

Healthworkers: Understaffed ... Underpaid... BURNT OUT!

'LET'S FIGHT TO WIN ON NHS PAY AND FUNDING'

● Protest on 3 July!

A LONDON NHS WORKER

Local protests and demonstrations are being organised all over the country on the NHS's birthday, 3 July. We will be demanding a real pay rise, proper funding, enough staff to ensure patient safety, and an end to privatisation and marketisation.

Staff are exhausted, traumatised and angry - a fact now recognised in the latest health and social care report by MPs; not that they offer any real solution!

For many healthworkers the insulting 1% pay offer from the government is the last straw. There is a determination to fight, including taking strike action.

The Pay Review Body is due to give its recommendation on NHS pay for England and Wales this month. This is likely to be another insultingly low figure. It is crucial that this should be met with a coordinated campaign of action by health unions, backed up by support from other unions, local NHS campaigns and

local communities.

Coordinated strike action is the surest way to win a real pay rise for NHS staff. The grassroots demand for 15%, now adopted by most unions, should be the absolute minimum. NHS pay has been reduced by around 20% since 2010.

Strikes would also show the Tory government that it cannot abuse the NHS and get away with it. Its current White Paper is a privatisers' charter, aiming to allow private companies onto boards that commission services. They might as well just hand over the chequebook now!

The establishment media, which couldn't say enough about what heroes we were a year ago, is now



PHOTO SCOTTISH TUSC

turning on NHS staff, accusing us of being 'greedy'. It isn't greed to want to be able to pay our rent and bills without struggling. It isn't greed that makes us fight for a wage that could retain staff, instead of them leaving in droves because they can't afford to live.

It isn't greed to demand safe staffing levels to ensure patient safety, or to demand outsourced staff are brought back in-house on NHS pay and conditions. It's not greed to fight for the resources needed to bring down waiting lists.

The real greed we see is the private companies bleeding the NHS dry for their own profits. Billions of pounds of public money was spent

on dodgy PPE contracts last year with private companies - which in some cases failed even to provide the PPE so desperately needed in health and social care.

Where health workers fight, we can win. A joint strike by NHS workers in Northern Ireland won equal pay with NHS staff in England and Wales in the first strike after Johnson was elected in December 2019.

During the pandemic, strikes in health have continued. In two hospitals in East Lancashire, security staff who demanded their contracts were brought back into the NHS, won.

For the future of our NHS, let's fight to win on NHS pay and funding.

● See also page 5

the Socialist

formerly Militant

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

Tory splits and infighting growing

Fight for a new mass workers' party



Hancock, Sunak and Johnson NUMBER 10/CC

The latest opinion polls show the Tories around ten points ahead of Starmer's Labour. No doubt Johnson is hoping he can continue to defy political gravity, aided by the abject failure of Starmer to act as an opposition. His hopes will come to nothing. As society begins to move out of lockdown, all the pent-up political and economic processes that have accumulated over the last fifteen months are starting to be unleashed.

That includes attacks by the Tory government on working-class people, as they try to make us pay for the Covid crisis. Cuts to Universal Credit, the ending of the furlough scheme, and real-terms pay cuts for public sector workers - including in the NHS - are the diet that Johnson and co. have prepared for us. Public services are on their knees, with 4.6 million people on waiting lists for NHS treatment. Meanwhile, in contrast to Johnson's posturing about 'levelling up', his government is presiding over a tsunami of brutal 'fire and rehire' attempts by private sector bosses to 'level down' their workers' pay and conditions (see page 9).

At this stage, there may be some workers who are still hoping that Johnson 'getting Brexit done' might mean some improvement in their living conditions but, as Covid recedes, the low-paid, super-exploitative and crisis-ridden character of British capitalism will be thrown into sharp relief.

The Socialist Party campaigned to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum for completely opposite reasons to the right-wing nationalists of the Tory Party and UKIP. We oppose the EU - which is a bosses' club driven by maximising the profits of the capitalist elites - and fight for international workers' solidarity and a socialist Europe.

All Tory governments, whether

pro or anti-EU, act in complete opposition to the interests of the working class. Johnson's Brexit will mean Britain going further down the road of being a low-corporation tax, low-regulation economy, reliant for example on 'free ports' - aka super-exploitative tax-free zones.

It is also further weakening British capitalism, which is why the majority of big business did not support it. The OECD predicts that Britain will suffer the most post-pandemic 'scarring' of all the major economies, partly because of the government's terrible handling of the pandemic, but also contributed to by Johnson's Brexit.

Class anger

Johnson would be deluded to imagine that his government will not face multiple opposition movements to the post-Covid misery it is serving up. Those movements - like the Black Lives Matter demonstrations - will be fuelled by all the accumulated anger at what the working-class majority suffered during the pandemic.

And they will face not a strong government but a weak and deeply-divided Tory Party, as was shown by Cummings' vitriol against his old boss, and developments since. The rebellion over international aid, timed to embarrass the government at the start of the G7 summit, involves a host of senior Tories including Theresa May, seven former Tory cabinet ministers and eight Tories who chair select committees, including the chairs of the defence committee and the foreign affairs committee.

Another indication of the growing schisms in the Tories was the resignation of the education tsar over the paltry sums the government was willing to spend on helping school pupils catch up - just one tenth of what he and the Tory education minister Gavin Williamson wanted.

Further infighting is also likely over

any attempts to delay the complete lifting of Covid-preventative measures in the face of the rising Delta variant. In reality, one of the central reasons for the criminal failure to take effective action to deal with the rising virus last autumn was that the Tory backbenches were only willing to support it when disaster had already happened. Not only Johnson, but the whole parliamentary Tory Party, was indeed responsible for many tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths.



Johnson would be deluded to imagine that his government will not face multiple opposition movements to the post-Covid misery it is serving up.

The current divisions in the Tory Party could be nothing, however, compared to what will develop under the impact of coming events. Johnson is a Poundland Trump, an English nationalist, who the capitalist class do not trust to reliably act in their interests.

Brexit is not a finished process. In the endless post-Brexit negotiations and skirmishes with the EU, this Tory government's blundering will inevitably enrage big sections of the ruling elite. His government's policies have already strengthened the struggle for independence in Scotland, and have inflamed sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland.

Sections of the Tory Party are

putting up with him only because he appears to be able to win some working-class voters. This is largely an illusion. Plummeting support for Labour is a far bigger factor than an increase in Tory votes in Johnson's electoral gains. Even this, however, will shatter as he fails to deliver for the so-called red wall voters.

Populist danger

Many workers who have voted Tory could be won to a mass workers' party with a socialist programme if such a party existed. After all, over a million ex-UKIP voters supported Corbyn, despite his limits, in the 2017 election, when he was still pledging to implement the 2016 referendum result. In the absence of such a party, however, the danger to the workers' movement is not the consolidation of stable working-class support for the Tories, but rather the development of unstable right-wing populist formations, including via splits in the Tory Party.

The capitalist class in Britain has its own crisis of political representation. Much of the capitalist elite would probably prefer a Starmer-led Labour government to Johnson's unreliable populists, as he would be a more reliable representative of their interests - if only he seemed capable of winning an election.

The workers' movement should take confidence from the crisis of capitalist politics, and the highly fragile nature of the Tory Party. However, a vital element in the struggle to defeat the Tories and to fight for a socialist alternative to this rotten capitalist system, is for the working class to have its own political voice, arguing for a socialist programme. Starmer's Labour is the antithesis of that. Therefore, one of the crucial tasks in the coming stormy period is the fight for a new mass workers' party.

G7 tax deal won't challenge corporate power

NICK HART
BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Ahead of the G7 summit, the media brought news of a 'historic' plan to impose a global minimum tax rate on large companies. Hailed as 'revolution' by German finance minister Olaf Scholz, the deal was approved by the finance ministers of the G7 group of large capitalist powers ahead of their summit in Cornwall. United States Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen declared that it would "ensure fairness for the middle class and working people in the US".

Have the governments of these major capitalist powers had a conversion to ending the ever-growing gap between rich and poor? Is it a sign that they plan to turn away from neoliberal policies designed purely to benefit big business? Or is it simply an attempt to preserve the existing world capitalist order and the hierarchy of nations within it?

In a period when global trust in large corporations, and capitalism in general, has decreased in many western countries, and billionaires such as Amazon boss Jeff Bezos have become notorious for their massive wealth, the G7 governments need to be seen to do something to rein in the worst excesses of big businesses.

But the devil is in the detail. The outline proposal is for a minimum global rate of corporation tax of 15% on profits, down from the US government's opening bid of 21%.

This would apply to multinational companies with a turnover above a yet-to-be-decided threshold. It would allow governments in the countries where they are headquartered to receive a top-up tax on those businesses' overseas activities in countries such as Ireland and Hungary, where the headline rate of corporation tax is less than 15%.

At 15%, the proposed minimum tax rate is lower than the 16% paid on average by the five largest Silicon Valley companies in the last decade. It's below even the historically low current level in Britain of 19% (set to increase to 25% in the next two years), and may become a global maximum tax in practice.

The other 'pillar' of the proposals is a plan to allow for taxing of profits on goods and services at the point where they are sold to consumers, rather than where the companies involved are formally based. For instance, this would allow the British government to collect tax on profits from Apple Music subscriptions sold to UK users, rather than that of Ireland where Apple has its European headquarters.

However, the rules on taxation in the country of sale would only apply to firms with more than 10% annual profits. For instance, this could see Amazon paying these taxes on its cloud computing services, which last year made effective profits of 30%, but none on its home delivery business, where the margin is much lower.

Taken together, these measures represent an effort to place a floor under the race to the bottom by national governments cutting corporate tax rates, and the rampant tax



Amazon workers in Minnesota walk out in December 2018 FIBONACCI BLUE/CC

avoidance by big business - 63% of American firms' profits in 2018 were declared in tax havens.

Firmly in the sights of the G7 countries is the hugely profitable digital technology sector which by nature is global. Users in Britain could be using an app developed in Germany, but reliant on servers based in Norway.

Big tech profits

The big tech companies have been able to make gigantic profits from subscriptions to apps from consumers and the rental of server space and computing power to businesses that, once developed, require next-to-no additional labour to sell to each new customer. Due to this and the dominance of a few big players in each field, the largest tech firms are set to provide a much more reliable source of profits for investors in years to come than manufacturing and more traditional service industries.

This deal has been nearly 13 years in the making, with global tax reform first discussed in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. Why is it that the plans are only progressing now?

The need of governments to increase their taxation income has become more urgent in the wake of the huge amounts of public money provided to combat Covid, both medically and with measures such as the furlough scheme in Britain. Following a decade of austerity, these pro-big business governments must make it at least appear to workers that the corporations are bearing the brunt of any tax increases.

Furthermore, Biden's plans to spend over \$2 trillion on renewing America's creaking infrastructure, and Johnson's promises to 'level up' Britain through investment in neglected regions, will require funds

raised from big business to help breathe new life into economies that were limping along before the pandemic.

The US government is mindful of its decreasing global economic and political power, and wants to secure a share of the proceeds of global commerce and financial transactions while it still can.

For all the celebratory outbursts following the agreement being reached, it still needs to be approved next month at a meeting of the larger G20 group of countries, including China and Russia, whose economic and political interests are at odds with the US and some other G7 countries. Any new rules that are eventually agreed would have a run up of years, not months, before being fully implemented, as the specifics of when they will apply and how they will be enforced are thrashed out.

