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# the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

## PRICE RISE NIGHTMARE

# WE DEMAND A REAL PAY RISE

### ■ Demonstrate on 18 June

### ■ Join the socialist fightback

HEATHER RAWLING  
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

### Work longer hours. Get a better-paid job.

That is government minister Rachel Maclean's suggestion for how to cope with prices rising at a 40-year high of 11.1% in April. She's an ex-banker whose business makes £1 million profit per year!

It's her government that stood by while P&O bosses broke the law and brutally sacked their workforce

to drive down wages to starvation levels.

I'm sick of being told how to cope: 'wear warmer clothes,' 'turn the heating down,' 'buy cheaper brands.' We've been doing all that for years!

Many already work long hours, holding down two or three jobs to put food on the table and pay bills. But working longer hours is not an option for everyone. Cuts to public services have forced people, mainly women, to give up work to care for sick and elderly relatives. Affordable childcare is non-existent so returning to work after maternity leave is almost impossible

without the help of friends and relatives.

Anyway, why should we work longer hours for poverty pay? Big business bosses are cashing in bumper profits, including energy companies and supermarkets - the same ones responsible for our rocketing energy and food bills!

1.5 million households will struggle to pay for energy and food in 2022. That's a polite way of saying 1.5 million households will be cold and go hungry. Millions more will see their living standards get worse.

The Tories want to blame the poor

for being poor. But we are poor because the bosses steal the wealth that we create.

There are over six million trade union members in Britain. Many are already taking on their bosses and voting on whether to strike to demand a pay rise - on the trains, in Royal Mail, in universities, and more.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC), which brings together the trade unions in England and Wales, is organising a national demonstration in London on 18 June to say: 'Enough is enough.'

If it is properly built for, if the TUC

makes sure that every workplace receives leaflets and subsidised transport is organised, the June demo could be a huge show of strength in numbers.

But to really start to show the strength of workers, the TUC should use the demonstration as a step towards coordinating strikes for a pay rise.

United trade union action, and a mass working-class political force that fights for a socialist alternative, is what is needed to take on and end the cost-of-living crisis.

● See page 3 for our demands to end the cost-of-living crisis

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PROVOKES RAGE ▶▶ p13



# High-rent, unsafe, insecure housing won't be fixed by Queen's Speech hot air

PAUL KERSHAW

CHAIR OF UNITE HOUSING WORKERS' BRANCH, LE11111

The Queen's Speech contained measures designed to get headlines suggesting the government would act to support tenants. It is a response to growing pressure from tenant campaigners, but the proposals read out by Prince Charles amid pomp and glitz will not reverse the growth of unaffordable and substandard housing, or the rising numbers facing homelessness. No new money has been allocated, and 'levelling up' secretary Michael Gove has admitted in interviews that the previous target of 300,000 new homes per year will not be achieved.

The government has been promising to abolish 'no fault' evictions for private renters since April 2019. Now abolition of the hated 'section 21' has appeared in the government legislative programme. The step has been welcomed by campaign groups such as Generation Rent. But it won't make much difference for those on insecure fixed-term tenancies, or those on monthly rolling contracts.

## No-fault evictions

Landlord organisations have reacted angrily, even though the speech also has a commitment to strengthen landlords' rights to gain possession. One buy-to-let landlord told the Telegraph that she was so concerned about the abolition of section 21 that she felt she had to evict a long-term



Housing association tenants in Shepherds Bush London, protest against rising rents and rip-off service charges PHOTO: SUZANNE MUNA

tenant of six years, who had never missed a rent payment. After refurbishing the house, she raised the rent by £130 a month, while the ex-tenant was forced into sofa-surfing. Apparently it is wrong to upset landlords who kindly pocket rocketing rents for supplying insecure housing - and tenants will be punished as a result!

Private rents have risen at record rates over the past year, and by 2024 the number of homeless people is projected to rise by a third. This brutal aspect of the cost-of-living crisis

is not addressed by the government despite massive public support for rent control.

Landlords will seek to further water down these already inadequate proposals in the Queen's Speech. Tenant campaigns and trade unions need to press for more. We need a ban on economic evictions during the crisis - no evictions for arrears - and a return to 'secure tenancies', which were abolished by Margaret Thatcher.

The official background paper published with the Queen's Speech

rented homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, meaning over a million people are living in bad conditions.

