pension 'triple lock' is unaffordable. Currently the State Pension rises every year by CPI inflation, average earnings growth or 2.5%, whichever is highest.

The Financial Times had the cheek to claim that pensioners are the richest cohort in society. Former Tory cabinet minister Lord David Willetts claims that pensioner poverty is a thing of the past, despite 1.9 million pensioners living in poverty. Without the triple lock, pensioner poverty would be considerably higher.

The pro-capitalist Adam Smith Institute say that pensions will be unsustainable by 2036. But their cost is only predicted to rise from 5% of GDP now to 7.7% by the early 2070s! If providing a decent standard of living for people when they get older is

considered unsustainable, what does that say about the system we live in?

Over one million households rely on pensions and associated benefits as their only source of income. These pensioners are at greatest risk as the annual pension increase doesn't keep pace with the escalating cost of rent, food and energy prices - CPI inflation doesn't factor in rising housing costs. A full state pension is a princely £921 every four weeks, which is hardly a living pension, and lower than nearly every other advanced capitalist country.

We need to fight against any attack and for pensions that can be lived on comfortably and tax free. A mass council house building programme would free millions of us from insecure tenancies and rip-off rents, including pensioners.

Starmer is willing to find money to massively increase defence spending by much more than the cost of the triple lock. We can provide everyone with a decent standard of living by using the wealth and resources in society to democratically plan what we need, not what is considered 'affordable' to the bosses who continue to get rich at our expense.

National Grid privatisation failure

CIARÁN O'DONOGHUE
NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Earlier this year Heathrow Airport experienced a power outage that meant the airport had to suspend operations for a day. It has now been reported that this recent power grid failure was caused by a fault that was already known to the National Grid. The fault was first reported in 2018, according to a report from The National Energy System Operator (NESO), with maintenance to fix the problem being scheduled but never completed. That's seven years ago!

The National Grid was privatised in 1990. It has recently been under special monitoring by Ofgem, Britain's energy regulator over its failure to maintain the energy network. The trade union Prospect has raised concerns about the way the industry and the National Grid are regulated. Prospect members have

reported that important maintenance work isn't being prioritised. This is troubling, given the recent events at Heathrow, and poses serious questions about such an event happening again. Meanwhile, the National Grid has paid out billions in dividends to shareholders since privatisation.

Privatisation is evidently a failure. The National Grid needs to be taken back into public ownership. But it needs to be under democratic workers' control and management. This would ensure that workers' concerns about maintenance, like the ones raised by these members of Prospect, wouldn't be ignored in favour of sending dividends to shareholders!

Do you agree?
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CHRIS MORGAN/CC

DATE ANNOUNCED: BUILD THE WALKOUT AGAINST TRUMP'S STATE VISIT

Protest against Trump and Starmer on 17 September

SOCIALIST STUDENTS PRESS RELEASE

Already hundreds of students have signed up to walk out of their schools, colleges and universities on Wednesday 17 September - the day that Trump arrives in the UK - as part of the Youth Walkout Against Trump campaign.

The youth walkouts, initiated by Socialist Students, will be a protest against the chaos that Trump's presidency represents for young people's futures globally. Students will be walking out to instead demand a future to look forward to - for free education, a decent job, and the guarantee of a high-quality and affordable home for all; for an end to climate crisis; and for a world free from war, oppression and exploitation.

With Trump's visit taking place while Parliament is in recess, Keir Starmer and his Labour government will be hoping to escape the firing line of mass protests like those which Trump provoked during his first state visit to the UK in 2018.

But the Youth Walkout Against Trump campaign will not let Labour off the hook. Adam Gillman, Socialist Students national organiser, said: "By building the youth walkouts, we can send a powerful message to young people and workers in America that we stand with them against Trump - not with Starmer, who issued the invite for this state visit."

TJ, a 19-year-old student in Leeds, said: "Labour has made cut after cut to young people's futures while bosses make record profits. Now they

roll out the red carpet for oppressive leaders abroad. I am building for these walkouts to give young people a way to show Starmer's Labour that this is not what the public voted for."

Lauren from Wrexham said: "Trump's visit to the UK is an opportunity to fight back; not just against him but the capitalist system he upholds, which puts the interests of big business above the lives of working-class people. These walkouts are a chance to stand up to Trump, as well as our government who welcome him with open arms, and all other leaders who uphold this corrupt system."

Penelope, a college student from Preston, highlighted the common attacks facing students on either side of the Atlantic: "Trump has cut funding to US universities, and has attacked students and staff standing up on issues like Palestine. Meanwhile Starmer's government here raises university tuition fees and continues the rampant underfunding of all levels of education. By walking out when Trump visits we are showing that young people everywhere have to fight for a decent education in a capitalist world, where none of our hard-won rights can be taken for granted."

While the university term has come to a close, and schools and sixth forms break up next week, Socialist Students will be continuing to build the walkout campaign over the summer. This includes campaign stalls and organising public meetings in towns and cities to discuss how young people can build the walkouts and get organised to win a decent future under the Labour government.

Want to organise a walkout?
Scan the QR code to get involved

PHOTOS: WHITE HOUSE/PUBLIC DOMAIN, CHRIS MCANDREW/CC & PAUL MATTSOON

UK graduates face worst job market since 2018

ADAM GILLMAN
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Young people leave university today with mountains of student debt, an increasingly bleak future with the shadow of climate change and war, and public services such as the NHS and mental health services devastated by cuts and privatisation. And on top of all that, a terrible and worsening job market. Graduate jobs are down by 33% compared to last year - the worst level since 2018.

Many students will have gone to university and taken on thousands of pounds of debt in the hope that at the end of it they will have access to better jobs, but increasingly that is not the case.

If you are a young person, with or without a degree, you spend hours and hours filling out job applications. If you do find a job you get low

pay, zero-hour contracts and long hours just to get by.

The media has blamed developments in new technology, particularly artificial intelligence, for the drop in graduate opportunities. If we accept that argument, it shows how the bosses would use technology to drive down the conditions of working-class people and increase their profits instead of using it for the good of us all.

We pay the price

But that's not the only reason - young people are increasingly expected to pay the price for the decaying capitalist system's failures. The chronic lack of investment over years, and the loss of decent jobs that comes with it, is the fault of the bosses not young people. Big business prioritises short-term profits for a few. Gambling on the stock markets and asset stripping public services is more profitable

than things which would create the high-quality jobs we need. Projects which use the skills and resources available to better our lives are held back by the way capitalist society is organised.

And Starmer's Labour government is clearly on the side of the bosses not the rest of us. The infrastructure investments announced, like an extra runway at Heathrow airport or wasted money on carbon capture, won't drastically improve the lives of working-class people but will make a handful of private businesses and individuals a lot richer.

Instead, we need public investment, under democratic workers' control, not just cash handed out to the bosses. A mass programme of council house building, transitioning away from fossil fuels to renewables, and using new technology to improve the NHS would not only benefit society but also generate millions of jobs.



MARY FINCH

And now, we have people desperately looking for work at the same time as others have to work multiple jobs just to get by. Sharing out the work, with no loss of pay and a shorter working week, would improve the lives of all of us, apart from the bosses.

But if we want any of this, we have to fight for it. The trade unions, which have over six million members, are the most potentially powerful force

in society that could take the lead with a campaign for the jobs, homes and services we need. By democratically planning production and distribution - nationalising energy, water, transport, the banks and the top 150 companies - the wealth and resources in society could be used by workers to improve the lives of us all instead of just the bank balances of those at the top.



1PM SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER - THE OLD SHIP HOTEL, 32-38 KINGS RD, BRIGHTON BN1 1NR

LOBBY THE TUC

CALL A NATIONAL DEMO AGAINST STARMER'S CUTS!

The first year of Starmer's Labour government is not what workers voted for in the general election. After 14 years of Tory cuts, working-class people have had to face yet more austerity unleashed on them and their communities. This includes its vicious Welfare Reform Bill to slash disability benefits.

SHOPSTEWARDS.NET



Scan the QR code for a model motion to support the lobby for your trade union branch or trades council

Unite policy conference Labour's brutal attack on bin workers opens up debate on union's political strategy



The emergency motion to support the striking Birmingham bin workers, suspend from Unite membership Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, and discuss the union's relationship with Labour, passed in the final morning session of Unite the Union's policy conference, four months to the day that indefinite strike action began. The motion was passed almost unanimously, reportedly with only five abstentions.

This was a huge moment for the union itself, but also for the whole trade union movement. Workers are looking for an industrial and political lead as the second year of Starmer's New Labour Mark 2 government begins.

In our pre-conference article, the Socialist Party said: "The Birmingham bin strike is a lightning rod for the whole debate about Unite's approach to political representation, as it brings together the industrial and political tasks."

This was borne out to the letter and more as, on the Wednesday afternoon, rumours started to swirl round conference that the Labour leader of Birmingham City Council was intending to effectively fire and rehire the bin workers - imposing pay cuts of up to £8,000, and making redundant anyone who didn't agree to it.

Socialist Party members and close allies drafted an emergency motion to support the bin workers, saying that if the council's threats are implemented, Unite's relationship with Labour will be reviewed. When Oisín Mulholland, young members' delegate for London and Eastern region and a member of the Unite Broad Left, along with Socialist Party members, moved a point of order to call for the emergency motion, he was given a standing ovation.