Even if these proposals succeed in reshaping the global tax system so that multinational companies pay significantly more than they do at present, it will not remove the power of these big businesses and the politicians they sponsor over our lives, or lead to a fairer, more humane form of capitalism.

Ultimately, the modern corporate giants would not be able to generate the multi-billion pound revenues they do without the efforts of workers, from app developers to copper miners. In the long term, the only just solution will be to take over these monopoly powers and to have those same workers run them democratically as part of a global socialist plan of production. This could then see not just the monetary wealth but the physical and intellectual resources of these companies used for the benefit of people and the planet, not simply the balance sheet of the US Treasury.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working-class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which organises across the world.

Our demands include...

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle for an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £12 an hour without exemptions as a step towards a real living wage of at least £15. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings. Scrap zero-hour contracts.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.

- Scrap Universal Credit. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.
- For the right to vote at 16.

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

- For a mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax 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.
- 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 bosses' neoliberal European Union and single market. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8777**
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Tory school catch-up plan: Fight for the funding our schools and colleges need



Strike wins school funding reprieve for Valentine school in Southampton, 2019

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER AND CANDIDATE FOR NEU DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

Tory appointed Education Recovery Commissioner Sir Kevan Collins has quit. The Treasury has refused to foot the bill of £15 billion he deemed necessary for pupils in English schools to catch up, instead stumping up less than 10% of what was suggested. That's just £6,000 a year for an average primary school.

In response, Collins resigned saying: "I do not believe it is credible that a successful recovery can be achieved with a programme of support of this size".

On this, Collins is absolutely correct. But it isn't just the funding for 'recovery' that is woefully inadequate. Schools and colleges have suffered from years of real-term spending cuts. Many schools have been announcing further job cuts for the end of this academic year.

The NEU has a long-standing campaign for increased education spending after years of real-term spending cuts, so it is laughable that Tory Minister Nadhim Zahawi has tried to blame teaching unions for Collins' resignation! Zahawi complains that unions "resisted the idea of extending the school day in the first place". But there's no contradiction between questioning the extension of the school day and demanding proper investment in quality education.

Making tired children sit in class, or with tutors, for even longer days of 'catch-up cramming' isn't what's needed. And, in practice, the pressure to staff an extended school day would be on existing teachers and support staff.

Breaking point

But we are already at breaking point. Excessive workload is already the main reason so many teachers leave the profession - a staggering third of new entrants within the first five years in the job. These plans will drive even more out of teaching, unless we organise to make sure the Tories' plans are dropped and, instead action is taken to reduce workload.

Under current contracts teachers are only obliged to deliver 1,265 hours of 'directed time' every academic year, so school employers could not enforce a longer working

day. However, the pressure on staff to do so, including the pressure from performance-related pay, will still be exerted in some schools. School union groups will need to organise to make sure workload isn't increased yet further through 'divide-and-rule' amongst staff.

Proper investment in additional staffing is vitally needed, not cheap-rate tutoring schemes. Any additional funding would be best spent on support within the existing school day, rather than by extending it. The UK has some of the largest numbers in school classes globally, especially in primary schools. Class sizes should be cut to ensure pupils get more individual attention, and to reduce teacher workload. There's also a need for schools to be able to provide greater pastoral support, with additional mentors and counsellors as well, particularly to support mental health.

Schools should be given the flexibility to make decisions to best meet the needs of their students, but above all must be given the necessary funding. If schools are going to offer extended sessions, then they should concentrate on activities such as sport, drama, art and music that many families cannot afford to pay for their children to participate in.

Sadly, Williamson and the Treasury have showed that they aren't interested in genuinely investing in our children's future. Instead they are looking to get by on the cheap by trying to force overworked staff and stressed students to simply work for longer. Together, parents, staff and students must say no - and unions must prepare action to oppose any attempt to impose a further worsening of conditions.

Indeed, we should go further and demand the additional investment our schools and colleges need and a new national contract for all staff that includes trade-union negotiated class sizes and staffing policies that makes sure there is sufficient staffing in place to meet needs - as well as to limit workload.

● *Martin Powell-Davies is standing for deputy general secretary of NEU, and your branch of NEU can nominate him; nominations are open now.*

● *For more info visit martin4dgs.co.uk*

Dea-John Reid murder: Jobs, homes and services, not racism

BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

14 year-old Dea-John Reid was tragically murdered on the streets of Kingstanding, Birmingham, on the evening of 31 May.

Reports from witnesses to the horrific murder made it clear from the beginning that this was a racist murder. Witnesses reported the boy being chased and subjected to racist abuse before being stabbed.

Disgracefully, but unsurprisingly, West Midlands Police denied and attempted to play down the racist motive for Dea-John's murder, only admitting on the evening of 2 June what locals had been reporting all along: that racism had sparked this tragic sequence of events.

A man in his 30s has now been charged with murder, while another remains in custody along with a 14 year old boy. Three others arrested in connection with the killing have now been released.

The actions of West Midlands Police in relation to this case, and in previous incidents involving the deaths of black men in custody, show that we can't trust an unaccountable police force to investigate Dea-John's murder, including possible racist motives.

We need an independent investigation involving elected members of the local community in Kingstanding and North Birmingham, including trade union reps, particularly those involved in working with young and vulnerable people in schools and social services.

Such an inquiry could not just begin to establish the real circumstances of this murder, but also the social problems which provide the backdrop to this latest outrage. 41.6% of children in Birmingham are living in poverty (the highest rate outside of London), 9.8% of people are unemployed with many tens of thousands more in precarious work, and 55,400 are currently on furlough wondering

if they'll have a job to go back to.

Along with the relatively well-paid, secure jobs that have been lost from the city due to the decline of manufacturing, the social ties of working-class communities in Birmingham have been further hit by a decade of cuts to public services, largely administered by the Labour council. Among the 12,000 jobs axed by Birmingham City Council since 2010 will have been many community and youth workers who would have previously helped young people find a positive future away from street crimes and violence.

Rather than build a campaign to win funding from Westminster for expanded public services that could prevent crime, Labour Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster's response is to call for a sticking plaster of 450 extra police officers.

But if these officers are not democratically accountable to the communities they police, if they continue to use discriminatory stop-and-search policies focused on black and Asian young people, this could serve to heighten tensions rather than ease them.

Divisive politics

We need to campaign against the divisive politics which turn migrants and black and Asian people into scapegoats for the conditions faced by young and working-class people. We reject this. These conditions are the result of the profit and greed of capitalism.

It's vital that trade unions and democratically run residents' and community associations work to ensure that any tensions created by this shocking murder are channelled in the direction of campaigning for young people's future. To demand better jobs, homes and public services, and avoid a repeat of the riots which followed the murder of Mark Duggan at the hands of the police in 2011.

The Socialist Party is fighting to build a mass united movement that can smash racism and the class inequality that together press on the necks of young people.

Leaving the power to run society in the hands of the existing rulers, the big-business boss class, condemns us to having to keep fighting racism. Mass united working-class action and organisation, united around a programme of anti-racism and anti-capitalism, to fight for socialism with the working class democratically running society, is necessary.

Community shows solidarity

Sunday 6 June saw a huge cross-community turnout of Brummies including black, brown and white working-class youth to give condolences and solidarity to Dea-John's family.

An extremely charged atmosphere of anger, sadness and a real desire to tackle racism head on from the grassroots level. There was no real faith or trust in the police or the political establishment to carry out this crucial task.

Dozens and dozens of attendees approached members of Birmingham Socialist Party asking to take leaflets and about organising anti-racist and working-class campaigns. We need to make our streets safe for all kids, but also offer a real future for the next generation of decent jobs, homes, education and fully funded public services.

KRIS O'SULLIVAN

Birmingham residents assemble in solidarity with Dea-John's family and friends KRIS O'SULLIVAN



We're building for 3 July NHS protests

● Waltham Forest: Burnt out but fighting back

LEN HOCKEY

UNITE BART'S HEALTH BRANCH SECRETARY
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Burnout among NHS workers - evident before the pandemic and greatly exacerbated during it - underlines the urgency for the national leaderships of the health unions to link up a coordinated response, including strike action. This could answer the crisis, and take on this weak government.

Recently, in Waltham Forest, I moved a motion (see below) to the trades council, the body that coordinates the unions in the borough. That won support for a Waltham Forest trades council-led demo on 3 July at the main gate at Whipps Cross hospital, in support of a 15% pay increase for NHS workers, as well as outsourced workers employed by Serco at the hospital working as cleaners, porters, caterers, reception and security guards.

3 July will see a countrywide expression of anger and frustration at the accelerated undermining of health services under the Tories - five million now on waiting lists, huge staff shortages, and workers continuing to leave the service due to falling real pay and deteriorating working conditions, linked directly to lack of funding.

All this threatens to undermine the right to free healthcare that the working class won at the founding of the NHS in 1948. Whipps Cross workers have a history of fighting and winning against the effects of privatisation.

Strike action, with the solidarity of the wider community and workers' movement, can not only secure the 15% pay increase we deserve, but also prepare the ground for future socialist struggle for a massively expanded, democratically controlled and adequately resourced socialist NHS, including nationalising big pharma and the medical supply industry.

● Pass this motion in your local union

- We give full support to the National Health Service and NHS workers. We condemn the derisory pay offer from the Tory government to NHS staff, and agree to support any campaign from NHS unions for a substantial increase in pay within the NHS. This should apply to all NHS workers, including outsourced staff who should be brought in-house to work directly for the health service on NHS pay, pensions, terms and conditions

- We also condemn the Tory government's public sector pay freeze and the employers' 'fire and rehire' strategy. We call on all relevant unions to campaign in preparation for national coordinated



strike action to end the pay freeze and the attempts to lower wages and conditions

- We call on our national union to work with other unions to call a national demonstration to properly fund the NHS and end privatisation

- 'Health Campaigns Together,' 'Keep Our NHS Public,' 'NHS Workers Say No,' and 'NHS Staff Voices' have called for demonstrations and rallies on Saturday 3 July 2021. We agree to play a role in building for a rally and

demonstration in ... and call on all shop stewards, members, delegates and affiliates to support it

● Basildon: Strike action must come next

DAVE MURRAY

Health workers and their supporters in Essex are planning to mark the NHS birthday by taking to the streets

for pay justice. With over 100,000 unfilled job vacancies in the health service, alongside the campaign against cuts and privatisation, this is a fight for the survival of the NHS.

Local nurses and health workers plan to march from Basildon Hospital to the town centre, building on the success of a demonstration organised by nurses in mid and south Essex NHS last August.

We're promoting the 3 July event by leafleting hospitals, and the trades union council is calling on trade

unionists to back the demonstration and turn out. We are certainly promoting the event on our local Socialist Party campaign stalls.

We will hear speakers from the Royal College of Nursing in Essex and representatives from the Thurrock refuse workers, who recently scored a win against their employer over pay cuts (see socialistparty.org.uk).

All of us involved in building for the demonstration are very clear that this event must be just the beginning of a determined fight on pay, and that in the end this will mean industrial action. Already we are planning for the next - this is likely to be a motorcade.

Last summer's pay campaign was cut across by the return of lockdown. 3 July is our chance to reignite last year's spirited and well-supported campaign, and take it to the next level.

- Assemble at Basildon Hospital at 11am on Saturday 3 July for a march into Basildon town centre

● Barry: Anger at Labour's Tory cuts

JOHN WILLIAMS

Now that lockdown is lifting, the Socialist Party campaign stalls in Barry in south Wales - calling for a 15% pay increase for NHS workers - have restarted. The response has been really good. We've spoken to health and care workers who are outraged over the proposed 1% pay 'rise', and agree with us that the Welsh government could have done more to resist the cuts from Westminster.