## Landlord regulation

The speech announced a plan to reintroduce so called 'consumer regulation' of social landlords. The 'ConDem' government which came to office in 2010 had declared the previous regulator as 'toast'. It went on to cut grants for social landlords and promoted social housing as investment opportunities for global financial institutions. Landlords were further deregulated and support for tenants' associations was largely ended. Great for the financial institutions, terrible for residents.

New performance measures for social landlords are promised, but to have any value these need to be under the control of residents. Clarion housing, a social housing provider which has repeatedly featured in exposures of terrible conditions due to disrepair, has recently boasted of high satisfaction ratings for its repairs. The landlords can't be left to evaluate their own performance, and the government can't be trusted to either!

Regulation is not enough to control modern giant financialised landlords. While the big landlords retain ownership of huge swathes of housing, their concern, and the concern of the financial institutions they are in hock to, will be to make money at the expense of tenants.

That's why we fight not just for genuine democratic tenants' and worker scrutiny of rent and housing conditions, but for democratic public ownership of the big landlords, house builders and banks.

# Tories talk up social housing sell-off

## Fight for quality council homes for all in need



JACK JEFFREY

SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Faced with worrying polls, growing public criticism and just ahead of local election day, Boris Johnson's government made a traditional Tory move - talking up selling off more of our dwindling stock of social housing. This time, the focus was on properties owned by housing associations, which have been mostly exempt from 'Right to Buy' legislation to date.

This isn't the first time in recent years that a Tory government has pushed selling off social housing in order to boost a faltering election campaign. In 2005, Right to Buy for housing associations was a key feature of Michael Heseltine's campaign. In 2015, David Cameron put together a bodged plan to extend Right to Buy and force councils to sell their most valuable stock. And at the 2019 party conference Robert Jenrick announced a plan to extend the

scheme to housing associations, but with a new twist - now houses could be bought in instalments.

Right to Buy has only exacerbated the housing crisis in the UK. Since its inception in 1980, the number of homes available for social rent has declined by almost 2 million. At the same time, the average price of a home has skyrocketed from £19,000 to £240,000 - an increase of over 1,000%! On average, rent has increased from 10% to 30% share of salaries.

40% of properties that have been bought under Right to Buy are now being rented out by private landlords, according to research by Inside Housing. Many of the renters are working people in receipt of housing benefit, the same group who previously could have applied for social housing!

Private rents are considerably higher than for social housing. This has contributed towards a huge ballooning in housing benefit payments - standing at £17.29 billion in 2020,

up from £2 billion in 1980. Extending the Right to Buy to housing associations will only worsen the crisis.

Many housing associations have become commercially driven conglomerates far divorced from their charitable origins. Their opposition to Right to Buy is driven by self-interest, and they care little for their tenants or their contribution to the public good - as recent media stories about the shocking standard of their accommodation have shown. There is no better example of this than their continued support and lobbying for 'Help to Buy', which subsidises them to build homes for private sale to first-time buyers. Another failed housing scheme that has cost £29 billion, and that the House of Lords has found to be wasteful and counterproductive, inflating prices "by more than its subsidy value in areas where it is needed the most".

Decent quality affordable housing is at the centre of any meaningful resolution of the cost-of-living crisis. Rather than selling off even more social housing stock, only for it to end up in the hands of private landlords, we need real investment in council homes run by democratically accountable local authorities.

We need an end to Right to Buy, and councils that are prepared to defy the government and spend what is needed to meet housing need.

# Windfall tax: a weak capitalist solution to a big capitalist problem



ADAM HARMSWORTH

COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Pressure is growing on the government to act on soaring energy bills which risk throwing 40% of UK households into fuel poverty.

The Tory response has been predictably inadequate. They've announced a mandatory £200 loan in our bills, and a £150 council tax rebate, which the Resolution Foundation think tank has shown won't reach an eighth of low-income households. That does little to help with the £693 average rise just this year.

While millions face fuel poverty, the energy giants are raking it in. BP's underlying profit in the first quarter of this year alone was £4.9 billion, while Shell took £3.1 billion - its biggest ever quarterly profit. Polls consistently show a majority of the public backing nationalisation of energy, but politicians are steering clear of that idea, trying desperately to leave it in the Corbyn era.