In discussion with leading bin workers, who were in Brighton to address conference, a sentence was added to condemn Starmer's Labour government for supporting the Tory-appointed commissioners as well as the Labour council.

Other delegates wanted to add that Angela Rayner, and any Birmingham councillors who were Unite members, be immediately suspended from Unite membership, with proceedings initiated to investigate their

conduct "with a view to expelling them from the union."

Oisín Mulholland moved the emergency motion: "A Labour council and a Labour deputy prime minister actively strike-breaking against our members. This motion sends the message that Unite won't be walked over by any government. If you attack our members, you are not our comrade. The TUC (Trades Union Congress) should call a national demonstration against austerity and hold it in Birmingham. We must build the mega-picket on 25 July."

Before Socialist Party member Nancy Taaffe could rise to speak in favour, leading 'United Left' member Jim Kelly raised a point of order to question if Rayner was a Unite member, and argue that there should be 'due process' in moving to expulsions.

Strike-breaking methods

Given the brutal character of the stepping-up of attacks on the bin workers, and the support of Starmer and self-styled 'friend of the unions' Rayner for the council's vicious strike-breaking methods, correctly delegates saw this as trying to cover for Labour. Worse still, it has been reported that some were trying to get reference to Labour removed from the emergency motion.

In reply to Jim Kelly, Nancy said: "What more of an investigation do you need? Angela Rayner has been tried in the court of public opinion... Let's follow process but our first loyalty is to our Birmingham bin workers. We should not let the Birmingham bin workers go down."

Some delegates will question if it was a coincidence that Jim Kelly's question about the status of Rayner's Unite membership was then followed by this being raised by her supporters. But this is an utter red herring.

The significance is what the emergency motion now means for Unite, and what it can and should trigger across the union movement.

This debate, sharpened by the brutal Labour attack on the bin workers on top of Starmer's cuts and austerity, has drawn out into the open the political basis for the clash taking place in Unite. As the Socialist Party has emphasised, a victory for the misnamed United Left in next year's Unite general secretary election and in the elections for the union's Executive Council (nominations for the EC open this October) would represent an industrial and political retreat in Unite, and move the union closer to Starmer and the cutting Labour councils.

In her main speech to conference on Wednesday, Sharon Graham had warned: "If you are a councillor and you want our money, you have to back our members. If you are an MP and you are looking for our support, you must be on our picket lines. And if you are a government that stands by and watches workers being attacked, then no matter what the colour of your rosette, we will push you back."

It is therefore essential that the Unite Broad Left (UBL), that brings together some of the most militant left reps and members in Unite, is really built now and developed further, with a left independent programme that sets out the tasks in the union.

This conference saw the essential role of Socialist Party members, lifting the sights of delegates by putting forward clear socialist working-class demands and strategy. The conference has also shown the potential for the UBL to establish itself as a powerful left. Both the Socialist Party and UBL had successful fringe meetings.

This was particularly important in the EC statement on Palestine and the assault on Gaza, which strengthens the union's position. It called out the genocidal policies of the Israeli government's war machine, while engaging with workers in the defence sector, including the demand long put forward by the Socialist Party that workers in the industries supplying the Israeli war regime will be defended by Unite. The United Left, who have seen Gaza as a weak flank to attack Sharon Graham, supported the EC statement. But true to type, in their speeches the UBL failed to mention that Britain's outrageous backing of the Israeli regime has occurred under a Labour government!

But the importance of the developments at Unite conference goes far beyond the union itself. As workers' anger and frustration with Starmer increase, it would be a big mistake to draw the conclusion that unions need to turn away from politics. The events of the last week particularly show that the everyday struggle of workers is absolutely entwined with the need for a political programme and organisation.

Many workers are reeling from the growth of Reform, which has identified the political vacuum that has opened up in the working class by Starmer's pro-bosses, anti-worker policies. Reform is dishonestly portraying itself as 'on the side of workers', but Farage's right-wing populism is based on divide and rule that only helps the employers.

The announcement by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana of the launch of a new left party, just before Unite conference, is a welcome development and was seen as such by many delegates. It opens up a debate about the need for a political alternative to the four pro-capitalist parties: New

Labour, Tories, Lib Dems and Reform.

The Socialist Party will engage with this and set out what we believe is needed - a new workers' party, centred on the trade unions, with a clear socialist programme. But critical to this is that the unions aren't bystanders in such a debate but front and central.

In her post-conference interview with Sky News, Sharon was asked if Angela Rayner and Labour were friends of workers. She said in reply: "Action speaks louder than words. It's all very well for people to label themselves as left, but for me, it means what do you do when workers are in struggle, and they need you? Labour is abandoning workers." She then went further in responding to a question about Unite's relationship with Labour: "Absolutely, there is a possibility of disaffiliation."

Many members will now want a debate within the union about Unite's political strategy, with nothing off the table.

Unite Conference took place in a heatwave weather-wise, but the events at Brighton will have been seen as a political earthquake. Militant union activists must argue that both in Unite and across the union movement, we need to build solidarity with the Birmingham bin strike, and discuss the vital role that unions must play in the establishment of a new political party for the working class.

- Victory to the bin workers - support the mega-picket on 25 July and call a national Saturday demonstration in Birmingham
- Support the suspension from Unite membership of Angela Rayner and the cutting Birmingham Labour councillors
- Fight for a political voice for workers



NICK HART
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Birmingham City Council's latest threat to make striking bin workers redundant hasn't come from a position of strength. Agency bin crews have begun being disrupted again by activists using creative tactics to get around the use of a court injunction by the Labour council and West Midlands Police to stop Unite members blocking lorries.

The lengths the council was willing to go to try to break the strike was shown when an agency driver was filmed mounting the kerb and driving at pedestrians, and the very next day was seen going out on his rounds again as if nothing had happened!

Announcing the 'fire and rehire' plans to the press before bin workers themselves got to hear of it, the council implied that it was breaking off negotiations. But council management have been dodging talks with Unite for several weeks now, and have refused to involve either council leader John Cotton or the government-appointed commissioners in them at any point since the strike began in January.

Support for the bin workers remains high among the public and the workers' movement. Now is the time to turn this into action. The mega-picket on Friday 25 July initiated by Strike Map and supported by 15 unions and counting, as well as a growing number of organisations, including the National Shop Stewards Network, is an opportunity to start a pattern of union members and other activists

- especially other union members in Birmingham City Council - regularly attending bin depots and other key sites, including scab firm Tom White in Coventry and the local incinerator.

A national Saturday demonstration against council cuts and in support of the strike in Birmingham could cut across the council's attempts to intimidate bin workers and their families by issuing letters threatening redundancy, and would put the pressure back on the Labour councillors, the Tory-appointed commissioners, and their paymasters in Starmer's Labour government.

As a result of its actions around the strike and years of cuts, only 5% of Birmingham residents say they plan to vote Labour in next year's council elections. In a panic move, Labour is now reported to have blocked 14 councillors who have been mildly critical of the leadership from standing for re-election, in the hope of replacing them with candidates who can be relied on to vote through further cuts packages.

We need councillors who can be relied on to vote against cuts - the recent moves by Unite to discuss its relationship with Labour is a welcome step to making this happen.

Mega-picket: 6am Friday 25 July

- Atlas depot B11 2AS
- Lifford Lane depot B30 3JJ
- Perry Bar depot B42 2TU
- Ryton site (Coventry) CV8 3EJ
- Veolia incinerator B11 2BA
- Unite should call a national Saturday demonstration in Birmingham

TRADE UNIONISTS FOR A NEW PARTY *meeting!*



Sign the online petition

Monday 21 July 2025

18:30

Come to our Zoom meeting to discuss the next steps for your union and across unions in the campaign for a workers' political voice
Register at <https://tinyurl.com/Register4TUnepartymeeting>



or scan to register

Petition: www.change.org/TradeUnions-LaunchANewParty

Mobilise for Birmingham bin strike to win

TUC LGBT+ conference: Gains can be won by a serious fight

FIONA BRITTE
DELEGATE TO TUC LGBT+ CONFERENCE, PERSONAL
CAPACITY

On 3 and 4 July, LGBTQ+ trade union delegates met for the annual TUC LGBT+ conference.

For years now, a strong theme of conference has been the vile abuse and discrimination faced by trans, non-binary and intersex people. In 2025 the issue was heightened following the Supreme Court ruling. Conference passed, among others, motions calling for better access to gender-affirming care, and tackling the far right who have moved into anti-trans, 'gender critical' spaces.

2024's conference met just before Labour took power, and many of the Labour-affiliated unions expressed hopes that now was the time for things to get better. This year that attitude had not gone entirely, but it was bruised. Some delegates described their Labour membership as "hanging by a thread", prompting the encouragement "so leave!" from other delegates. Others seemed more determined to put a gloss on things by hailing the promised conversion therapy ban, which would include a ban on attempting to 'convert' people out of being transgender - however, all had to accept that Labour have not given a timeline for when it will achieve that, and the bill remains in legislative limbo.

Labour MP Kate Osborne addressed Conference, and while she rightly called out the leadership for the role they have played in encouraging hatred against trans people and the impoverishment they're planning for millions of disabled people through cuts, she continued to place faith in capitalist institutions

like the Council of Europe to be the "home of Human Rights".