Everyone has their own stories about how the NHS has helped them. It's clear that many still see the NHS as a proud tradition of their lives. And there is a mood to fight for it. "We need our own party. Now I agree with that", was the response from one local resident.

One NHS worker told us horror stories of hospitals so under-resourced that rooms were left unlit, and nurses transformed into 'jailors' by understaffing on mental health wards.

Many Barry residents still remember the shameful attempt by the Welsh Labour government to shut down the local Sam Davies ward, that thankfully was saved by a campaign led by health workers in Unison, which the Socialist Party supported. Closures like this left our NHS ill-prepared to deal with Covid.

This behaviour from the Welsh government isn't surprising. At the height of austerity it passed on £1 billion worth of Tory cuts to the Welsh NHS.

Current Wales First Minister Mark Drakeford was health minister while that brutal austerity campaign was carried out. There's anger at the Welsh government for doing the Tories' dirty work.

Barry Socialist Party member Kevin Gillen stood for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the Welsh Parliament election in May. As a result, we picked up a list of supporters and potential members for the Socialist Party. One has joined already.

Douwe Egberts workers strike against pay cuts of up to £12,000 a year



KATIE SIMPSON
NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members witnessed an incredible atmosphere of solidarity visiting the Jacobs Douwe Egberts (JDE) factory picket line in Banbury on 5 June. Unite the Union has stood firm against the company's 'fire and rehire' tactics, achieving an 86% turnout in favour of a further four strike days in June.

Despite lockdown seeing a massive surge in profits for the coffee and tea industry, as more and more people brew from home, JDE is using 'fire and rehire' tactics in a brazen attempt to increase profit margins. For many years, Unite has negotiated good wages and conditions for the factory workers. Most of the staff we spoke to had worked in the factory more than 20 years. They enjoy their jobs and continued working during lockdown.

Yet it is those on the frontline, on hourly pay, who are facing annual pay cuts and contract changes. Some of the workers are facing yearly wage losses between £8,000 and £12,000. Many are having their pension plans torn up, and the factory is targeting women workers in particular, with dramatic changes to their contracts including night and weekend shifts.

Women workers who have family commitments are being told to accept the new terms or face dismissal. Workers reported being told to sell their homes if they cannot afford to pay their mortgages on these new terms.

Those on the picket line reported being filmed by management who have already dismissed one union activist. As numerous cars honked and drivers raised their fists as they passed, one long-term employee told us: "After 60 years of fantastic negotiations between Unite and the company, the factory has been thrown into its darkest days by corporate gangsters."

Open the books

JDE spokespeople have claimed that the Banbury factory needs to 'modernise' and is 'uncompetitive'. When factory workers spoke with other factories in Germany, France and the Netherlands, they were all being sold the same mantra. Yet the bosses have refused to open the books and have any meaningful dialogue with the factory workers.

Publicly, the company is boasting that 50% of the staff at the factory will have pay increases. One worker on the picket line pointed out that some of these increases are as little as £40 a year, and many are only seeing higher wages because they are being forced to work more hours.

Significantly, the factory is doubling the number of management positions, and bosses already taking six-figure salaries will be seeing wage increases and bonuses of as much as £12,000.

The well-unionised workforce is not buying the arguments of the bosses and see these tactics for what they are - pure greed.

BERKAY KARTAV
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

London workers prepare to fight Khan's transport cuts

The Tory government and Transport for London (TfL) have reached a new agreement to implement more savage cuts to the jobs, pay, and terms and conditions of TfL workers, in return for a further £1.08 billion bailout. This deal secures funding only until late 2021, and more attacks on the workforce will be on the horizon in seven months' time.

Outrageously, on top of the cuts already announced during the pandemic as part of a previous bailout, the new funding deal will lead to an additional £900 million worth of cuts this year alone.

In addition to imposing a pay freeze on workers employed directly by TfL, by next March TfL will make

Revolt against 'social partnership' at Wales Trades Union Congress 2021

SOCIALIST PARTY WALES TUC 2021 DELEGATES

Trades councils again played an important role pushing a fighting agenda forward at the Wales Trades Union Congress (TUC). Socialist Party members were prominent moving and seconding the key motions on the most important issues. Opposition to plans by the Wales TUC bureaucracy to reduce trade unions in Wales to mere cheerleaders for the newly elected Welsh Labour Government is building.

The overriding theme being pushed at the conference was 'social partnership' between trade unions and Welsh Labour, which is in government in the Senedd (Welsh parliament), relying on the politicians in Wales to deliver for workers in Wales.

But opposition to this approach of just tail-ending the Welsh Labour government cropped up again and again in the conference. Significantly, over a third of the conference voted for Swansea Trades Council's motion calling for a rejection of social partnership, despite it being opposed by the leadership of Wales TUC.

It was pointed out that teachers in Wales, just as much as teachers in England, had to act to force the Welsh Labour government to back down after the reckless rush to reopen the

schools in January. The scandal of the lack of PPE from the outset of the pandemic was highlighted, and the impact of Covid-19 worsened as a result of deprivation in communities across Wales.

It is vital that the trade union movement in Wales develops an industrial strategy on what is needed to defend workers and improve conditions and services in our communities. These demands must be taken into negotiations across the public sector and with the Welsh government.

Alongside this industrial strategy, we need a serious campaign to demand resources in Wales to address the major underfunding of our public services so they meet our needs. Wales TUC already has a clear policy on these points, but it has not delivered.

Rather than trying to paper over the differences, under the cover of social partnership, we should be making a clear call to mobilise our movement to ensure that we fight for what is needed.

There was also determined opposition to employers using 'fire and rehire', and condemnation of Stena Line which scandalously withdrew its company sick pay scheme at the start of the pandemic, forcing workers onto statutory sick pay and putting them at risk.

Clear demands were put forward that the Covid legislation passed in Wales needs to have strong enforcement powers to be used against all employers contravening this legislation. This would include employers like DVLA, where PCS members were disgracefully forced to ballot and take strike action to protect their safety.

Trades councils have been to the fore in supporting the protests and struggles in our communities. After supporting the rallies called by NHS workers for a 15% pay rise, it was great to see the Swansea Trades Council amendment to include this demand in the motion on health and social care carried unanimously by the conference. We now have clear policy for the Wales TUC stating: "We call on the Welsh Government to immediately implement the justifiable demands of health and care workers for a 15% pay increase."

Despite the bland format of an online event, where none of the participants could see or hear each other apart from the speeches, it was clear there is anger building across our movement, and a determination that we will not accept going back to how things were before the pandemic.

• Read the full report at socialistpartywales.org.uk



Protesting in Merthyr in 2020

proposals to slash transport workers' pensions, which could mean higher pension contributions by workers and a higher retirement age.

Another condition for the financial package is implementing a plan for TfL to begin operating driverless trains on London Underground, starting with the Piccadilly and Waterloo & City lines. This is yet another attack on the militant workforce.

The transport union RMT is preparing to ballot its members and take industrial action to defend their jobs, pay, pensions and working conditions against the attacks launched by the Tories and accepted by Labour mayor Sadiq Khan, who also serves as TfL chair. Coordinated trade union action is vital to immediately counter these attacks.

But industrial struggle should

also be linked with political struggle. We need a political strategy not only to defend RMT members' pay and conditions, but to go on the offensive and fight for environmentally friendly and affordable public transport.

TfL's broken funding model was not sustainable even before the pandemic. But with the sharp reduction in fare revenue, the funding crisis has been exacerbated.

What has Khan done other than pleading to the Tories for extra funding? Nothing. In fact, Khan and TfL have now made a commitment to self-funding by 2023, and they are expected to raise revenue by between £0.5 billion to £1 billion every year from 2023 onwards.

There can be no trust in Khan and the Labour Party to take a fighting

stance to win the necessary funding for London's transport.

The Labour mayor has consistently attacked workers throughout the last five years, and continues to implement cuts on behalf of the Tories without offering any meaningful opposition. The deal he has signed up to is appalling, even by his own standards.

In May's elections, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) - which the Socialist Party is part of, alongside the RMT and others - stood in the London elections to challenge Khan and offer a socialist alternative. The attacks on the transport workers and other sections of the working class show the burning need to build a new mass workers' party with a fighting socialist programme.

Goodlord striker speaks out How we unionised and fought the bosses

A section of workers at property services company Goodlord have been on indefinite strike since 22 February, and were sacked by the company on 19 May. The workers were striking against an imposed pay cut, and the company has now ignored the legal protection against dismissal for strikers in the 12 weeks after a ballot. One of the striking workers, **Scott Hunter**, who joined the Socialist Party during the dispute gives an overview of the struggle.



Regular picket lines helped sustain the strikers' morale and act as a pressure on management

we were willing to fight, and demonstrate our solidarity with each other. Management's response to this letter was essentially to say: "Thanks, but no thanks," and brush us off.

Unionisation

By this time we were in regular contact with Unite the Union, which offered to represent us. Democratically, we chose to join with Unite to further our fight. Next, we attempted to raise a collective grievance with our company. The company refused to recognise the collective nature of our grievance, instead telling us to submit grievances individually. This was unacceptable to us and so we chose to ballot for strike action.

Through this time we were losing members to attrition. Several of our colleagues understandably found new jobs or simply left their positions, unwilling to endure the increasingly-hostile company atmosphere. After it became aware of the ballot for strike action, the company also stepped up its anti-union intimidation effort,

frequently ambushing staff members with one-to-one meetings with management where they were quizzed about union involvement and spreading anti-union messages during company-wide meetings.

At the same time, the company was also on a recruitment drive, and the new hires - hired on the new, lower wages and living mostly outside of London - were much less sympathetic to our cause.

Looking back, online organising has been a double-edged sword: while it is easy to get in contact with people, the lack of face-to-face interaction makes it more difficult to establish a sense of camaraderie with new colleagues. I feel now that our recruitment efforts among the new hires may have been more successful if we had put more emphasis on phone conversations and video calls rather than pure text messaging.

Despite these issues, our cause has surged forward. As we prepared for strike action in early 2021, we attempted some talks with the

Goodlord mass picket in May, Scott Hunter is on the right
JAMES IVENS

company. The company ultimately refused to move on the issue of pay; however, during this time, we were able to get the company to go back on its intended cuts to hours, sick pay, and mandatory shift work. However, pay remained our major issue and we proceeded on that basis.

We began our indefinite strike in late February 2021, as well as launching a leverage campaign. That involved targeting the company's clients to generate pressure, and a student solidarity campaign aimed at the student lettings industry. We were awed throughout this by the level of support we received by socialist groups across London and the country. Regular picket lines helped sustain the strikers' morale and act as a pressure on management.

We also had the Living Wage Foundation revoke Goodlord's accreditation. After eleven weeks of strike action, we proposed that we go through mediation service Acas to mediate with the company. Though the company did not initially know what Acas was, they eventually agreed and we went through arbitration. This process ended in the company offering us between six to ten weeks' pay each in lieu of notice. This offer was not acceptable to us as it did not lead to permanent jobs at good wages.

We pointed out to the company that bringing us up to the London Living Wage (which was our compromise position) would cost the company about £2,000 a year for each of us, but the company was willing to pay us approximately £4,000 each as a lump sum. The company declined to explain why they were willing to pay us the lump sum but not increase our salaries.