The headline proposal in the media to deal with gigantic fuel costs is a 'windfall tax' - a one-off levy usually targeting companies that have made big profits. Labour's proposal is an extra 10% on corporation tax for companies drilling in the North Sea.

Labour's plan could apparently

raise £2 billion, £71 per household, leaving many in fuel poverty and barely touching the energy companies' wealth.



**We have to fight for nationalisation, because the best offer from the capitalists is a slightly smaller increase in fuel poverty. We cannot go on like that.**

No wonder it is starting to receive the backing of the capitalist class: Tesco's chairman, the Lib Dem leader, and some Tory MPs have expressed support. Sunak and Johnson themselves seem to be retreating from opposing the tax to considering it an option.

Other sections of the capitalist class object to the pitiful windfall tax, fearing that taxes on the rich could popularise the idea that their money can be seized for public use. BP and Shell are among those trying to defeat the idea by promising more investment, while also threatening to

withhold investment if the tax goes ahead.

If the Johnson government implements a windfall tax or a similar measure, it would amount to a U-turn, forced by the pressure of growing working-class anger at the rising cost of living. A fighting lead from the trade unions would enormously amplify this pressure.

But a windfall tax, or any half-measure to take from the bosses, would not deal with the core problem. While capitalists own and control our utilities and so much wealth, they will continue to act in their own interests, even when their profit-hoarding causes poverty and death.

Nationalising the energy industry under democratic workers' control as part of a socialist plan of production would mean that the bosses' hoarded cash could be put to use.

Socialist nationalisation could end fuel poverty immediately, could cut even end energy bills, with costs absorbed into government spending. A socialist planned economy in Britain, linking with others across Europe and the world, could bring an end to rocketing prices and the chaos of the capitalist market.

We have to fight for nationalisation, because the best offer from the capitalists is a slightly smaller increase in fuel poverty. We cannot go on like that.



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

## Pay, benefits, pensions

- An immediate above-inflation pay rise for workers to restore wages after over a decade of pay freezes and below-inflation rises
- Regular pay increases for all, linked to trade-union agreed measures of inflation
- Raise the minimum wage to £15 an hour, without exemptions
- Restore the pension triple lock
- Restore the additional £20-a-week Universal Credit payment. End the benefit cap
- Living benefits and pensions for all who need them, rising with the cost of living

## Housing

- Freeze council and social housing rents
- Rent controls to cap rents - decided by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and trade union representatives

## Make the rich pay, not the workers

- No rise in national insurance or council tax, scrap student debt
- No worker should be made to pay more tax, raise tax thresholds in line with inflation
- Take the wealth off the super-rich, nationalise the top 150 companies and banks to be run under democratic working-class control and management, with compensation only on the basis of proven need

## Price rises

- Reverse the rise in the energy price cap. Nationalise energy and other utilities under democratic workers' control and management to reduce bills by removing the profit motive

- No increase in public transport fares. Return transport into public hands, to guarantee a fully funded, free, environmentally friendly, sustainable transport system
- Stop price rises, end bosses' profiteering. Open the books of big retailers to inspection by trade unions. Nationalise the big retailers under democratic workers' control to be run to meet need, not for profit

## Trade union struggle

- For a trade union-led struggle against the cost-of-living crisis
- The TUC-organised demonstration on 18 June must be used as a stepping stone towards coordinated strike action, uniting workers' struggles for pay rises
- For fighting, democratic leaderships of the trade unions

## New workers' party

- No trust in Starmer's Labour to fight in our interests. For a new mass workers' party based on trade union and workers' struggle

## Socialism

- End the chaos of the capitalist market. For a socialist plan of production, based on the needs of the overwhelming majority, not for profit

## Join the fightback

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

Tory MP: 'It's your fault you're poor'

KAREN SEYMOUR AND ROO STEVENS MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Poor people can't cook and can survive on 30p per meal - £6.30 a week. That's according to ex-Labour councillor, and now Tory MP for Ashfield, Lee Anderson.

Anderson, the MP who refused to support England at last year's World Cup because the players took the knee, has again chosen to show his arrogance and ignorance.

Anderson and his ilk perpetuate the myth that poor people and benefit claimants can't be bothered to cook; that they are feckless and lazy and need educating.

patronising cooking and budgeting lessons before getting any food.

Actually, people on low incomes are some of the best budgeters I know, we have to be!