She correctly identified austerity as the enemy, but pointed to the much-watered-down and delayed Employment Rights Bill as an example of Labour's commitment to working people, and called Rachel Reeves's decision to "rip up Green Book (investment) rules" a game-changer. This highlights that good intentions of left-leaning politicians on social issues like LGBTQ+ rights are not enough - the system of capitalism, supported by Labour, relies on maintaining inequality.

Unfortunately, there was significantly more discussion of what is wrong than what the trade union response must be to successfully fight back and win for LGBTQ+ people. More often the motions called for "lobbying" and the TUC to "affirm support" for LGBTQ+ rights, rather than coordinating action, including strikes, between all unions to both fight transphobia and fight for better pay, jobs, homes and services for all. Sowing divisions amongst workers plays into the hands of big businesses and billionaires, who rely on us fighting amongst ourselves rather than demanding their hoarded wealth be redistributed.

Labour government attacks

My trade union, Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), moved a motion agreed under last year's executive committee, entitled 'Oppose Labour's attacks on LGBT+ people'. It passed with a considerable majority. In moving the motion, Liat Norris (PCS Broad Left Network member) asked delegates from Labour-affiliated unions to go back to their unions and call for an immediate review of their affiliation. The motion was firm that we should not be



Protesting in Swindon ROB PETTIFOR

'thankful' for a Labour government that has so actively harmed the LGBTQ+ community.

I and the other PCS delegates reminded conference that they have done so both through direct attacks - such as supporting the Supreme Court ruling - but also by maintaining the programme of budget cuts and austerity which has devastated the working class for years under the Tories.

Keir Starmer recalled parliament on a Saturday to 'nationalise' Scunthorpe steelworks, and at a moment's notice to shamefully proscribe the campaign group Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation. He could have done the same to bring legislation to protect trans people following the Supreme Court ruling, and to remove anti-trade union laws.

We told conference that it is for the

trade unions as the organised working class to put in place practical steps to allow reps to defend trans members at work. I reminded conference that the Labour Party didn't add LGBT+ rights to its manifesto in 1985 because the National Union of Mineworkers asked nicely - it was because the industrial might of their active, engaged membership was so considerable that Labour was forced to concede. But today the trade unions have been stripped of their power to determine Labour policy - for example, in 2023 the party conference voted to renationalise Royal Mail but it was not in the manifesto.

We must build our unions to fight political and industrial battles in defence of LGBT+ members with a programme to unite all of the working class, if we want to see meaningful changes rather than more empty words.

Join the fightback

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- or text your name and postcode to 07958 032072

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PCS in DWP: Fight for a 10% pay rise, maximum flexible/hybrid working, and oppose job cuts

PCS BROAD LEFT NETWORK MEMBERS

Workers in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are under attack from the employer on three key fronts: pay, jobs and hybrid working.

The civil service pay remit allows all government departments to provide pay awards of just 3.25% (with a pitiful extra 0.5% to address 'low pay'). This represents a pay cut, as RPI inflation in April 2025 was 4.5%. It will certainly not address years of pay erosion, which has fallen by over 20% since just 2020, not to mention years of previous below-inflation pay rises. It will not address the narrowing gaps between our lower grades, which have been increasingly pushed closer together through minimum wage increases; nor will it address the fact that the lowest-paid grades are on minimum wage for the third year in a row.

On top of this, the pay remit is entirely unfunded, meaning any money put towards pay rises needs to come



DWP members on strike ELEANOR DONNE

from cuts. The civil service union PCS fought in the past against unfunded pay rises and refused to trade jobs for pay - we must push the leadership to do that again.

Labour's Spending Review confirmed vicious budget cuts of 15% by the end of the decade; yet cuts will have to be made to fund this year's pay rise. Job cuts have already been announced in other parts of the civil service, such as 5,000 in the Ministry of Defence and 1,200 planned for the Cabinet Office.

As recently as 9 June, the Cabinet Secretary sent an email to all Civil Service staff about mandatory training in the use of artificial intelligence (AI), and there are multiple news reports referring to the use of AI as a means to improve productivity or potentially replace jobs. We are already understaffed by 30,000 people; our workloads are already too high and we are already paid too little. We urgently need a job security agreement.

DWP has mandated 60% office attendance from September, despite us demonstrating over recent years that

we are able to work from home to the same standard. No evidence has been provided to justify the rolling back of the present office attendance level, and thousands of members of staff will now face spending more on travel and their established work-life balance, such as childcare, will be detrimentally impacted.

The DWP needs a serious group-wide campaign to oppose the proposed changes and to extend hybrid working to all staff, including those working in Jobcentres. Increasing office attendance levels in other areas of the civil service, such as Land Registry and Met Police, has been met with strike action by PCS members. Only a group-wide industrial dispute will push DWP senior management in to restoring the current 40% office attendance.

We encourage members to attend PCS meetings where called and to talk to your union reps where meetings haven't been planned. See bln.org.uk for a model motion.

To help win a fighting PCS, join the Broad Left Network: bln.org.uk.

Starmer is on the back foot - Unison can fight for better local government pay

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN UNISON

Public sector union Unison members remain angry over the failure of their pay to keep up with the cost of living.

In a consultation exercise, nearly 80% rejected the 3.2% offer from the employers and agreed to take strike action. In one large branch with a 55% turnout, the vote was as high as 97%!

This year's pay claim for local government workers in England and Wales was for a flat-rate increase of £3,000, aimed at starting to address 15 years of pay stagnation. The estimated loss in real pay of over 20% hasn't stopped the loss of a million jobs over the same period.

Unison, the main union in the sector, has failed to organise a serious campaign since the wage freeze of 2009. Members normally only notice the campaign after the pay-rise

implementation date. Since the anti-democratic Tory strike ballot threshold was introduced, the union has held disaggregated ballots of individual branches, but struggled to get more than three large branches to achieve a 50% turnout. This time the consultation turnout was just under 30% across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There is frustration, particularly among a layer of the activists, with the poor strategy adopted by the negotiating committee, the NJC committee, and the lack of priority the officials give to it. There is an urgent need for regions to elect fighters onto that body to transform negotiations on pay and other conditions of service.

However, with resident doctors (previously known as junior doctors) ready to take strike action, it could be possible to open up two fronts against Labour's pay restraint.

Starmer has been forced back on

winter fuel allowances and disability benefit cuts; a million local government workers on strike could force significant concessions.

At the time of writing, members do not know the decision of the union's negotiating committee (NJC committee) almost two weeks after it met to consider the next steps. The general secretary, Christina McAnea, has reported to the new right-wing dominated NEC that there will not be a ballot. This demonstrates the leadership's rush to partnership with a Labour government, despite the anger of an increasing layer of members preparing to fight Labour in power.

The NJC committee should be meeting with the other local government unions to reject the 3.2% offer and discuss plans for a coordinated national disaggregated strike ballot, supported by a serious campaign for a 'Yes to strike' vote and showing a real determination to fight.



South Gloucestershire strike 2023 ROGER THOMAS

Sheffield Veolia bin strike mass picket



ALISTAIR TICE

JOEL MAYFIELD, STRIKER

When anti-union employer Veolia resorted to a High Court injunction against effective protest, Sheffield's striking refuse workers, Unite members entering the eleventh month of their fight for union recognition, were all agreed on the need to up the ante. Taking inspiration from the Birmingham 'mega-picket' on 9 May, Sheffield bin strike supporters decided to raise the profile of this dispute with a mass picket of our own!

Early on the morning of Wednesday 9 July, at least 150 people mobilised at short notice for a display of solidarity with the 'Lumley Street Warriors'. There was a carnival atmosphere, everyone present - from Kent miners to Doncaster train drivers - could see and feel the meaning of solidarity. Bodies and banners came from London to Liverpool, including a 15-strong contingent of striking refuse workers from Birmingham. Sheffield's bin strike isn't yet as well-known as it should be, but we're certainly getting the word out now!

Veolia bosses weren't feeling confident about testing the enforceability of their injunction. We discovered that the company had dispersed lorries from the depot 75 minutes earlier than permitted by the council's noise abatement regulations. Awe-inspiring speaker and miners' strike veteran John Dunn likened this to "creepy crawlies" scurrying out from underneath an upturned stone!

Veolia has been placed on notice, they've had more than fair warning regarding their anti-union activities. If Veolia fails to recognise Unite before the one-year anniversary of the Sheffield bin strike in August, we'll be calling on the wider movement to mount an even bigger mass picket to coincide with the 12-month mark.

Demand the Labour-led council intervenes

SIMON JENKINS
SHEFFIELD SOUTH EAST SOCIALIST PARTY AND
SHEFFIELD TRADES COUNCIL

This dispute is simply about the right for workers to choose which union

represents them. As an executive member of Sheffield Trades Council, I can report that we are supporting that fight.

Bin collections are being affected, despite what Veolia and the council say - I can say this as a Sheffield resident. The council tries to cover with overtime working by non-Unite members or agency workers.

After the mass picket, we assembled outside Sheffield town hall to lobby the council meeting. A petition collected by Unite with over 6,000 signatures forced a public debate, plus a Socialist Party petition was put forward asking the council to intervene. I asked a question on behalf of the trades council.

Councillor Joe Otten answered that this is between GMB and Unite unions. But the council privatised waste management in 2001 and have sat on their hands during this strike. The chair of the council Environmental Services committee just kept repeating the Veolia company line, showing whose side the council are on - not ours!