Sacked

After we rejected this last offer, the company sent us termination notices. This was the thirteenth week of strike action and we had concluded a second ballot to further our legal protection, based on the new issues that had arisen during the strike, including anti-union intimidation and bullying from the company. Despite our valid strike ballot - passed unanimously - the company knowingly broke the law and sacked us.

This is where we currently are. We are pursuing legal options while remaining open to negotiations if the company wants to come to the table. We are focused on securing the best possible outcome for our members, and sending a message to other employers that these practices are not acceptable.

Our current strategy aims to put pressure on the company by targeting its clients and related businesses; already, we have staged demos outside of several of Goodlord's clients as well as the head offices of Nutmeg, com, of which Goodlord's CEO William Reeve is chair of the board. We are also working with Socialist Students and others to target Goodlord and their clients during the peak season for student lettings.

For myself, this experience led me to join the Socialist Party and overall moved me to put my beliefs into action by involving myself in party activities and supporting other strikes over London and the country. While I do not want to speak for all my colleagues in their absence, I feel that this experience has made lifelong socialists and trade unionists out of many of us.

Lessons from history

The 1971 Upper Clyde Shipbuilders occupation and work-in

In June 1971, the privately owned shipyards of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders collapsed into receivership. But instead of accepting redundancy, the large workforce occupied the affected sites and began its famous 'work-in'. The following article by **Bill Mullins** (right) is dedicated to those workers who fought this battle, and to the new generation of workers fighting capitalist-imposed redundancies, 'fire and rehire', and other attacks, which began in earnest during the Covid-19 crisis. These current struggles are addressed in the article opposite.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the gigantic struggle by Clydeside workers to defend their jobs and the communities that were reliant on the shipyards in that part of Scotland.

In the summer of 1971, 13,000 Clydebank shipyard workers occupied their threatened yards for over six months, and continued to turn out ships during this 'work-in', despite the bosses' attempts to close the last four of the five yards in the area.

Their struggle was supported not only by workers in Scotland, but throughout the UK and across the world.

Workers everywhere were inspired by the marvellous sense of unity created by the Scottish working class as it fought back against a brutal attempt by the new Tory government of prime minister Ted Heath to end support for what were infamously dubbed by the Tory industry minister, John Davies, "lame duck" industries.

At one time or another, organised workers across Scotland came out on strike (joined at times by workers in the north of England) in the long battle to save the jobs of the Clydeside workers.

Tens of thousands took to the streets of Glasgow in massive demos ending at the famous Glasgow Green (where revolutionary socialist John Maclean led mass working-class demos against capitalism during and after World War One) and swore that they would not allow the shipyards to be closed.

While we remember the battles of the Clydeside workers in 1971, we also have to learn the lessons from it - both the good and the not so good - particularly when it comes to the political, as well as the industrial strategy, adopted at the time.

Failing capitalism

In June 1970, the new Tory government came to power committed to a strategy of ending state support for 'uncompetitive' industries.

This was at a time when British capitalism was coming under extreme pressure in its markets across the world as a result of the rise of new developing nations following the destruction of World War Two.

In shipbuilding, the Japanese and Korean industries were taking off and undercutting British shipbuilders.

British owners had refused to invest in modern machinery and were now paying the price as they were edged out of their markets.

On the Clyde, the previous Labour

government in 1968 had consolidated shipbuilding into a consortium consisting of four yards (plus the profitable Yarrow Shipbuilders, which then left the consortium in 1970).

The yards, with 13,000 workers, were: Fairfield in Govan, Alexander Stephen in Linthouse, Charles Connell in Scotstoun, and John Brown in Clydebank.

UCS now found itself in dire straits when the Tory government loudly pronounced its policy of no government support for the shipbuilding industry, among others. In June 1971, John Davies refused the request by UCS for a small bridging loan of £6 million (1971 prices).



Militant - the forerunner of the Socialist - demanding nationalisation of the threatened shipyards and wider solidarity action by the trade unions

This is despite the fact that earlier that year the Tory government had nationalised overnight Rolls-Royce aero engines because of the vital strategic interests at stake for British capitalism and its armaments industry (see '1971: Rolls-Royce crisis - when the Tories nationalised in order to secure the interests of British capitalism' socialistparty.org.uk)

In response to this, 200 trade union shop stewards from the yards met on 12 June and vowed to fight the closures threat.

At a mass meeting the following day, the workers unanimously agreed to the shop stewards' proposal for a 'work-in'.

This had, it seems, been the strategy adopted by the leading group of four senior stewards earlier, including Jimmy Airlie and Jimmy Reid.



Three of the four senior stewards were members of the Communist Party, and it was clear that this was their strategy.

Earlier this year the Morning Star newspaper, commemorating the UCS work-in, said the work-in "precipitated over 100 other occupations". And that the strategy of the party was to build an "anti-monopoly alliance".

It went on to describe how they wanted to expose the split between the city of London and the big monopolies against the community of small businesses that relied on the continuance of the shipyards in the west of Scotland in particular. They adopted, he writes, the slogan of "defend Scotland's economy".



Militant - the forerunner of the Socialist - demanding nationalisation of the threatened shipyards and wider solidarity action by the trade unions

They proposed the coming together of the Scottish trade union movement (the STUC) along with "regional businesses" into a "Scottish assembly" for the future of a "civic Scotland". This was clearly what lay behind the tactic of the work-in.

Later on, as the work-in proceeded, it exposed some of the practical difficulties that this tactic had created.

For example, at one stage, even though the shop stewards had successfully stopped the government's 'official receiver' from entering into the yards, he nevertheless announced, on 1 September, the redundancy of 399 workers in the first wave of the plan to close all four yards.

The shop stewards had committed at the mass meetings that they would raise the money to pay the wages of the workers under threat. Though

there was massive support for the struggle, including financial support, it was going to be an obvious uphill battle to make good that promise.

The 1970s was a period of intense struggle by the organised working class as British capitalism sort to off-load the crisis it was facing onto the backs of the working class.

The attacks on jobs and living standards had precipitated enormous waves of struggles, including occupations of workplaces under threat of closure.

But most of the occupations involved directly the most active worker militants, who looked in turn to the support of the labour and trade union movement. In this context, there was a direct comparison with what was happening on Clydeside.

Mass support

The UCS work-in lasted well over six months and it involved many examples of the widespread support of the rest of the working class.

The STUC called, for the first time in its history, a special conference on 16 August 1971, at which a resolution to organise a one-day stoppage and a demo in support of the UCS struggle was carried unanimously.

On 18 August, over 200,000 workers stopped work in Scotland and 80,000 went on the demonstration through the streets of Glasgow.

The main demand of the crowd was 'four yards stay open or none do'. This was in response to the rumours that the Tories were beginning to back-track and look to the private sector for somebody to take over one or two of the yards.

Eventually, by February 1972, the government was forced to step in and commit to supporting a number of companies with government money to take on shipbuilding on the Clyde.

It committed to spend what was then the enormous sum of £35 million to push through the deals.

The restructuring of the yards took place with two of the yards, Govan Shipbuilders and Scotstoun Marine being set up. John Brown was sold to the Texan company Marathon Oil to make components for the North Sea oil rigs.

Lessons

Was the UCS occupation leaders' strategy of looking to regional capitalists for support, correct? In my view, no. It undoubtedly led to compromises with these capitalists rather than an all-out struggle by the organised working class.

The best comparison is Militant's (forerunner of the Socialist Party) tactic in the Liverpool Marxist-led council struggle against the Thatcher government's spending cuts in the mid-1980s.

Then, Liverpool's socialist council relied solely on the willingness of the organised workers, both in the council and in the wider region, to fight to the end. The struggle won millions in additional funding to maintain the council's job creation, mass



By February 1972, the government was forced to step in and commit to supporting a number of companies with public funds to take on shipbuilding on the Clyde

housebuilding, and urban regeneration plan.

You do not necessarily turn away support from small capitalists if offered, but this section of society, with a foot in both the capitalist and workers' camps, cannot be allowed to determine the tactics and strategy of the struggle to save jobs and the shipyards themselves.

Moreover, nowhere in the whole battle, it seems, was there the central demand to nationalise the yards under democratic workers' control. But without that central demand, you end up having to look to the private sector to save the day.

Undoubtedly, the UCS battle put a large spanner into the Tory strategy of letting 'lame ducks go to the wall', and Ted Heath was forced to backtrack on many other issues before being unceremoniously kicked out of office in February 1974.

UCS will long be remembered as a very important part of the battles of the organised working class during that tumultuous decade to defend jobs, living standards and communities.



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British Gas workers took 43 days of strike action against the imposition of new contracts which cut wages by up to £15,000 a year PHOTO STEVE SCORE

ROB WILLIAMS
SOCIALIST PARTY WORKPLACE AND TRADE UNION ORGANISER

A year ago, the trade unions faced an historic crisis. Almost across the board, the union leaderships collapsed into national unity with the Tory government and the employers. Their very independence was called into question as strikes were suspended and disputes called off. Added to

this, in the midst of lockdown, union offices were closed down. For a period, the activity of the union structures went into cold storage.

Yet over a year later, a very different position has opened up. We have seen prolonged strike action from British Gas to Manchester buses. From big companies to small employers. At root, the idea that there is common interest between the bosses and workers has been smashed by a brutal offensive by the employers, using vicious methods such as 'fire and rehire', backed by a growing trend of victimising union reps.

However, as last summer moved into autumn, it became clear that big business was intent on going on the attack. In sectors such as the airlines, with reduced custom, the likes of BA were primed to seek an advantage in rolling out stored-up attacks on workers' pay and conditions. The weapon of choice was fire and rehire - reducing workers' incomes by effectively ripping up existing contracts and imposing new ones.

At least 25 employers have attacked workers through fire and rehire. The most vicious example was in British Gas. Where, after 43 days of strike action by GMB members, the hundreds of workers who refused to sign new contracts which cut wages by up to £15,000 were sacked, their blue vans picked up by car transporters.

Just in the last few days, coffee maker Jacobs Douwe Egberts has issued dismissal notices to Unite members in Banbury, striking against pay cuts of up to £12,000 a year (see page 6). And Homes England is now threatening to resort to fire and rehire to secure pay cuts.

Outrageously, among the first employers to use fire and rehire was

Labour council of Tower Hamlets, forcing Unison members to take action last summer. The blizzard of Starmerite suspensions and expulsions, that included Jeremy Corbyn and now Unite assistant general secretary Howard Beckett, left these cutting Labour councillors untouched.

But this employers' offensive hasn't cowed workers. If anything it has provoked action. At first, some unions appeared satisfied to negotiate reductions in wages to avoid the worst of the attacks, and there is still a danger of this.

But, increasingly, fire and rehire has been met with resistance and sustained strike action - 43 days in British Gas and 85 by Unite members at Go North West buses in Manchester. There has been a clear move away from isolated one-day stoppages to intense action, many being indefinite strikes.

It is clear to workers that such vicious methods can only be defeated through serious action, increasingly of an all-out, indefinite character. In addition, the very anti-union laws brought in by the Tories in the last few years are a factor in unions moving quickly to intensive action.

These include timing out disputes after six months, forcing a rebalot and making it difficult to win a strike vote in the first place, especially the undemocratic 50% voting threshold for a rebalot, that would have seen hardly a councillor elected last month.

However, what has been missing is coordination across the unions against the employers' attacks, especially fire and rehire. This was undoubtedly a factor in British Gas where the GMB, with just a third of the workforce and one of four unions, was left to fight alone. While it is true

that the union officers made some mistakes, this isolation did put them in a weaker position than if a united front had been put together. On the very day the GMB announced the first strikes, Unison posted on its website that it had accepted the company's 'deal'. Nevertheless, the workers fought on tenaciously.