These latest out-of-touch comments have been accompanied by another Tory MP, George Eustice, patronisingly recommending people buy own value brands when shopping!

Thanks George, that hadn't occurred to us. And with access to heavily subsidised restaurants (and bars) in the House of Commons, why should he care?

We need fundamental change, not budgeting tips. That's why the Socialist Party fights for:

- A £15-an-hour minimum wage, and living benefits and pensions
• For pay, benefits and pensions to rise automatically with the cost of living
• Nationalise the big food and fuel companies to combat soaring prices



'Think before asking for a pay rise'

That was the advice to workers from Bank of England boss Andrew Bailey as he addressed MPs in Parliament about the cost-of-living crisis.

We have thought about it. With inflation predicted to reach 10%, how about a 10% pay rise for all workers?

Thinking about it for a bit longer... Workers share of wealth in Britain has been shrinking for decades.

pockets of the working class to the capitalist class.

The pay rise we really need to claw back the wealth is much bigger than 10%, and how about fully funding our NHS and other public services to boot?

Come to think of it, a system where a tiny minority of individuals own the vast majority of wealth while the rest of us struggle to get by needs to go too.

So we demand an inflation-busting pay rise, and an end to Bailey's profit-driven 'apocalypse', by struggling for socialist change.

Richest man says 'work harder'

Will he or won't he buy Twitter? While the world's richest man grapples over how to spend his billions, Elon Musk has no qualms over squeezing everything out of his Tesla workforce.

Workers at the Tesla factory in Shanghai, China, have reportedly been sleeping on-site and working 12-hour shifts with just one day off a week.

Musk was full of praise for his super-exploited Shanghai workforce, but less so for US workers: "They won't just be burning the midnight oil, they will be burning the 3am oil, they won't even leave the factory type of thing, whereas in America, people are trying to avoid going to work at all."

This enlightened capitalist is clearly more concerned with making history, having previously chirped: "Nobody ever changed the world on 40 hours a week".

'Computer says no'

That was chancellor Rishi Sunak's excuse for plunging hundreds of thousands of benefit claimants further into poverty. He claimed that the computer system could only change benefit levels once a year, and it had already been set at 3.1%, a real-terms cut.

The computer didn't mind being told to remove the £20-a-week Universal Credit uplift in the autumn though!

Meanwhile, energy regulator Ofgem does want more frequent increases. Its solution to the energy price crisis is to raise the energy price cap four times a year not two!

£4.7 million

That is the size of the pay package for Tesco CEO Ken Murphy. 224 times the average pay for Tesco staff

\$100 billion

Just 28 oil and gas companies gained \$100 billion in profit during the first three months of 2022

SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party May issue includes... War in Ukraine: A new era of world relations has begun



Half a million go without social care in worker shortage market failure

DAN SMART BRISTOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Nothing has changed. Since the care staffing scandal hit the headlines last year, hundreds of thousands of people are still awaiting vital support for their most basic of living needs.

In fact, the situation has got much worse. The number of people awaiting social care has almost doubled to half a million since 2021, according to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

Care agency Caremark told the BBC that "demand is very, very high". It reported that, while in the past they accepted almost all requests to provide care, it now turns down 80% of requests from councils, unable to get enough staff!

It's no great mystery as to the cause of the problem. Care staff are criminally underpaid and undervalued. Most care staff earn less than £10 an hour for work that can require a huge amount of skill and sensitivity, as well as



being extremely high-pressured and demanding.

Increasingly, workers leave to find better-paid work in other sectors such as retail or cleaning. The situation is compounded by the cost-of-living crisis.

Care agencies complain of being unable to raise wages to attract new recruits and at the same time stay afloat. That may be the case for some smaller organisations, but the majority of care bosses are doing very well out of the situation.

£18.9 million of government Covid pay outs. Meanwhile it was siphoning millions in tax-free profits to the Cayman Islands!

What an indictment of the systematic privatisation of care, that vulnerable people are having to rely on family or precarious voluntary provision to get by, or otherwise end up in hospital or worse.

Tory and Labour governments guilty for ambulance shortage deaths

MIKE CLEVERLEY WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

There has been a 77% rise in the most serious incidents logged by paramedics in England over the past year. Doctors report that ambulance wait times are endangering patients.

When I, a 79 year-old, fell and broke my arm a few weeks ago, I was told by the 999 operator that an ambulance would take three hours to arrive. Whips Cross Hospital was a 15 minute drive away.