The Socialist Party argues that bin services should be taken back in-house.

Construction workers walk out at Hinckley Point C

Thousands of construction workers have walked out unofficially at the massive Hinckley Point C nuclear power plant against bullying management. As we go to press, they are still out.

It has been estimated that there are 12,000 workers on the site, organised by Unite and the GMB, and it is reported that anything from 2,000 to 4,000 workers are involved in this dispute, reportedly at MEH Alliance - bringing together Altrad Services, Cavendish, Balfour Beatty, NG Bailey and Altrad Babcock.

In 2016, Balfour Beatty were one of eight construction companies forced to pay compensation to blacklisted workers after an heroic campaign. They and NG Bailey were prominent in the attempt to bring in the BESNA contract in 2011 that would have resulted in huge pay cuts for construction electricians, organised in Unite. It was defeated by a six-month struggle fronted by the 'Sparks' rank-and-file workers, which led to official strike action being called.

The workers walked out on Wednesday 9 July, and it has been reported that a manager has been suspended, pending an investigation. Construction workers have told us that they feel vindicated, and therefore are demanding that the pay they've lost through the action that they felt forced to take be reimbursed. They are determined to fight on to get this money back.

Notts teachers defeat longer hours threat

Teachers at 14 Outwood Grange Academy Trust (OGAT) schools have defeated their employer's attempt to impose an extra 30 minutes' teaching on the working day. With many teachers working over 55 hours a week, an extra 170 hours over the year would be the last straw. Starting with a one-day strike, building up to three-day strikes, and with a four-day strike planned, OGAT made a new offer.

Jenny Cadman, National Education Union (NEU) rep at Outwood Valley school, Worksop, said: "We settled for a 15-minute extension to our day. The students have a longer day by 20 minutes but will get ten minutes more break... We now have a workload reduction Joint Consultative Committee.

"We know that if we fight, we win, and that people are prepared to stand on picket lines. The NEU has gained membership and strength."

JON DALE, MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

• See full article at socialistparty.org.uk

1945 LABOUR GOVERNMENT – 80 YEARS ON

ALI MANSFIELD

CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

This month marks one year of Keir Starmer's Labour government in office. It also marks 80 years since the transformative 1945 Labour government of Clement Attlee. Coming in the wake of the Tories' historic collapse, Starmer was not swept into power by a wave of enthusiasm, but reluctantly turned to as the only way to kick out a Tory government which had presided over 14 years of brutal austerity.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought anger at the Tories to boiling point as it laid bare for many their ineptitude, corruption and contempt for the working class. Moreover, economic instability alienated the Tory Party from its traditional social base, and discredited in the eyes of big business what was once the most successful capitalist party in history.

The Labour Party was thus able to gain some qualified support based simply on not being the Tories, but it too has seen its historic social base eroded. This was reflected in a historically low turnout at the 2024 General Election, with Labour being elected on the lowest vote share ever recorded.

Scrambling for a base of support, figures within the Labour Party have sought comparisons with the post-war Attlee government, remembered as the most radical reforming government in British history.

'Spirit of '45'

In an article for the Mirror promoting the government's summer spending review, which maintained the Tories' austerity status quo, Angela Rayner cynically made reference to the 80th anniversary of the Attlee government: "From the devastation of war, this great Labour legend built a country that worked for working people. His proud legacy – homes for heroes, our NHS, a modern welfare state – lives on. And now, after 14 chaotic years of failure and neglect, this Labour government is delivering in the same spirit."

The 2024 Labour manifesto, entitled 'Change', is littered with references to the "chaos" of the previous administration. As much as wishing to distance themselves from the Tories in the eyes of voters, Labour aim to present themselves to the bosses as a more stable representative of their interests, vowing "an enduring partnership with business to deliver the economic growth we need".

Capitalist commentators have also contrived to draw comparisons between this current Labour government and the 1945 government, including the Financial Times, which claimed "Starmer must signal a new direction... snatching back the mythology of 1945 for his own, more moderate agenda". This is not because they hope to replicate any improvement in the conditions of the working class.

By conjuring the 'mythology' of 1945, and leaning on support from the trade union leaders, the capitalists hope Starmer's Labour can, more skillfully than the Tories, carry out policies in their interests, without provoking struggles of the working class. Those mass struggles won't be avoided. The Labour Party, British capitalism, and the world in 2025 bear no resemblance to 1945.

The 1945 general election took place only months after VE day, and while war in the Pacific still raged. There existed a profound war-weariness and a determination not to return to the conditions of the 1930s.

This was reflected in a decisive rejection of the pro-capitalist Liberal Party and a huge swing from the Conservatives to a Labour Party, at that time openly and explicitly declaring itself as socialist, with a bold manifesto taking aim at big business. The importance of nationalisation was acknowledged, stating "there are basic industries ripe and over-ripe for public ownership" and, of iron and steel, "only if public ownership replaces private monopoly can the industry become efficient".

One fifth of the economy was taken into public ownership, including coal, steel, the railways and the Bank of England. Much of the move towards public ownership stemmed from a motion put to the 1944 Labour conference in favour of nationalising land, building, heavy industry and the banks. This motion was initially opposed by the party leadership, including Attlee, but supported overwhelmingly by the rank and file. Under pressure from the membership, and the revolutionary mood of the masses, the leadership was pushed further than it would have liked. The internal democratic structures which allowed the working-class membership to exert its influence, in this case by a motion from a constituency becoming part of the party's manifesto, have since been destroyed.

The NHS

Perhaps the most significant and emblematic gain won under the post-war government was the establishment of the NHS.

Until the time of the second world war, there had been no planning of medical provision in terms of coordination between different services, and the geographical distribution of doctors in response to need. A majority of people had no access to a GP, and those who did had to pay. State-run medical services had been a trade union talking point for many years prior.

With the advent of the NHS, hospitals were brought into public ownership, and were free to access. Healthcare provision was planned at a regional level and GPs, dentists and opticians provided free services. Deaths from diphtheria, typhoid and tuberculosis were significantly reduced in this period.

The NHS stands as the most



Voters arriving at a polling station in Holborn, London
PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN



Starmer's Labour government is one determined to do the bidding of the capitalist class, by making working-class people pay. The Labour Party is transformed today into an out-and-out capitalist party, entirely different from the workers' party with a pro-capitalist leadership that existed in 1945.

That government, under pressure of the mood from below, with the threat of workers rising across Europe, made significant concessions to the working class. But at its head were leaders who, though susceptible to working-class pressure from below, were committed to the maintenance of capitalism.

enduring gain from this period, despite being continually attacked by successive governments ever since, and is still treasured as one of the most significant victories for the working class in Britain.

Another major component of post-war reconstruction was an extensive housing programme which included the building of more than 800,000 council houses over the course of six years.

Today, the NHS is in a state of crisis. Health Secretary Wes Streeting has defended the encroachment of the private sector on the running of the NHS, including public statements that he is "very sympathetic" to the idea of reintroducing Private Finance Initiatives. His claims that this will help bring down waiting lists are derided as "utter nonsense" by the Centre for Health and the Public Interest.

Housing

An important part of Labour's messaging on 'national renewal' relates to housing, where Rayner has sought especially to draw comparisons with the 1945 government: "Labour's towns of the future will be built on the foundations of our past. The post-war period taught us that when the government plays a strategic role in housebuilding, we can turbo-charge growth to the benefit of working people across Britain. That is what Labour's plans will achieve."

Even at the most ambitious extent of its recent proposals, the Labour government plans to build 180,000 social rent houses over ten years – amounting to less than a tenth of the yearly rate of council house building by the post-war government, adjusted for population growth. Significantly larger amounts of funding under this scheme will go straight to private developers, and undoubtedly the small portion set aside for social rent will be the first to go, should Labour feel compelled to make future savings in the face of inevitable economic instability.

It is clear that even an optimistic reading of Labour's current plans offer nothing remotely close to the historic gains whose image Starmer and Rayner wish to conjure.

Starmer's Labour government is one determined to do the bidding of the capitalist class, by making working-class people pay. The Labour Party is transformed today into an out-and-out capitalist party, entirely different from the workers' party with a pro-capitalist leadership that existed in 1945.

The post-war Labour government, under pressure of the mood from below, with the threat of workers rising across Europe, made significant concessions to the working class. But at its head were leaders who, though susceptible to working-class pressure from below, were committed to the maintenance of capitalism.

While important industries were

nationalised, these represented a minority of the economy. Crucially, these industries were not placed under democratic workers' control, meaning that production was not planned fundamentally on the basis of meeting the needs of the working class, but on meeting the demands of the privately owned majority of the economy.

Far sighted representatives of capitalism in part recognised the fetter of private ownership on the economy. And that to best manage the capitalist system as a whole, to help it recover from the devastation of war, and to be able to offer concessions to a restive working class, it was beneficial to nationalise key sectors to be used for the benefit of other privately owned sections of industry.

Similar considerations of how to best manage capitalism's inherent contradictions while avoiding mass anger are at play today, but recent steps towards nationalisation of rail and state intervention into Scunthorpe steelworks are of a different order of magnitude.

The extent of post-war reforms was possible only on the basis of an unrepeatable period of sustained economic growth and a balance of forces internationally incomparable to that which exists today.