There are never any guarantees of victories. Even with the maximum support and determined action there can be setbacks. The heroic, mainly young, Goodlord workers in London have been brutally sacked despite indefinite strike action (see page 7). But at least when a fight has been put up it builds workers' confidence and sends a clear message to management: if you attack us we will fight back. Usually, more is won than if no fight had been put up.

But important victories have been won against fire and rehire and other management attacks. The Manchester bus workers forced back Go North West. To supplement their 12 weeks of indefinite action, the Unite organising and leverage department, under executive officer Sharon Graham, called out 'left' Labour mayor Andy Burnham who, while supporting the workers in name, was refusing to act against the bus company.

In London, Metroline bus drivers stopped remote sign-on through the threat of action. Thurrock binworkers defeated the Tory council's attack on their pay and conditions after six weeks of action. In Leicester, striking workers at SPS forced back the company's attacks.

Similarly, the vicious wave of union victimisation, which has often accompanied these attacks on workers, has been met with resistance, with some victories. A year before

If unions give a lead, workers are fully prepared to fight and win victories

the Manchester bus strike, Unite rep Colin Hayden was targeted, but the union and its members defeated this attack. They knew that it was intended to soften up the whole workforce and, predictably, within months fire and rehire was threatened. But the successful defence of Colin was a crucial factor in keeping the union intact for the general fight that was to come.

The NEU has won a number of victories against the dismissal of union reps as employers look to avenge the defeat of Boris Johnson's planned unsafe early school return at the start of the year.

We have also seen the tenacious fight of the construction electricians against a new attempt at deskilling by the likes of NG Bailey and Balfour Beatty. A decade after they tried to attack wages through BESNA, they now see deskilling through ESO as another route to cutting pay and boosting their profits. As then, this has been met by the direct action of protests and stoppages, forcing the bosses to the negotiating table.

All these disputes are a sign of the mood developing below the surface. The brutal challenges of Covid to lives and livelihoods have resulted in workers taking determined action and seeing the importance of being organised. For the 4th successive year, union membership has increased.

While the official structures of unions stalled last spring, workers took unofficial action to ensure workplace safety. The fights against the employers' attacks are still at an early stage, as many of the bosses, and Johnson's Tory government, bide their time to unleash their full offensive. But the disputes so far show that if the unions give a lead, workers are fully prepared to fight and win victories.

● Ferry 'Groundhog Day' dispute

Woolwich Ferry workers are walking out over a victimised rep. The Woolwich Ferry, is now run by Transport for London (TfL). The workers have taken seven days action in May and June, with the final date on 21 June. Unite's 57 members voted by an overwhelming 97% for strike action on the ferry, which has seen a number of disputes in the last few years provoked by "poor employment relations". This led to TfL taking over its operation from Briggs Marine Contractors Ltd. But the workers have dubbed the latest strike as a 'Groundhog Day' dispute.

● Caledonian train strike

The RMT has confirmed that strikes will go ahead from 15 June after a ballot of members on the Serco-operated Caledonian Sleeper train returned a massive 85% vote in favour of strike action over pay. The ballot took place after the company attempted to impose a pay freeze on workers who have kept the service running throughout the Covid pandemic. The strike runs from Tuesday 15 June to Saturday 26 June.

● Usdaw members ballot for action

Udaw members have voted by over 90% in favour of industrial action at BCM Fareva, the Nottingham-based manufacturer of consumer pharma and beauty products for Boots and others. BCM Fareva has proposed slashing members' terms and conditions, including sick pay and redundancy payment provisions, while threatening to use 'fire and rehire' if agreement cannot be reached on the proposed changes. Strike dates are yet to be announced.

● Tesco equal pay fight

Thousands of current and former Tesco workers have won a 'legal argument' in a fight for equal pay. The European Court of Justice has ruled that a law exists that could be relied on in making equal pay claims against Tesco. Tesco workers, mostly women, have argued that they failed to receive equal pay for work of equal value with colleagues in its distribution centres.

This follows the Supreme Court ruling earlier this year, that Asda shop workers can compare their roles with those of their colleagues in distribution centres for the purposes of equal pay. Leigh Day solicitors, representing Tesco workers, says the latest decision reinforces the Supreme Court's ruling and makes it extremely difficult for other supermarkets to argue the roles of shop workers cannot be compared with those of their colleagues in distribution centres.

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PCS annual delegate conference

Fight for a socialist leadership in PCS, build a fighting, democratic union!

DAVE SEMPLE
OUTGOING PCS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEMBER

PCS annual delegate conference (ADC), the first for two years, convenes on 13 June in a new digital format that has already provoked outrage from the most engaged layers of the union's activists.

Conference has traditionally been the democratic centre of the union, where branches can hold the national executive committee (NEC) to account for its actions over the previous year, and where the standing orders committee (SOC) is expected to stand up for the right of branches to be heard.

This year, for the first time in PCS history, branches do not have ownership of the conference agenda. It has been determined in advance by the NEC Left Unity majority, with the full support of the Left Unity-dominated SOC acting as their guard dogs.

For the first time ever, branches are restricted to submitting four motions, three on pre-ordained topics picked by the NEC, and only one on any subject of their choosing.

Once the SOC ruled on which motions could be heard, and with branches having no chance to democratically overrule the SOC, branches were given a pitifully short window for 'reference backs' to ask the SOC to change its mind.

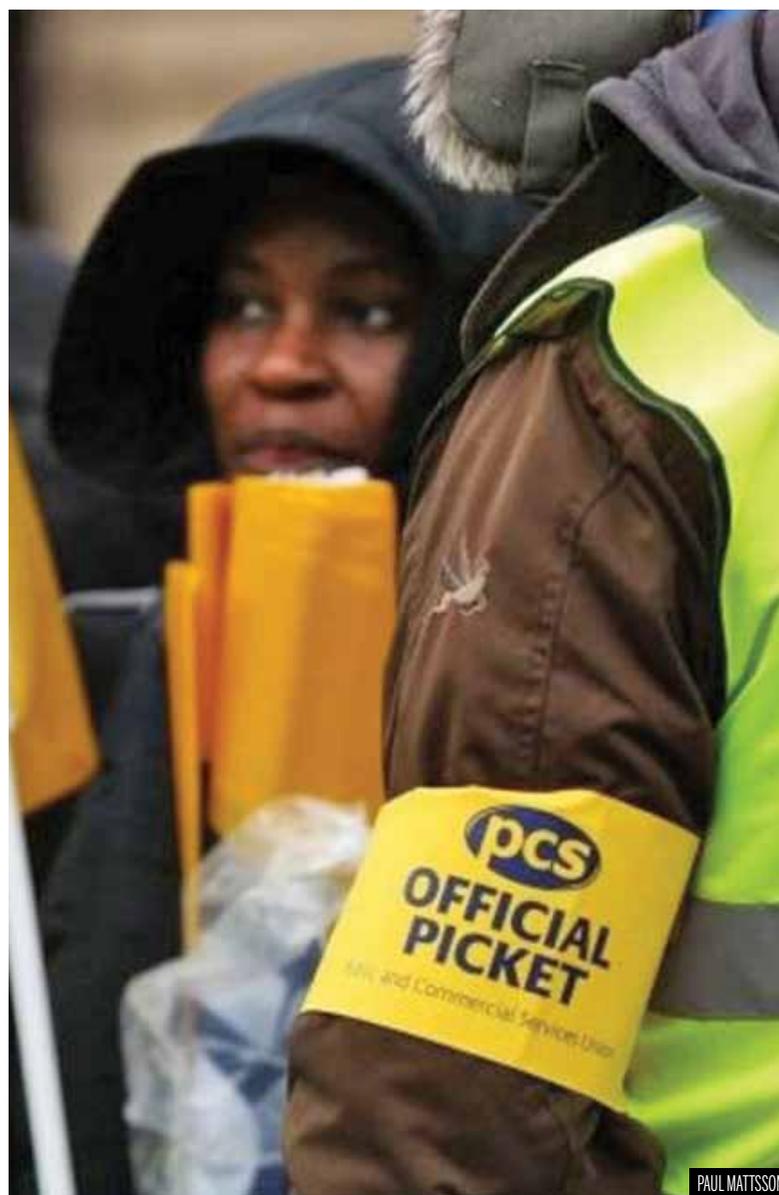
Meanwhile, emergency motions were banned by the NEC, meaning that developing situations such as the Israeli military intervention in the Palestinian territories are missing from the conference paper.

Catastrophic decisions

Yet ADC is just as important this year as it ever has been. The last year has seen catastrophic decisions by the current leadership of the union, such as:

- The letter to the Cabinet Office, which threw out our 10% pay claim.
 - The decision that a petition on pay was an effective substitute for a national campaign.
 - The refusal to provide steadfast advice to keep members safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, offloading this responsibility on to the shoulders of brave individual members and reps.
 - The total abdication of responsibility and leadership, in the hope that by appearing moderate and reasonable, the Tories would deal fairly with them.
- This could be called naivety if the reps leading the NEC were new, but they are 30-year veterans.

The litany of failures is long - and so is the list of decisions reversed. "It's too risky to ballot!" cried our brave leaders, at the outset of the pandemic. A decision they were



PAUL MATTSSON

forced to reverse when their trust in the Tories not to force people back into the offices was proved mistaken.

"Including pensions as part of the union's national campaign weakens the focus of our pay campaign", reps were told at ADC 2019, only for the NEC, in the dying days of the 2021 electoral year, to decide yes, pensions must be included in the campaign.

"Digital meetings should be mandatory!" was the cry that rang out at the NEC, and our proposal that they should be encouraged but not mandatory was voted down by the Left Unity majority.

The leadership of the union reversed its position when put under sustained pressure, seizes the position of its opponents, but maintains the same vitriolic, embittered rhetoric against the very opponents whose views it has just adopted!

The NEC cannot hide all of its craven antics, however, like the decision not to support Black Lives Matter demonstrations or demonstrations over the murder of Sarah Everard. We called for the union's members to be

mobilised, by encouraging those who felt they could demonstrate safely to attend, while offering avenues to protest at home for the others.

This was voted down amidst petty moralising about putting PCS members at risk. The most politically conscious PCS members attended these demonstrations in droves, the only difference was that there were no trade union banners around which to unite workers.

Socialist Party members, including two elected to the NEC in 2019, have steadfastly opposed the leadership of the union and its track record of posing on social media but otherwise sitting on its laurels. We have not been alone, fighting alongside independent socialists in the Broad Left Network and those attached to no faction in PCS.

The most recent elections saw the number of socialists on the NEC reduced, with Broad Left Network members going from four to one, and the number of socialists on executive committees in DWP and HMRC also thinned down a little. Far from discouraged, however, we will continue to hold the NEC and the other executive committees to account, and will continue to demand bold action to win for members.

Ensuring that conference 2021 adopts a fighting programme, and repudiates the tired rhetoric of the NEC, concealing as it does its lack of a plan, is the first step in building that fightback.

To all delegates, solidarity! The fight to reclaim our union continues.

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**FIGHT THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE
CAMPAIGN FOR COORDINATED ACTION
BY PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS**

Post-Brexit trade deals

Workers' mobilisation needed to stop corporate extortion

JOE FATHALLAH
CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

Since the UK's departure from the European Union, the Tory government has come under pressure from its backers in big business to establish trade agreements with as many countries as possible. It wants to ensure the continuation of British capitalism's access to markets, cheap labour, and raw materials.