Fortunately, I was in the company of fellow Socialist Party member, Martin Reynolds, and the security staff at Waltham Forest Town Hall. The staff helped me into the building to wait out of the cold. But when, after three hours, it was clear the ambulance was not on its way, the staff who had waited with me until the end of their shift drove me to hospital and waited another 30 minutes while I queued to check in.

It didn't take long to understand why the ambulance did not arrive. There were seven ambulances waiting to take their casualties into the hospital!

This was not a weekend, it was a normal Tuesday evening and, incredibly, this situation is not a bit unusual.

Once checked in to A&E, I waited five hours for an X-ray and it was the next morning before I was seen by a doctor and offered any pain relief, 12 hours after Martin had telephoned for an ambulance.



My experience shows just the tip of the iceberg. There have been 551 serious incidents posted by ambulance staff between March 2021 and February 2022; 201 were unintended or unexpected deaths, up from 78 the year before.

These damning statistics are the result of decades of underfunding by both Labour and Tory governments.

Shocking delays for patients to receive care are now 'normal'. The Covid-19 pandemic has obviously made things worse, but it is not the cause. The symptoms were there long before Covid 19 and result from

a funding crisis in our NHS, deepened by the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scandal that has drowned Health Trusts with unaffordable debt repayments.

PFI debts must be cancelled, and the NHS fully funded, with the money taken not from workers with a National Insurance increase, but from the super-rich. First on the long list should be the health privatisers and drugs companies sucking the health service dry.

We fight for a fully funded, publicly owned NHS, run democratically by staff, patients and the community.

Socialist Party

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 £15 an hour without exemptions. 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!

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# PCS conference Prepare to fight on jobs and pay

PCS members on the march PAUL MATTHESSON



JP ROSSER  
PCS MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

A week before PCS annual delegate conference (ADC) began, the Tory government made the incredible announcement that it wants to cut over 90,000 jobs from the civil service.

This year's conference needs to agree to launch a massive campaign, with a national ballot to include job losses, office closures, pay and pensions. This should begin no later than 1 July.

Last year's online conference was organised in a thoroughly undemocratic way. It's likely that this experience will reduce attendance at this year's hybrid event. Even if that is the

case, it won't diminish the significance of ADC 2022.

For two years, succumbing to 'national unity' during Covid, the Left Unity (LU) PCS leadership parked the national pay claim and demoted it to a mere online petition.

This year's conference will be the first time the members and the Broad Left Network (BLN - the PCS left group in which the Socialist Party participates) will be holding them to account for that in person.

The government's announcements just prove that weakness invites aggression.

Members have shown they are up for a fight. The pay issue was put back into the hands of members this year

We only need to think back to ADC 2020, where Left Unity were still pressing for a single issue, aggregated ballot on pay across the civil service.

The strategy put forward by the BLN was to encompass multiple issues into the ballot so as to create a wide base of support. This strategy also called for consideration of a disaggregated ballot as a tactic.

Left Unity rejected this approach in 2020, but by ADC 2021 they had conceded that the issue of pensions should be included in the ballot.

The BLN continued to press for the campaign to include issues such as jobs. This was denounced by Left Unity speakers from the floor, who decried the 'shopping list' of demands, and from the LU national executive committee (NEC) speaker, who described these as "tired, old arguments".

The leadership of the union reverses 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 adopted!

an indicative ballot, which concluded on 21 March.

## Members want to fight

The turnout of 45% included strong turnouts in some of the biggest union groups. It sets a solid base both for a successful pay campaign and resistance to the government announcement of over 90,000 job cuts.

However, Left Unity's lack of confidence was laid bare in their article published immediately after the indicative ballot results were known. Their headline told the faithful: "Don't mourn".

Left Unity have no confidence in the ability of activists or members to deliver a successful ballot.

to the TUC Congress in September with a successful ballot already completed. PCS would once again play a leading role with other unions, giving them confidence that they could create a 'coalition of the willing'.

## Democracy

Another key debate will be around organising the union. The NEC has gone conspicuously quiet on the matter.

Its motion last year instructed it to report to branches early in 2022 on various matters, including extension of the election of full-time officers. But the report kicked the can down the road, with decisions now to be taken at ADC 2023.

Yet delegates would be mistaken to think this means that there aren't changes being made to PCS.