Stalinism emerged strengthened in the aftermath of World War Two. The Soviet Union had degenerated from the workers' state established through the October 1917 revolution into a

brutal top-down regime bearing no resemblance to genuine socialism. However, its planned economy represented a different social system, and the idea of socialism was supported by large sections of the working class – representing a threat to capitalism.

Motivated by trying to avert that threat, and with breathing space afforded by the post-war economic boom, the capitalist class made concessions, assisted by loans from US imperialism seeking to instill stability. These factors combined to initiate a period of relative unity between capitalist nations in an international framework dominated by the interests of US imperialism.

Britain today

21st Century Britain exists in an entirely different world. Capitalism globally is stagnant. The world balance of forces has transformed multiple times into today's multipolar world of increased tensions between capitalist states, with a protectionist US unable to play its former role. British capitalism is increasingly feeble and especially vulnerable to global economic shocks. This crisis compels Starmer's Labour government to impose further austerity and cuts.

Recent policy U-turns show that this government can be pushed back by working class anger, but the crumbs off the table will not satisfy

the working class's hunger for change. The fundamental constraints imposed by Labour's unshakable commitment to capitalism will continue to expose their inability to offer any way forward.

This process would be accelerated with the existence of an independent political voice of the working class which could give expression to this anger. Such a party would amplify the pressure to achieve greater concessions and, by providing a forum for workers to debate the way forward, expose more clearly and more rapidly the fundamental limitations of the capitalist system.

It was true in 1945 that the gains of that period could only be defended on the basis of overthrowing capitalism altogether. But a reformist leadership was able to sow illusions under conditions of unparalleled and unrepeatable economic growth. Under the protracted global crisis facing capitalism today, no such illusions can be maintained.

With capitalism offering no way forward, major class battles are inevitable in Britain and internationally. Independent working-class organisations will be vital in cohering these struggles, and the process of developing such organisations will sharply pose questions on what is needed to take things forward. Socialists have an indispensable role to play in pointing the way forward to the necessity of the socialist transformation of society.



Nye Bevan, Minister of Health, on the first day of the National Health Service, 5 July 1948 at Park Hospital, Davyhulme, near Manchester PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Still fighting Labour's disability benefit cuts

Wales activists fight to the last minute

BEN GOLIGHTLY
SWANSEA DPAC

● Cardiff

Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) Caerdydd a'r Cymoedd (Cardiff and Valleys) called a rally on 7 July in Cardiff City Centre. We asked the public to contact their MPs to ask them to vote against these cuts on 9 July.

The rally heard speakers from civil service union PCS, 'Don't Call Me Special', Unite Community, and Cardiff Trades Council. DPAC members and members of the public spoke about how the cuts would affect them. Then a group of DPAC members and supporters made their way to the JobCentre on Charles Street, where they held a sit-in.

The sit-in, arranged for after the latest appointment time, lasted for over an hour, and was friendly towards staff and security. The protesters requested that the manager put out a public statement of support for disabled people, which they agreed to (but has not yet happened).

● Swansea

After a three-month campaign, exhausted disability campaigners held one final rally before the vote in Swansea on 8 July.

Swansea ALEC THRAVES



It was a day of mixed emotions. We are proud that we have played a big part in winning major concessions from the government. But we are also very sad that it is, so far, a partial victory. We don't want to leave

behind young disabled people, or let down people who become disabled in future.

After the Swansea rally, we travelled to a nearby DWP building, intending to ask for a manager to chat

to us and to deliver a letter. We had PCS trade union members, who represent DWP staff there, supporting us. This was quite possibly the politest direct action ever! However, security had already locked the doors,

and management refused to talk to us or accept our letter. After the best part of an hour, police officers attended, and an officer offered to deliver the letter for us.

Despite all the stress, we are grateful to the government for one thing. The attacks have created a whole new generation of disability activists! This is not over!

● London

MAGDA KHOULOU BOUHAFF

"Anybody can become disabled" said one protester outside parliament on Wednesday 9 July. Keir Starmer's plans to cut disability benefits target some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Dozens gathered - under intense heat, with temperatures reaching 27 degrees - at 4pm on a weekday, supported by Socialist Party members. They asserted their disappointment and anger towards these cruel cuts.

These cuts not only harm disabled people, but all of us. Nobody is safe from becoming disabled. It can happen to anyone and is not a choice that people make.

Even after the government was forced into a humiliating U-turn the week before, the bill in its current form would mean thousands of disabled people and their households will have to pay the price, being pushed into poverty and hardship.

During the protest, Jeremy Corbyn offered solidarity with everyone who is under threat from the health and disability cuts. The Socialist Party called for the trade unions to lead a fight to stop Labour's cuts, and build a new party for the working class.

Birmingham Gaza protesters stand up to Labour's war and police intimidation

REFAT
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Since the start of this war, protests in support of Palestine have been non-stop, including more than 400 people on 12 July. People from all walks of life stood together, displaying an

unwavering commitment to end Israeli military occupation and the killing of the innocent.

I was lucky to speak to many individuals at the latest protest, whilst handing out leaflets for the Socialist Party. You could see the passion and love that they had for the cause.

Happy to be there, to be part of something bigger.

In recent protests, Labour-backed police have harassed some protesters, arresting them for nonsensical reasons. This time, the police manhandled an individual with a t-shirt calling out the Israeli army, but he was not arrested after many of the protesters intervened.

The protest showed how united people are in the face of a Labour government that is becoming more authoritarian every day, as it supports war and imperialism in the Middle East, while oppressing workers and the most vulnerable in Britain.



Socialist Party at the protest NICK HART

For a Starmer-style U-turn at Caerphilly Council

MARIAM KAMISH
CAERPHILLY TRADES UNION COUNCIL SECRETARY

Plans for an unspent £5 million in Caerphilly Council's budget have been met with disbelief. £5 million could secure the future of the ten libraries the Labour council wants to close - for many years to come.

More cuts

Caerphilly Labour council wants to leave another £2.7 million for 'contingencies' - even though they've already filled the contingency fund required by their financial officer.

Public outrage has forced Keir Starmer to make U-turns. We hope to make Caerphilly Council do the same.

The council is attempting to off-load four libraries in community asset transfers, and close another six. The council is prioritising 'hubs' in larger towns, where they can showcase their 'investments' - abandoning our smaller communities.

But we need local libraries. They are so much more than book depositories.

They are the only public spaces left in our communities. We're not

prepared to see them close. The council needs to start listening.

An Audit Wales report found that Caerphilly Council's scrutiny process was inadequate, the council cabinet was unaccountable, and the council's consultation failed to take people's responses into account.

Nothing's changed

Audit Wales noted they'd highlighted the same shortcomings in 2018. Nothing has improved.

We're mobilising the community for a fightback. On 7 July, we protested at the council offices, with some



protesters dressed as fictional characters. On 19 July, Caerphilly Trades Union Council has a demonstration to save the libraries - and a costume

competition for the kids. The council has had a windfall. We demand they spend money to keep our local libraries open.



Unite marching at Durham Miners' Gala PAUL MATTISON

Corbyn and Unite address 200,000 at Durham Miners' Gala

DANIEL GILMORE
TYNE AND WEAR SOCIALIST PARTY

200,000 people travelled to celebrate the 139th Durham Miners' Gala, a huge celebration of working-class history and international solidarity. The field was packed with people discussing alternatives to the current pro-capitalist parties.

Sharon Graham

Unite the Union general secretary Sharon Graham spoke about the need for workers to oppose the genocide in Gaza, emphasising that Unite would support any workers that refused to handle Israeli-made goods.

She also spoke about opposing 'fire and rehire', backing the Birmingham bin strike, and the recent motion at Unite conference. This was initiated by Socialist Party members

and supporters, passed by Unite conference almost unanimously, led to the suspension of Labour deputy prime minister Angela Rayner as a Unite member, and called for the union to rethink its connection to the Labour Party.

Husam Zomlot, Palestinian ambassador to the UK, received a massive amount of support from the crowd, indicating the strength of feeling on the issue within the working class as a whole, with Palestinian banners and chants throughout the day.

Jeremy Corbyn emphasised his support for care workers and the overstretched NHS, as well as raising taxes on the wealthy, and rescinding the two-child benefit cap - both policies were hugely popular.

He did not, however, mention his new political party, which raised comments and concerns from some

that were looking for more political direction.

Overall, the day was another successful demonstration of working class power that continued even despite the high heat, and our comrades intervened brilliantly.

New workers' party

Socialist Party members from all over the country were there, including Durham and the north east. We called for a new mass workers' party, using the petition launched by leading trade unionists to speak to people, and hosted a meeting of our own. There we discussed the way forward, and the need for trade unionists to raise this demand within their own unions.

● **Read more - 'Unite: Labour attack on bin workers opens up debate on union's political strategy' on pages 4-5**

Leicester campaigners defy stall ban without being fined

HEATHER RAWLING
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

A small victory was won today in the battle to defend the right to protest and campaign in Leicester. Protest and campaign stalls, and amplification are banned by the Labour council using a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

A stall defiance day was organised which included socialist organisations and Unite the Union. We agreed a strategy to not get fined, to engage with the city wardens in a good-natured way.