One of these negotiations has been with Australia, aimed at allowing UK companies to sell certain goods there without the imposition of trade tariffs, and vice versa. A deal is expected to be announced before the start of the G7 summit.

Not all British employers see this as a positive. For example, the National Farmers Union warned of the "slow, withering death of family farms", presumably in fear of being undercut by competitors who are not subject to the same regulations.

But from the point of view of the working class, the Tories are utterly incapable of negotiating any trade deals which would serve our interests in any way.

The Australia deal is set to include an Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system, which is a series of secretive courts that allow businesses

investing overseas to sue the government of the host country for damages if policies are enacted which attack their profit margins.

For example, in 2017, US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly won a claim against Canada for CA\$500 million in response to attempts to control drug prices.

In 2018, the French company Veolia won a claim for US\$268 million against the Egyptian government for increasing the minimum wage. And, shockingly, in 2012, Occidental Petroleum Corporation won \$1.8 billion from the Ecuadorian state - roughly the same amount as the country's annual health budget!

Claims

There are currently 1,104 known ISDS cases, including claims against health and environmental regulations, climate change agreements, and attempts to protect indigenous land rights.

There is no equivalent of legal aid available for states attempting to defend themselves against claims, and even when they win they are often left out of pocket on legal costs. Legal fees average \$8 million per case, and corporations' claims are often funded externally by financiers in return for a cut of the damages.

In 2006, the US civil engineering

company Bechtel was forced to accept a token payment of \$1 from the left-wing Bolivian government of Evo Morales.

Massive demonstrations had taken place in the city of Cochabamba six years previously in response to one of Bechtel's subsidiary companies implementing a huge increase in water prices. Morales stepped in and ripped up the firm's contract.

Feeling the hot breath of the Bolivian working class down their necks, the ISDS negotiated the nominal settlement.

This shows that to defeat this system of legalised extortion, mass mobilisations of workers, especially in the trade unions, indigenous populations, and others threatened by the claims, are what is needed.

A socialist government would undoubtedly be faced with huge legal claims in response to nationalising the key sectors of the economy under democratic workers' control, with compensation only based on proven need.

It would then be necessary to refuse to pay the claims, and instead mobilise domestic and international workers' solidarity against the ISDS.

The TTIP deal between the EU and the USA, which was due to include a ISDS provision, was put on the back burner in 2017 in response to huge



Campaigning against the TTIP threat to the NHS in 2015

protests and uprisings on both sides of the Atlantic.

Of course, nothing of the sort has been forthcoming from Keir Starmer's supposedly 'opposition' Labour Party.

In fact, it has been almost completely silent on the issue, because

it is just as much in the camp of big business as the Tories are.

We now need to build a new opposition party, one that fights for the interests of ordinary working-class people against multinational corporations and their insatiable drive for profits.

G7 green hypocrisy



Capitalist 'Big Energy' is wrecking the planet PHOTO PAUL MATSSON

DAN SMART
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

As the G7 summit arrives in Cornwall, it's been found that the group of seven rich capitalist nations has bailed out highly polluting aviation and car industries to the tune of \$115 billion.

While Johnson is splurting soundbites about 'building back better', these actions set a precedent by propping up environmentally damaging industries for decades to come.

The report by Tearfund found that the same applied to major gas and oil producers. The seven countries pumped \$42 billion more into fossil fuels than into clean forms of energy during

the pandemic. The vast majority of these handouts came with no prerequisites for companies to reduce their emissions.

The G7 summit could have been an opportunity for the world's major economies to show they have a plan for the future of our planet beyond Covid-19. Representing just 10% of the population, they are still among the most polluting in the world, contributing to a quarter of global CO2 emissions.

Whilst the talk over the three days will surely be full of green rhetoric, their deeds tell a very different story. But what else do we expect from a system that puts dirty profits above our environment and livelihoods?

New book - coming soon

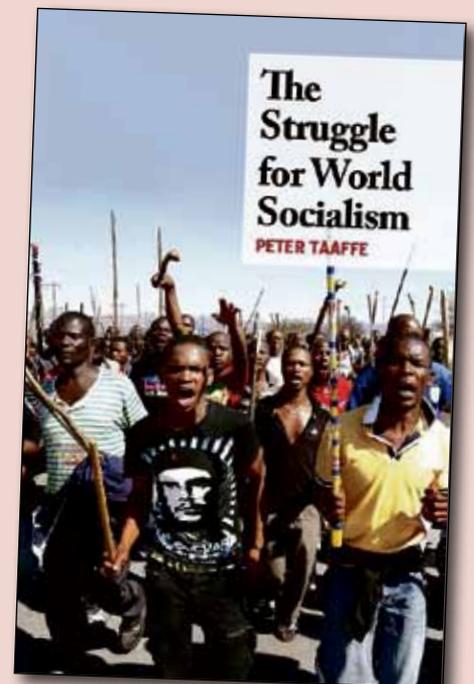
The Struggle for World Socialism

Thousands of people, especially the young, have taken to the streets across the world in opposition to the naked greed by the ruling elite, and growing impoverishment of the mass of people. The chasm between the obscenely rich ruling oligarchs and the majority of workers has been brought into sharp relief in the terrible pandemic.

Many, in all walks of life, are searching for a new way forward. Socialist change is in the air. Could this be the beginnings of the coming socialist revolution?

In this third book on the history of the work of the Socialist Party, **PETER TAAFFE** outlines a Marxist and Trotskyist analysis of developments in the global capitalist system, including the political events that flow from them, from the financial crash of 2007-08 through to 2019.

Numerous examples of successful trade union and political class battles bring to life not only the kind of organisation and audacity that can win against the bosses now, but also help workers hone the kind of methods and organisation that can ultimately bring about fundamental socialist change.



£12 - details to obtain a copy and for discounted branch bulk orders will be advertised soon

“Rights are won not given”

London refugee wins housing debt campaign

In 2020, Latha Lawanya Ramajeyam, an asylum seeker at the time, was unable to make rent on her room due to the legal costs of her asylum case. Her property management, City Rooms, then pursued her through legal action for a punitive sum, including several months’ rent on a room she had already vacated. Lawanya is an organiser for the Refugee Rights and Tamil Solidarity campaigns, and a member of the Socialist Party. Following a campaign led by the Socialist Party, backed by trade unions and housing campaigners, court has been avoided and an affordable compromise negotiated.

“When I explained my situation to City Rooms in 2020, after ignoring me for weeks, they called me into a meeting. A City Rooms manager told me to get the money from loans or from family and pay. I couldn’t do this. He told me to return the key that day and get out, which I couldn’t yet as I had nowhere to go.

He asked to see my bank statement as he did not believe how little money I have. I showed him my most empty account balance on my mobile. He then said he would arrange for people to clear out the room by 3pm next day, and throw my things away.

I think there are a lot of migrants, international students and asylum-seeker tenants like me looking for single-room accommodation like this. Letting companies probably think we are more pliable due to our isolation and legal status. They did try to threaten my asylum status.

I offered my security deposit in full. I had nothing else to my name. But because my contract had no ‘break clause’, City Rooms was able to legally demand several months of ‘unpaid’ rent on a room I had already left. They ignored my pleas, made no attempt to negotiate, and went straight to the small claims court.

You can’t get lawyers who will represent you ‘pro bono’ in debt cases like this. But we found one who would at least help me enter a defence.

My local Socialist Party branch, East London, had been supporting me and planning a campaign

to defend me. James Ivens from my branch negotiated with City Rooms on my behalf.

We made several compromise offers for part of the total sum on a weekly repayment schedule. City Rooms dismissed them, demanding large lump sums they knew I could not afford.

We asked trade union branches to pass resolutions in my defence. We planned an occupation of the City Rooms office on Saturday 17 April.

We occupied the Stepney Green office and handed in a letter saying we would be back if there was no movement. We explained to City Rooms workers that the action was against their boss, and urged them to join a union.

The London Renters Union also picketed their office in Stratford with leaflets explaining my situation. Every organisation which participated sent a message “that Lawanya has a campaign behind her that will not stop until the outrageous demands placed upon her are dropped.”

The next day, after months of silence, City Room’s director wrote to us offering to reach a deal. They also claimed they were ‘not aware’ of the weekly repayment offer we made during mediation. We set the record straight on that.

But their first offer went back on the agreed repayment rate, still demanded the full, punitive amount, and demanded the repayment rate be reviewed in six months. In six months it would be harder to rebuild campaign support and maintain the pressure.

So we did not accept this. We gave



Lawanya and supporters below



them seven days to respond, or we planned to start campaigning again.

We phoned City Rooms’ director on the day of the deadline. He wanted to negotiate the whole thing, then and there. We stayed firm.

City Rooms agreed what we had put forward in the first place. We achieved a big reduction in the total amount, and an affordable repayment rate in my control.

During the call, City Rooms’ director complained bitterly about our protest action. He told us “you know

you’ve done wrong” and that it was “corrupted.” It was clear this was decisive in winning talks, although he disagreed when we said that to him!

This is not a single-person victory. Tenants and the working class have won a victory.

Workers and tenants should understand from this our collective strength and unionise. The history of struggle shows that no rights are ever just given, they are won by people demanding and then fighting to get them.”

“Building roads always means more traffic, and not less”, Rosamund Kissi-Debrah, whose nine-year-old daughter Ella died in 2013 due to air pollution poisoning at her home near the South Circular Road, said in a message of support. A performance by the ‘Extinction Rebellion Banshees’ warned about impending death from air pollution.

East London Socialist Party member Niall Mulholland gave greetings from Newham Trades Union Council. He pointed out that “in Irish folklore, wailing banshees also ward off evil spirits - which in this case are the property developers, haulage companies and other big businesses who would profit from the tunnel.”

Tolls will be imposed at the planned Silvertown Tunnel and on the existing Blackwall Tunnel - hitting local working-class people hardest. Niall condemned London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s “shameful” refusal to scrap the project: “This tunnel will leave a monstrous legacy of deaths and degradation of our local community.

“We must not give up on this fight. We must put our leaders’ feet to the fire, until they cancel this tunnel.”



Niall Mulholland speaking at the protest

Hundreds march to scrap Silvertown Tunnel project

Chanting ‘Hey mayor, we want clean air’ and ‘Stop the tunnel now’, several hundred people marched through Canning Town, in Newham east London, on 5 June, calling for the Silvertown Tunnel project to be scrapped.

The demonstration briefly halted where construction work for the tunnel is underway. Campaigners handed out postcards demanding the £2.2 billion project funds are used for investment in public transport links.

Newham already has some of the worst air pollution in the UK.

Cladding safety: Protests demand developers and government pay

PETE MASON
BARKING REACH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION CHAIR

Protests took place around the country on 5 June highlighting the cladding crisis, covered by both the BBC and ITV news. Four years after the Grenfell Tower disaster, flammable cladding, balconies, insulation and missing cavity barriers are still causing untold misery.

All around the country protesters explained that they had sunk their life savings into a home which is now valued at zero - unsellable, and they are facing bankruptcy.

We took our protest to the Beckton Parkside sales office of Bellway Homes. Cars were constantly beeping their support.

On the megaphone, I pointed out that the government is defending the profits of the big building companies,

and called for them to be nationalised, so that all unsafe buildings could be immediately remediated, to break the deadlock residents are currently facing. This could then start a mass high-quality council housing building programme to set new standards in the building industry and end homelessness.