Protest not banned

The trades council had been in email correspondence with the council over their intentions to hold a ceremony for Workers' Memorial Day in April. They have shared the correspondence with us. Eventually the Community Safety Team manager stated: "That where the activities are relevant to protest, the use of amplification or stalls/structures is not restricted for these purposes."

Socialist Party members printed off the relevant email and gave copies to all those taking part in the stall defiance.

We used our stalls to campaign on a variety of issues, including fighting the cuts and opposing Trump's visit, for 90 minutes before being approached by two city wardens who asked a group to take their stall table down.

I handed the city wardens a copy of the email and suggested they discuss with their line manager for clarification. They agreed and we decided to end the stalls at 2pm which we were going to do in any case.

The clock tower in Leicester has long been a meeting place for protests. Today it was surrounded by traders and a stage promoting music, alongside nearby fair rides.

The council first said that our stalls are a nuisance and then changed that to 'untidy'. The only difference I can see between our protest stalls and the stalls around the clock tower



is that they would have paid and we can't afford to.

Community neglect

City wardens are being pulled out of their neighbourhoods to police the city centre, meaning issues like fly tipping are being neglected. And yet the PSPO has been difficult to enforce.

We agreed to return next week and push for our right to have campaign and protest stalls.

● Heather was issued a notice for setting up a campaign stall on 31 May. A defence campaign has been set up and we plan to challenge it in court on the principle of the right to campaign.

A legal defence fund has been established and we are going to trade unions and campaigning organisations for support. If you can raise it in your organisation please contact Heather rawling154@outlook.com for more details.

SEND anti-cuts campaigns lobby council together

IAIN DALTON
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Campaigners from Save Queensway School and Save Our School Transport held a joint lobby of Leeds City Council against cuts being implemented by the Labour-run council. They were also joined by campaigners, including Unite Community members, holding a day of action against the government's benefit cuts. I attended as a representative of the Save Little Owls nurseries campaign, following the news that six out of the twelve nurseries the council had proposed to privatise have now been saved. Parents were concerned that private sector nurseries would skimp on SEND

(Special Education Needs and Disabilities) provision to boost their profits.

Like many councils across the country, Leeds has been trying to cut anything it is not legally required to provide. This is their justification for closing and privatising nurseries and cutting SEND provision for over 16 year olds.

We've won before

Save Our School Transport campaign follows the success of a previous campaign in 2018. The council is trying to place the burden of organising transport to school on the students and their families. They are doing this with bus passes, travel grants and training. That may be suitable for

some students with SEND, but not for those with complex travel needs.

Queensway primary school in Yeadon, which has a high proportion of children with SEND, has faced two attempts by the council to close it over the last few years. The latest attempt was stopped due to legal action, but the head and other workers at the school have already found other jobs. GMB union members who work as school support staff brought a deputation to the council calling for a secure future for the school and enhanced redundancy payments for any job losses, due to the emotional toll of repeated uncertainty.

Leeds Trades Union Council has helped pull together campaigns



against cuts in an anti-austerity committee in the past. This included drafting a no-cuts amendment to a council budget. Relaunching a body

like this could help to coordinate the growing number of struggles of community campaigners and trade unionists against the cuts.

2005: JEAN CHARLES DE MENEZES SHOOTING

Still demanding justice!

STEVE NALLY
LAMBETH SOCIALIST PARTY

On 22 July 2005 an innocent man was brutally shot to death by police at Stockwell tube station in south London. That man was a young Brazilian worker called Jean Charles de Menezes.

Like millions of Londoners that day, Jean, an electrician, was on his way to work. However, he became the target of a ruthless 'shoot to kill' Metropolitan Police operation.

Two weeks earlier 52 people had tragically lost their lives in a wave of terrorist bombings on London's transport system. Then, on 21 July, four terrorists attempted but failed to detonate their bombs.

The next day Jean was murdered by police, who initially claimed that he was a "terrorist". I remember people cheering at my workplace when the news came through. I still feel sickened by the memory of that.

As a result of the bombings a police operation had been set up to track down suspected terrorists. One such operation was in Tulse Hill, Lambeth, and it focused on the housing block where Jean lived.

On the morning of 22 July he left for work getting two buses to Stockwell tube and boarded a tube train. He did not jump the barriers and

run down the escalator as the police initially claimed. He did not stand up to them as they claimed. Nor did he disobey orders as they claimed.

Cover-up

In reality Jean was jumped upon, unawares, and killed with seven bullets to the head. He didn't stand a chance.

To cover themselves the police spun a web of lies and deliberately hampered the inquiry immediately set up by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Jean was no terrorist. If he had been, why did the police allow him to leave home, get on two buses and enter a busy tube station without arresting him beforehand?

And why on that particular day was the CCTV not working at Stockwell tube station? Perhaps it may have shown what really happened on the day. However it took a determined campaign to expose the truth.

On Monday 25 July the Stop The War Coalition (STWC) organised a 400-strong vigil outside Stockwell tube station. Menezes family members and supporters present at the vigil demanded that the vigil march on Parliament, about two miles away.

Despite police objections, the vigil developed into an impromptu

march. By the time it was halted by riot police at Vauxhall Bridge it had grown into a demonstration of over 700, with members of the local Portuguese community joining it as it progressed down South Lambeth Road.

The local Socialist Party branch made an immediate call for a mass demonstration through the Stockwell area to protest against Jean's murder and to protect and unite the local community - in particular the 30,000-strong Portuguese community based in that part of Lambeth.

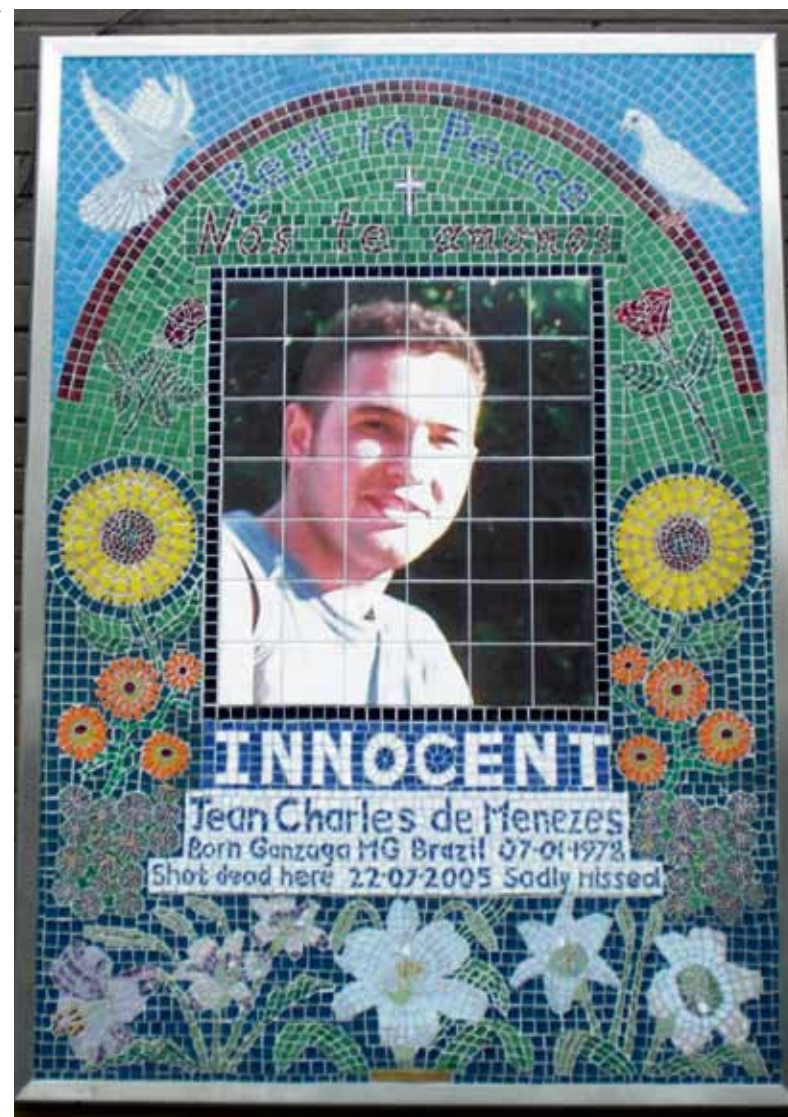
We also called for class unity, not to war and terrorism, and an open public inquiry led by trade unionists and the community groups into the shooting.

Although these demands were well received in the local area, prevarication by the STWC and others meant that such a march did not take place and the justice campaign was eventually diverted down the route of legal process alone.

Socialist Party

Following the vigil, the Socialist Party held a successful public meeting in Stockwell on 11 August, attended by over 40 local people.

Alongside this, Socialist Party members also participated in the



Stockwell station Jean Charles de Menezes mosaic
PHOTO: STEVE BOWEN/CC

Menezes family campaign - Justice 4 Jean. Its first action was a lobby of Downing Street on 22 August.

Over 600 attended and again it quickly turned into an impromptu march, this time on Scotland Yard. These two impromptu marches highlighted the potential for an immediate demonstration of many thousands.

Meanwhile, the Stockwell area came under siege from the police. It was not enough for them to kill a man in cold blood. They also decided to use their powers to intimidate the local community as more of the awful truth emerged.

At one stage you literally could not turn a street corner without seeing police vehicles. To me it felt like living in a mini-police state.

The STWC then organised a national anti-war demonstration for 24 September with a feeder march from Stockwell tube station. The Socialist Party again went onto the streets and into the local Portuguese community giving out 6,000 leaflets.

We also held a meeting at Lambeth College, which 60 students attended, and got resolutions passed by Lambeth Unison and the RMT transport union branch that covered Stockwell tube.

The feeder march was a success but was not the mass demonstration and accompanying campaign required to get justice for Jean and to fully hold the police to account.

In 2006 the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decided not to prosecute the police officers responsible for Jean's early death. Unlike Jean, they were allowed to return to work.

Instead, the CPS prosecuted the Metropolitan Police for breaking health and safety legislation! And in 2007, they were found guilty.

Open verdict

The following year, at Jean's inquest, the Coroner instructed the jury that they could not return a verdict of "unlawful killing", which by then was the only verdict that could describe what happened. Instead, an open verdict was returned.

In a final insult to Jean's family, the Gold Commander in charge of police operations on 22 July 2005, Cressida Dick, was promoted to the position of Deputy Assistant Commissioner. She later became Met Police Commissioner and was awarded a CBE and DBE.

Labour prime minister at the time, Tony Blair, and London Mayor, Ken Livingstone, while apologising for the shooting, praised the police for 'doing a difficult job'.

The state tried to smear Jean's memory, telling the media he was 'an illegal migrant worker'. They even posthumously accused him of sexual assault. This was emphatically disproved.

The brutal murder of Jean Charles de Menezes shows how far the state will go to 'get their man' and what they will do to try to cover up their actions. It shows how unaccountable the police are and will even reward those who carry out such catastrophic deeds in the name of 'justice'.

It also shows the need for mass protests and well organised campaigns when such events occur. Jean never got any justice and his family will never get any peace from the memory of a son taken so brutally.

• This is an edited reprint of the article published in the Socialist on the 10th anniversary in 2015

Israel-Palestine: 'Humanitarian city' would be anything but for Gazans

ELLEN KENYON PEERS
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Plans have emerged for the forced displacement of all inhabitants of Gaza into a camp built on the ruins of Rafah. The proposal, which is supported by US president Trump as a step towards forced deportation of Palestinians in Gaza to surrounding countries, has raised tensions even within the Israeli right wing and highlighted the fragility of the current Israeli government.

Former Israeli PM Ehud Olmert, who spent most of his political career vehemently rejecting withdrawal from the settlements, referred to the so-called 'humanitarian city' as a concentration camp, resulting in calls for his imprisonment from Israeli defence minister Israel Katz. Olmert's words were echoed by current opposition leader Yair Lapid, who described it as 'a bad idea from every possible perspective'.

The project, which is estimated to cost \$4 billion, would initially see 600,000 Palestinians forcibly relocated to the heavily guarded camp in the south of the enclave, where they would not be permitted to leave. Northern Gaza is seen as prime real estate by the Israeli ruling class and Israeli forces have been clearing areas for development and settlement by Israelis since the start of the war. Israel's military forces have clashed with the government over the plans, highlighting that current resources would be spread too thin and reflecting the disquiet of army reservists, who have previously raised concerns they were being ordered to commit war crimes in Palestine.



Al-Mawasi refugee camp in Rafah, Gaza
PHOTO: UNRWA/CC

The news comes as reports of settler violence rise dramatically in the region. Recently two Palestinians, one a US citizen visiting from Florida, were beaten to death by settlers in Sinjil, which has been attacked repeatedly over recent months as part of an on-going land grab by Israeli settlers. Referred to as a 'prevailing crime of impunity' by the UK embassy in Jerusalem, Palestinians in the West Bank live their lives in fear of violence and - in many cases - death at the hands of Israel's armed settler militias.

Netanyahu has, in the past, curried favour with religious groups by

funnelling money into illegal settlements. But he has met with dissent in recent days as the United Torah Judaism and Shas (ultra-orthodox) parties threaten to leave his fragile coalition over his introduction of conscription for Yeshiva students, that were previously exempt, in a bid to boost troops. In tandem, his far-right security minister, Ben Gvir, has threatened to leave the current coalition if a ceasefire and hostage return deal is signed with Hamas. Netanyahu has spent the majority of his tenure in the current government carefully walking a tightrope that will

Epping asylum hotel: To combat racism build a campaign to fight all council cuts and for jobs, homes and services for all

On Sunday 13 July, a crowd gathered outside a hotel being used to accommodate asylum seekers in Epping, following one of the asylum seekers having been charged with sexual harassment and assault. The crowd, which swelled to a few hundred, clearly included racist far-right individuals and groupings trying to exploit the situation and lead threatening chants and actions.

Socialist Party members are campaigning for the following approach in the labour movement in the area.

Following the events in Epping, this trades council states:

We condemn all acts of racism and threats against asylum seekers. We stand in solidarity with victims of sexual harassment and violence. Savage Tory austerity, now continued by Starmer in government, has been passed on by local councils - in

Epping's case a Tory council, but disgracefully the same is true in Labour councils. Coupled with decades of low pay, poverty and a housing crisis, this has created the basis for despair and division in our communities which dangerous racist far-right groups aim to exploit, aided by the appalling anti-migrant rhetoric of all the main parties including Starmer's Labour.

We say:

- Oppose all racism and division; defend the right to asylum; workers' unity against attacks on asylum seekers
- End all council cuts. Demand full funding from the government for all our communities' needs
- Jobs, homes and services for all
- Build council houses; cap rents
- Oppose all sexual harassment and violence. Restore funding for

women's services; invest in street lighting and other measures to keep our streets safe

We pledge our assistance to the trade unions and communities of Epping to help build a united campaign for the resources all residents need and against the far right. We'll work with any anti-austerity councillors who want to fight Tory and Labour cuts.

We call on the TUC to organise a national demonstration against

Labour's austerity and division.

Following the decision of Unite to suspend Angela Rayner and open up a debate about Unite's relationship with Labour - as a result of the brutal treatment of Birmingham bin workers by the Labour council, backed up by the Labour government - the trades council will organise a debate in the autumn on how the trade unions can build a workers' political voice that can undercut support for Reform and for far-right groups.

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PHOTO: PAUL MATTSOON

Committee for a Workers' International
FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD
socialistworld.net



The Socialist Party marching for justice and against war in 2005 PHOTOS: 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.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Cruz's cuts kill: more weather warning funding needed



Flooding in Kerrville, Texas PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

JASPER CHAPLIN
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The death count for the recent Texas floods has reached 120, including three dozen children, and Ted Cruz has blood on his hands. The Texan Republican senator, who slashed \$150 million from weather forecasting just days before the disaster, was relaxing on holiday (again!) while working-class Americans faced a historic four days of flooding.

Cruz amended language in Trump's reconciliation bill before it was signed, eliminating vital funding to improve weather-related research and forecasting. These are the same systems that could have saved lives over the 4 July weekend. In a blatant show of hypocrisy, Cruz, who was in Mexico during the 2021 winter storm crisis, returns from yet another holiday to preach about 'better warning systems'. But this concern was nowhere to be found when he was slicing up the National Weather Service budget and protecting fossil fuel profits over his constituents' lives.

More than 600 meteorologists and support workers have already left the

understaffed National Weather Service under Trump's agenda. Cruz's cuts removed another \$50 million from climate research that could help predict these kinds of extreme weather events, with more cuts to climate agency NOAA planned under the Trump administration.

A spokesperson for Cruz denied any link between the cuts and the flood's impact on Texas workers, saying that there are more productive ways to improve weather forecasting than 'overfunding' NOAA accounts. But it's clear that wherever that money is going now, it won't be funding public safety.

In areas with adequate warning systems and personnel, such as Comfort, Kendall County, the death toll is zero; that should be proof enough how vital these services are. Essential early warning systems that save lives shouldn't be subject to the profit motives of big fossil fuel companies. The only way we can achieve that state-wide is by taking back profits from the fossil fuel companies and putting the funding of essential services under democratic workers' control.

India: One-day general strike

BYOUVRAJ
NEW SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE (CWI INDIA)

New Socialist Alternative (NSA) in Pune city, India, took part in a rally organised as part of the one-day general strike held on 9 July 2025. The NSA-linked union, Shramik Hakk Andolan, also mobilised support and actively participated in the general strike.

More than a thousand workers gathered in front of the Collector Office (the government office responsible for collecting tax and other main governmental tasks) in Pune, shouting slogans and staging a sit-in protest. A similar demonstration was also organised in another part of the Pune district to enable workers from that region to participate in the strike action.

I addressed the rally, calling for sustained agitation and broader alliances to mobilise unorganised workers into collective action.

The general strike saw an estimated 250 million workers participating

across the country. Ten central trade unions issued the call for action, presenting a charter of 17 demands. These demands included the scrapping of the new labour codes, halting privatisation of public services, ending casualisation of jobs, as well as political demands such as the repeal of the anti-democratic Public Safety Act in Maharashtra.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha, a united front of various farmers' organisations, also extended support to the strike. However, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), the trade union aligned with the ruling BJP, did not participate.

Workers from sectors such as power, banking, mining, postal services, and others joined the strike. Across many cities and towns, workers and farmers rallied to raise their voices. Transport was disrupted in some areas as highways were blocked by striking workers.