Protests hit the local offices of Countryside, in Clapton and Barnet in London. Over 100 gathered in Hayes. Large crowds in Birmingham condemned a range of developers. On the Bellway protest in Manchester, protesters chanted: “Hey Bellway, rich and rude, we don’t like your attitude”. Local TV covered the Manchester protest against Lendlease.

In Canary Wharf in London, protesters from the New Providence Wharf, where a fire broke out just a month ago, angry at developer Balmore, were joined by protesters

against Persimmon. A New Providence Wharf resident said that the fire brigade told them their fire was a “very near miss” - with two hospitalised, and many evacuated - and that “next time they may not be so lucky”.

A big protest took place in Brighton against Barratt Homes, where 600 residents have organised themselves into a residents association. They said: “We’re going to confront the government, and we’re going to confront Barratt Homes.”

The Socialist Party says an essential next step is bringing all the campaigns together in a conference to discuss the way forward - include resident associations, Fire Brigades Union and other unions, such as those covering housing. That conference could propose to build a national Saturday demonstration, and participate in the May 2022 local elections.



“Barratt must pay!”

FERDY LYONS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist Party and the Social Housing Action Campaign attended a protest outside Upton Gardens, Barratt’s development at the site of West Hams’ old Boleyn Ground, as part of the national day of action over the cladding scandal.

Leaseholders of Barratt developments are facing bills of up to £31,000 to remove the unsafe cladding from their properties, on top of the extortionate service charges they are already paying for waking watches and fire wardens. The demo was very well attended, with many Barratt leaseholders and residents, various community groups, local MP Stephen Timms and London Assembly members Umesh Desai and Zack Polanski.

Demonstrators drowned out the traffic of Green Street with chants of ‘Barratt must pay’ that was met with drivers honking their horns in support. The flammable cladding was erected by these developers in the full knowledge it was unsafe, and the government is letting them get away with it. All flammable cladding off now and make the developers and government pay not the residents!



Ipswich residents are trapped

TERESA MACKAY
IPSWICH SOCIALIST PARTY

Ipswich Cladiators, founded in the wake of the cladding crisis exposed by the fire at Grenfell Tower, protested at Taylor Wimpey’s Wolsey Grange development. They are worried their homes are unsafe, and they could face bills of tens of thousands of pounds to fix the problem.

Alex Dickin is part of Ipswich Cladiators. He cannot sell his home as it is valued as being worth nothing.

He is worried he will be left bankrupt. He is trapped, unsafe and cannot move on.

It’s not just the cladding that is the problem. Cardinal Lofts on the Ipswich Waterfront, where Alex lives, have wooden balconies and no fire breaks. A fire could just take off and spread throughout the building.

In fact, the overall design of the building is extremely poor. And Alex is not the only one. A further 225 Ipswich leaseholders are also trapped in this scandal.

Many buildings affected no longer have active developers that can pay to fix the cladding. The government

has only revealed three of the 17 buildings affected in Suffolk, refusing to say which the others are.

Residents now face huge bills for fire marshals and repairs. The financial impact is horrendous - bills of more than £90,000, which they cannot afford to pay.

These are predominantly young people on the first step of the ladder in purchasing their own property - or so they thought! If they forfeit the lease on their flat they then can lose their homes and their jobs. On top of that, there are 70 schools around the country with this cladding that were built after Grenfell!

Taylor Wimpey is promising £165 million to fix the 232 affected buildings. But this is not nearly enough. The average cost for each building will be £2 million, according to government data, almost three times as much.

Both Taylor Wimpey and the government must pay for removing dangerous cladding from high-risk buildings. Safety is their responsibility. They should meet the costs of remediation work, and not pass it onto leaseholders.

is in complete disrepair, and Clarion will do nothing to improve it.

This case isn’t unique to Clarion. Like many so-called ‘social’ landlords, it leaves its tenants in substandard broken properties that are not fit to live in. They raise rents and service charges without improving the service.

Tenants need to organise and fight against these exploitative landlords. The Socialist Party stands in solidarity with Daniel and all renters and tenants campaigning for their rights.

FERDY LYONS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2021	DEADLINE: 2 JULY 2021
Northern	1,318	750		176%
South West	2,696	1,800		150%
London	5,557	4,600		121%
Southern & SE	2,702	2,350		115%
Wales	2,182	2,300		95%
Yorkshire	2,353	2,550		92%
North West	1,020	1,150		89%
East Midlands	1,592	1,850		86%
West Midlands	1,241	2,600	48%	
Eastern	500	1,200	42%	
Other	677	3,850	18%	
TOTAL	21,839	25,000		87%

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Readers' Opinion

● Employment offers no escape from poverty in 21st Century Britain

For the last ten years, the number of people who work, yet are still considered to live in relative poverty has been steadily climbing as working people's wages fail to keep pace with the soaring cost of living. The sad fact of the matter is that in this broken economy, which serves as a looting machine for the capitalist class, a worker can work full-time and still not earn enough to live comfortably, or even to pay their monthly bills and expenses.

As private rents, goods prices, utilities bills and general cost of living all soar, wages remain stagnant and deflated by comparison, as they have done for decades. Coupled into this is the shredding of the social security net by Tory austerity that reduces aid for people who are overburdened by the cost of living.

We see the results all around us, brought even more sharply into focus during this pandemic. As the wealth of the billionaire class has exponentially increased, hundreds of thousands have lost their jobs and many more have taken a 20% pay cut thanks to the Tory furlough scam. One third of all children in the UK live in relative poverty. Hunger, insecurity and poverty-induced trauma are watchwords for many.

For those of us on the bottom rung, holidays overseas, frequent takeaways and dining out, cars, homes, branded clothes, or even shopping in middle-class supermarkets like Sainsbury's or Tesco, are luxuries out of our reach, and will stay this way while the minimum wage stays below £15 an hour and we are forced to rent privately in the midst of an artificial housing shortage.

Until a socialist government can repair and strengthen the social security net that has been ravaged by our class enemies in the capitalist cabinets, we will continue to see levels of child and working poverty increase. The vehicle through which this change will be delivered is not Starmer's Labour - a party of landlords and bosses with the occasional cowed and silenced 'socialist' sprinkled throughout the ranks. A mass workers' party that will fight for the struggling workers, for the unemployed and the youth is needed. Until that mass party can stand on its own two feet, with union finances behind it, we will continue to live in the miserable circumstances whereby employment offers no escape from poverty in 21st century Britain.

ROB SOMERTON JONES
BRIGHTON

● Royally racist

Remember when Prince William recently declared that the royal family was "very much not" racist? Well turns out that, according to newly discovered documents, the Queen's courtiers banned "coloured immigrants or foreigners" from serving in clerical roles in the royal household until at least the late 1960s, and possibly up to the end of the 1990s, although they were permitted to work as domestic servants!

The Queen is also exempt from the provisions of discrimination laws, which leaves staff working for the royal family with no legal redress if discriminated against. So very much not racist indeed!

JIM HORTON
NORTH LONDON

● Crony Cruddas ignored, Unite activists attacked

The revelation that new billionaire peer Peter Cruddas donated to the Tories three days after his peerage should really be newsworthy! A £500,000 sum, his biggest ever donation to the Tories, was given just after he was introduced to the House of Lords. Boris insisted he get a peerage, against the advice of the Appointments Commission, and now the Tory party has Cruddas' money.

To most it looks like clear cronyism, but the BBC aren't interested. At the time of writing it had nothing on its website in the three days since the facts emerged.

However, it was happy to attack Unite's Howard Beckett on Newsnight over a total non-story. A BBC journalist interviewed Labour right-wingers Margaret Hodge and Tom Watson, then brought Beckett up against Labour MP Siobhan McDonagh - famous for saying that to be anticapitalist is to be antisemitic.

Beckett and left-wing activists in Unite were accused of underhand dealings and betraying Unite's members. Why? Because leaked emails spoke about organising against Labour right-wingers. Beckett pointed out that is completely legitimate activity to actually defend members' interests!

BBC News may be publicly funded, but this hypocrisy shows it clearly acts for the capitalists.

ADAM HARMSWORTH
COVENTRY



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TV review: Mrs Thatcher vs the miners

History as written by the bosses

ERIC SEGAL
KENT SOCIALIST PARTY

'Mrs Thatcher vs The Miners, the Battle for Britain', a documentary recently screened on Channel 5, is a transparent attempt by the bosses to rewrite history. History is written by the victors, but this account demands scrutiny by workers.

Arthur Scargill, leader of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), came to prominence as a miners' leader in 1972 when he organised 'flying pickets' of Saltey Gate depot. Having won this dispute, the NUM again struck in 1974, which forced the Tories to call a general election. After losing that election, and another in 1974, the Tories chose a new leader, Mrs Thatcher who was elected as prime minister in 1979. The documentary presents the miners' strike as a personal struggle between Thatcher and Scargill.

Stephen Sherbourne, Thatcher's sycophantic private secretary, comments: "She presented simple messages again and again"; "To the outside world she's not only clear and inflexible, she's clear focused and determined"; "Thatcher had one plan on her mind and that was to control the unions". Neil Kinnock, wealthy failed ex-leader of the Labour Party, is contemptuous of Scargill: "Margaret Thatcher and Scargill deserved each other, absolutely no one else deserved them". "She planned and she was prepared, he postured and banged his chest, and shouted".

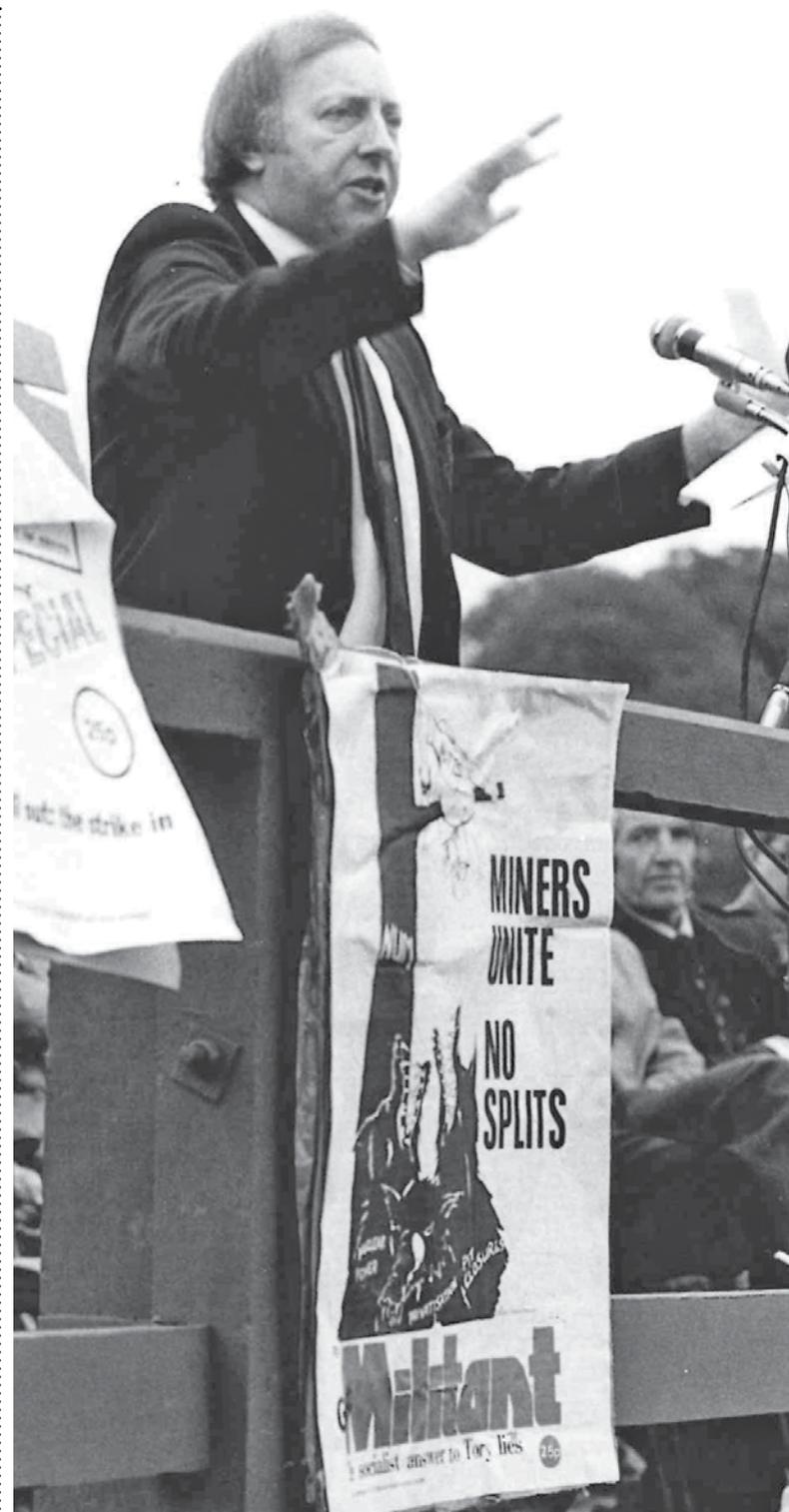


The defeat of the miners in 1985 wasn't about a lack of courage, determination or working-class support.

Matthew Parris, ex-Tory MP whose mild-mannered mask slipped, said: "In politics there are some battles you have to win, some things you can't do without confrontation, sometimes you have to have a fight and win." And so the ruling class made detailed plans to break the NUM. In 1981 the National Coal Board (NCB) announced that 23 pits were to close, this led to a walk out. However, the Tories feared that the timing wasn't right to take on the miners. Coal stocks were deemed too low, and so Thatcher, in a humiliating defeat, was forced to postpone the pit closure programme.

Charles Moore, Thatcher's biographer, commented: "She then set about building up coal stocks. She made secondary picketing illegal, organised a national police force trained in methods used in Northern Ireland to control riots." The tactics of bribing scabs, and deliberately starving working-class women and children came later.

The leadership, strategy and tactics of the strike must be studied, but workers will know that the miners



Arthur Scargill, President of the NUM during 1984/85 miners strike

had no choice but to fight. The defeat of the miners in 1985 wasn't about a lack of courage, determination or working-class support.

The victory of the ruling class wasn't due to their strengths, but because the right-wing leaders of the labour and trade union movement stabbed the miners in the back by refusing to mobilise the rest of the working class in solidarity. This led to social and economic devastation in the mining communities. The miners who fought that battle, the miners' wives and their communities will inspire future generations.

This documentary is a naked

attempt by the bosses to intimidate the working class. It is an attempt to warn a new, young layer of workers looking towards workers' struggle not to go down the road of militant trade unionism. The documentary poses a challenge to aspiring trade unionists: Are you prepared to stand your ground against the bosses?

For a true account of the strike from the standpoint of the working class read: 'A Civil War Without Guns, The Lessons of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike' written by Ken Smith and available to buy at leftbooks.co.uk

● 'Mrs Thatcher vs The Miners' can be streamed on my5

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Palestinian self-determination

Is the solution one state or two?

This is the second in a series of articles on Israel-Palestine following last month's brutal war on Gaza by the Israeli regime. It is a reprint of the last section of an article published in the June edition of Socialism Today, in which executive committee member **Judy Beishon** outlines the Socialist Party's view on calls for a 'one-state' solution to the national conflict, and why we instead call for two socialist states.

The ongoing expansion of Jewish settlements and other Jewish-only infrastructure in East Jerusalem and the West Bank has been destroying Palestinian hopes of having their own state. The area that was designated to the Palestinians by the 1993 Oslo 'peace' deal has been reduced and atomised, and none of the mainstream Palestinian political parties have a strategy to prevent this process.

So it is not surprising that the idea of one secular or bi-national state has become more considered and debated.

Of course, no socialist would oppose the idea of peaceful co-existence for Israeli Jews and Palestinians in one state, with equal rights and opportunities for all and no discrimination, as author and academic Ilan Pappé proposed recently in an interview in the German newspaper Neues Deutschland.

However, the key question is how that could be arrived at, given the present existence of capitalism and the current consciousness and views on both sides of the divide.

The Palestinians living under occupation don't want to live in one state with their present oppressor Israeli ruling class. Following the decades of discrimination, repression and bloodshed, they have no confidence that they wouldn't be discriminated against - and they want self-determination in their own state.

In a March 2021 Palestinian survey, while 55% saw a two-state solution as 'no longer practical or feasible', only 33% supported abandoning it in favour of a one-state solution. And many in that 33% do not see how a one-state situation could be arrived at. They are only too aware that Israel has one of the strongest military apparatuses in the world and a ruling class that has its base of support in the Jewish population.

In addition, working-class and middle-class Israeli Jews are living in

a state that was claimed to have been set up to protect their interests following terrible pogroms against Jews in eastern Europe and then the horrific Holocaust.

Before Israel was created in 1948, Marxists had warned - including Leon Trotsky - that an Israeli state in the Middle East would not be a safe-haven for Jews, but would instead be caught up in a bloody conflict. Now, 70 years after the formation of Israel, that prognosis remains tragically true. But most Israelis were born in that state, have nowhere else to go, and have their own national consciousness.

Add to this a 'siege mentality' due to being surrounded by Arab countries and not being far from the present Iranian regime, it's clear that the national consciousness and feeling of vulnerability among Israeli Jews is strong.

They, like the Palestinians, also fear being discriminated against in a one-state scenario. As Socialist Party political secretary Peter Taaffe wrote in his article, 'Socialism and national rights' (reprinted in the June Socialism Today), "if you try and impose one state on them now, it will be rejected".

No capitalist solution

Pappé commented in his Neues Deutschland interview: "The two-state solution, even ideally, offers no way out of colonisation or oppression". That is true on a capitalist basis. Decaying and rotten capitalism can only offer inequality along with poverty for a large layer of the population on both sides of the divide - substantially worse for the Palestinians, but poverty is also rife among Israeli Jews.

A capitalist 'solution' that would mean trying to share out the poverty and misery at the bottom of society is no solution, and holds no attraction for either side.

The proposition of two socialist states, on the other hand, raises the

prospect of people's needs being met, as well as their present national aspirations.

On a socialist basis, with elected representatives of working-class people in the negotiating positions, who would have no interest in profit making, territorial influence and wealth-based prestige, agreement could be reached on all the issues that today are intractable under capitalism. These include the sharing of Jerusalem, water resources, guarantees for the rights of minorities, the right of return, and the borders.

At any stage it could be agreed to dispense with a border, and that would inevitably be an eventual outcome under socialism - in a socialist world without borders - but the timing of it must be democratically decided by the people involved on both sides.

The road to this massively transformed scenario will entail the building of workers' parties with socialist programmes, setting both Jewish and Palestinian workers on a path towards breaking from pro-capitalist political representatives, and moving to challenge and remove capitalism altogether.

Security for the Jewish population will not be achieved by military means, nor will it be achieved by looking to any of the many brands of Israeli pro-capitalist politicians for another capitalist solution.

The only path towards living in peace and security and out of the rounds of bloodshed lies in the working class on both sides of the divide organising themselves, independent of capitalist interests, and playing a leading role in showing a way forward.

Building a socialist Palestine and a socialist Israel will become part of a process of workers' movements being built across the Middle East and turning to the same objective - the removal of capitalism. That will be the only basis for a future that can satisfy the needs and aspirations of all the peoples of the region.



A Palestinian rights solidarity demo in London during the recent Israel/Gaza war
PHOTO: TU SENAN

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Israel: A new coalition heading for the rocks

If the political situation in Israel wasn't so dire, then the ousting of right-wing prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu by a disparate coalition, headed up by Netanyahu's former wing-man Naftali Bennett, would be farcical. It's like replacing Lucifer with Satan!

Under the eight-party coalition deal, Bennett will serve the first two years of a four-year term as PM, and then hand over the reins to a 'secular' right-winger, Yair Lapid.

While Netanyahu is a rotten, hard-right nationalist - who thought the

prosecution of the recent eleven-day war on Gaza would preserve his premiership and protect him against corruption charges - millionaire ex-tech boss Bennett is even further to the right. He champions the settler movement for a 'greater Israel' in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Anti-trade union

Bennett not only rejects a Palestinian state, he is also reactionary domestically. He's against regulation in the private sector and opposes trade unions, telling the Guardian in 2013

he wanted to "break the stranglehold the big unions have on the Israeli economy".

However, the coalition has only a wafer-thin parliamentary majority and combines seemingly incompatible Israeli right-wing MPs through to some with a social-democratic background; and also Mansour Abbas, leader of the Arab Islamist Raam party.

Any renewed hostilities between the Israeli state and Hamas in Gaza will splinter the coalition. Meanwhile, Netanyahu is busily scheming

to split away coalition right-wingers to his camp, having laughably accused the coalition of being "left-wing" and "dangerous".

Neither 'Lucifer' nor 'Satan' can address the 'elephant in the room', ie the Israeli/Palestinian national question, or the pressing social and economic problems facing both Jewish and Arab workers within Israel.

Only the building of socialist movements in the Palestinian-occupied territories and in Israel, fighting against capitalism, can provide a way out for the long-suffering masses.

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G7 CAN'T SOLVE POVERTY, COVID, CLIMATE CHANGE

JOIN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM



A lot has happened since the G7, a group of rich capitalist nations including the UK and US, last met in summer 2019. Since then, the capitalist system's inability to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic has been a disaster for most of the world's working class and poor.

The G7 summit from 11-13 June brings together the political leaders of nations with vast economic wealth, around 30% of global GDP. But over decades they have demonstrated their inability to solve global poverty or halt climate change.

That's because, without exception, the leaders are unprepared to do anything that would

fundamentally challenge the economic dominance of the super-rich, and the systematic exploitation we experience under capitalism.

The pandemic has acted as a brutal but effective teacher for the world's population. At every stage of the unfolding catastrophe, global capitalism has been further exposed. While the virus has already cost 2.5 million lives worldwide, in the same period the ten richest billionaires have increased their fortunes by \$500 billion.

The billionaires and their political representatives are scared of the mass upheavals that are coming, fuelled by seething class anger. That's why they have preceded the

summit with announcements of a suggested 15% minimum corporation tax rate (see page 3).

The summit will discuss a target for global vaccination by the end of 2022, stopping climate change, and how to shore up a sustained economic recovery. But none of these objectives can be achieved by a system based on maximising the profits of a tiny minority.

We need to fight for a world where the vast wealth in society is used to provide for the needs of humanity. That means taking the major corporations and banks into democratic public ownership as part of a socialist transformation of society.

A starting point is to build powerful organisations of the working class, to build fighting leaderships in the trade unions, and to assist in the creation of a new mass party for workers in Britain and around the world.

To help us in that struggle, join the Socialist Party.

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A SOCIALIST RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS
▶▶ socialistparty.org.uk/coronavirus

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS
▶▶ see column on p3

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