- Read an extract from the leaflet produced by NSA for the strike at socialistworld.net

Kenya: Anger erupts again in new wave of anti-government protests



PHOTO: CAPITAL FM KENYA/CC

OSCAR PARRY

Monday 7 July saw 31 people killed by police, including a 12-year old girl sitting at home, over 100 injured and over 500 arrested as mass protests erupted again across Kenya, driven by widespread anger at a government assault on the living standards of ordinary people. These protests were first sparked off last year in response to the heavy taxation policies of President William Ruto - nicknamed 'Zakayo' by demonstrators, referencing the biblical tax collector Zacchaeus. These figures, published by the state-run Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, give a glimpse of the government's repression of what it correctly sees as a challenge to its rule.

At least 16 were killed by state forces on 25 June against actions to mark the first anniversary of last year's #RejectFinanceBill2024 protests that itself saw many killed, injured or abducted. Now, demonstrations have swept across at least 17 of Kenya's 47 counties, with tens of thousands participating. On 'Saba Saba Day', a historically significant day that commemorates 7 July 1990, the start of the 1990s struggle for multi-party democracy, the protests surged again, affirming the long-standing resistance tradition among Kenya's working people.

What distinguishes these protests is the character and composition of the movement. It is overwhelmingly led by young people from urban centres, many of whom are unemployed or struggling with the high cost of living. Mobilisation has been swift and dynamic, largely coordinated through social media platforms like TikTok, with videos and calls to action going viral in hours. Despite the absence of formal leadership or coordination with established political parties, the movement has rapidly gained momentum. Indeed, many journalists and observers on the ground note that the protests have bypassed traditional political structures entirely - a sign of deep disillusionment with all wings of the ruling elite.

Fearful of this grassroots rebellion, the Ruto government has responded with increasing repression. Activists have been abducted in extrajudicial operations and subjected to unlawful interrogations. Armed gangs, described by protesters as government-hired thugs, have attacked demonstrators using clubs and whips. Police have unleashed tear gas, water cannons, and live ammunition against largely peaceful gatherings. Ruto has ordered police to shoot in the legs protesters who target businesses, ensuring they are incapacitated but not killed. To clamp down further, the government has ordered media outlets to stop broadcasting the protests live - an attempt to suppress the growing tide of dissent.

However, rather than cower in fear, Kenyans have responded with even greater determination. The brutal killing of teacher and activist Albert Ojwang while in police custody, along with footage showing an unarmed street vendor being shot at close range, have become rallying points for a movement that sees itself as standing against not just one administration, but a corrupt and exploitative political system.

Importantly, cracks are appearing in the state apparatus itself. While the government is attempting to deploy security forces to crush the protests, many police officers and soldiers come from the same communities as the demonstrators. In time, sections of the armed forces may refuse orders or even align with the movement.

Ruto retreat

This isn't the first time Ruto's administration has been forced into retreat. In 2024, the government withdrew a set of deeply unpopular tax hikes and dismissed several cabinet ministers following weeks of protests. Those demonstrations reached their peak when protesters stormed parliament and set parts of it alight, forcing unpopular politicians to flee through tunnels, a period now remembered as the 'Seven Days of Rage'. Yet, in 2025, the government has returned with a repackaged set of economic attacks - this time targeting basic necessities such as bread, mobile transactions, and internet usage in a new tax bill.

Ruto, a wealthy businessman, has made these decisions under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is driving an austerity agenda linked to a \$3.6 billion bailout package. One of the bailout's main conditions is to increase tax revenues while slashing public spending. The Kenyan government is currently spending nearly 38% of its revenue on debt repayments, according to the World Bank. A weakening Kenyan shilling and rising interest rates due to global capitalist turmoil have worsened the debt burden. In early 2024, Ruto's government

narrowly avoided default on a \$2 billion Eurobond issued in 2014 by borrowing yet another \$1.5 billion from the IMF - at interest rates exceeding 10%.

This imperialist debt cycle has forced Kenyans to pay more, earn less, and endure public service cutbacks - all so that international creditors and bondholders can be repaid. Foreign aid, too, is drying up. Donald Trump's cuts to USAID have already reduced payments to Kenya, hitting crucial sectors like healthcare the hardest. In 2023, Kenya received \$850 million in aid from the US, with nearly half allocated to health services.

Capitalist institutions are openly worrying about the stability of Ruto's rule. The Financial Times criticised Ruto's tax policies as "poorly designed", while The Economist urged him not to stand in the 2027 elections. Discontent is spreading regionally. In Uganda, youth protests against President Yoweri Museveni have led to arrests, while in Nigeria, the #EndBadGovernance demonstrations against President Bola Tinubu, that were also against corruption, misgovernance, and inflation, have been met by state repression.

However, Ruto and the Kenyan ruling elite will not surrender easily. They will attempt to wait out the storm, revise their strategy, and reintroduce their unpopular measures in another guise. That is why the movement must evolve from spontaneous protest to structured resistance. The youth should take the lead in forming democratic action committees in schools, universities, and neighbourhoods. These bodies should appeal to the broader working class and poor to similarly organise themselves and join in building a united front capable of challenging the status quo.

Already, some calls for a general strike have emerged from the protests - a significant step forward. A one- or two-day nationwide shutdown could serve as a powerful show of force, bringing new layers of society into the struggle, in particular the working class, and putting pressure on all levers of state power. Unity across ethnic and tribal lines is especially critical, as Kenya's political elite has often used such divisions to distract and weaken opposition movements. Encouragingly, this wave of protests appears to have cut across those divisions, underscoring the shared economic pain felt by the majority.

Ruto once campaigned on a promise of lifting ordinary Kenyans out of poverty. But since assuming office, he has done the bidding of global capital and local elites, imposing policies designed to satisfy IMF and World Bank requirements. While coming from a poor background, and once a bit of a populist, Ruto is now tied by a thousand threads to the interests of Kenyan capitalism and world imperialism. Kenya has joined the growing list of neocolonial states caught in spiralling debt, forced into austerity, and facing growing popular backlash. Earlier this year, a newspaper splashed a headline asking whether Ruto was "Kenya's most hated president".

The crisis highlights the urgent need for a revolutionary political alternative. None of the current opposition leaders offer real change - they, too, serve the same capitalist class.

In countries like Chile, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, mass movements succeeded in toppling governments only to see the old or different pro-capitalist forces come to power due to the absence of a coherent revolutionary socialist party capable of organising the next steps. Even in Kenya, ministers forced to resign last year have since been reinstated - an indication that without structural transformation, nothing truly changes.

The only way forward is for the working class and poor to organise independently, aiming to form a government rooted in socialist policies and democratic control. Such a government would break with the failed capitalist model and reject the dominance of imperialist institutions like the IMF. It could redirect national wealth toward healthcare, education, housing, and job creation rather than debt payments and elite enrichment.

A new political party - revolutionary, democratic, and grounded in the everyday struggles of the Kenyan people - is urgently needed. As the movement reflects on its victories and setbacks, the need for a political vehicle to consolidate and deepen the struggle is clear. This question must become central to ongoing debates about the future of the resistance.

Only through such organisation can Kenya's working masses transform spontaneous outrage into revolutionary change that would inspire the working masses and poor throughout the continent to follow a similar course.

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

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

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

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



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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

END GAZA SLAUGHTER



PHOTO: IAN PATTISON

FIGHT FOR A NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY

SEAMUS SMYTH
EAST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY REGIONAL ORGANISER

How many times must we witness the horrors unfolding in Gaza plastered across our screens? And how many times will we hear the same hollow words from Starmer and the Labour government, claiming to champion peace while continuing to arm the Israeli state?

While at home, they prepare to gut vital public services and slash support for the most vulnerable, all in the name of serving the super-rich. 'What has changed since the Tories?' is the most often asked

question on our campaign stalls. And it's obvious. Under Labour, the priorities of the capitalist class remain untouched.

Meanwhile, as Trump maintains his support for Israeli bombardment and advocates for the mass displacement of the Palestinian people, Starmer is extending a warm invitation for him to visit the UK this September.

This is the true face of capitalism: war and destruction. It's a system that has already cost countless lives - and it's upheld by politicians across Britain, the US, and beyond, who continue to back the Israeli state's cruelty without question.

The same leaders who greenlight

war and pour billions into death and devastation are the ones tearing apart our public services and deepening the crisis for working-class people.

Outrage

Across Britain over the last year, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in protest, voicing their outrage and exposing the hypocrisy of this government.

But this movement must go further. Its power lies in joining forces with the organised working class and the trade union movement. Unions can play a decisive role - mobilising their members on demonstrations, defending those

targeted for speaking out, and coordinating action between arms and logistics workers and anti-war campaigners.

At the same time, we must raise the urgent need for genuine political representation for working-class people.

The statements by Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn indicating a new political party "will take shape" reflects growing frustration with the political status quo.

It would be a welcome step that can inspire young people, trade unionists, and anti-war activists demanding an alternative to war and austerity. But for the new party to succeed, it must be

rooted in struggle and the everyday experiences of working-class communities.

The movement for peace in Gaza must be channelled into a serious challenge to capitalism and oppression.

The Sultana and Corbyn statements are a promising beginning, but need to be grounded in the struggles of working-class people to unite in the fight against war and poverty.

Ending war and oppression, in Gaza and beyond, means breaking with capitalism and building a new socialist future from below.

The working class deserves nothing less, and the time to build it is now.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 14



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