There's still a push, for example, for digital solutions to organising challenges. There is still a trend of centralising power away from lay activists. These attacks on activist-led democracy can be defeated.

ADC 2022 comes at a crucial time. It gives delegates the chance to adopt a fighting programme to face and reverse the range of attacks facing our members today.

This will be the first step in rebuilding PCS as the proud, activist-led union we all aspire to see again.

- Socialist Party fringe meeting Tuesday 24 May at end of conference, Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Road, Brighton
- BLN fringe meeting Wednesday 25 May at end of conference, Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Road, Brighton

It would put PCS in the position of

# RMT ballot on the railways Biggest dispute 'in living memory'

East Midlands strike 2021 NOTTS SP



A MIDLANDS RMT MEMBER

Ballot papers have been landing on rail workers' doormats since last week in what looks to be the biggest dispute facing the railway in a generation.

The government and railway employers are using the Covid recovery as their long-awaited excuse to go after our pay and conditions, which have been fought for and won by previous generations of railway workers over decades.

RMT has balloted 42,000 members across the train operating companies (TOCs) and Network Rail over three main issues: an imposed two-year pay freeze, a failure to guarantee no compulsory redundancies, and the employers' failure to guarantee that there will be no changes to terms and conditions without union agreement.

## Privatisation

The nationalised railways were run on a shoestring back in the 1990s. Despite the old jokes about British Rail sandwiches being ropey, the network achieved a reasonable level of efficiency in spite of decades of cuts.

Following privatisation, government subsidies ballooned from £1 billion in today's money to £5 billion just before the pandemic - so much for the efficiency of the private sector!

Thanks to effective trade union organisation and rising passenger numbers, we managed to secure some significant improvements to our pay and conditions, and kept our pension scheme relatively safe during this time.

The pandemic hit passenger numbers, but these have now risen back to around 80% pre-Covid levels.

The Tories promise to tackle the climate emergency by getting people out of their cars and onto trains. But the railways are still running a less frequent service across the country, and the RMT has revealed the government's plans to close thousands of ticket offices. The most expensive rail fares in Europe continue to rise.

You will not tempt people out of their cars if they are offered a less convenient service, with no staff to advise about ticket options. This is particularly the case for vulnerable or disabled people.

State-owned Network Rail, which owns the tracks and stations, wants to cut £2 billion in order to service its debts. Much of these were created when it took over from the disastrous Railtrack PLC, following several high-profile fatal incidents. On the other hand, the TOCs eye an opportunity to slash their operating costs and boost shareholder profits.

## Profits

But what about the profits that have been sloshing around the rail firms' bank accounts over the last few years? The truth is that, thanks to the corporate largesse of the Tories and New Labour, the railway has remained awash with cash since privatisation. So where has this money gone?

Yes, some workers have fought for and won improvements to their pay. But this pales into insignificance when you consider the obscene profits made by the various parasitic organisations, such as the Rolling Stock Leasing Companies (ROSCOs). These three companies, owned by banks, were set up by the Tories in the 1990s to own and lease the locomotives and carriages to the franchise-holding TOCs.

RMT research has shone a light on their profiteering. Last year alone, the ROSCOs paid out dividends of £950 million. Together with the TOCs, these private firms have extracted £8.3 billion from our railway network since privatisation. This money has been stolen from the community, railway workers and passengers, and funnelled into the pockets of wealthy shareholders.

This is why the Socialist Party calls for the renationalisation of the railways and transport network.

There can be no doubt what sort of jobs the Tories want on the railway of the future - they already exist.

## Avanti West Coast cleaners

The workers who clean the trains on the prestigious and expensive Avanti West Coast service are outsourced and employed by Atalian Servest. This is a subcontractor working on behalf of Alstom, the train maintenance contractor.

These vital workers are paid just above the minimum wage, and receive no railway pension, sick pay or even free travel on the very trains they clean each day.

They have heroically struck for ten days so far in their struggle for a genuine living wage. Their employer is resisting paying them any more than an extra 6p an hour, never mind sick pay or anything else, despite recently paying out £10 million to their parent company in France!

Every penny of this obscene dividend was derived from the sweat of these 'key workers'.

This is parasitic twenty-first century capitalism at its worst. With the grotesque situation at P&O Ferries still fresh in workers' minds, there can be no doubt that we are approaching a confrontation with the employers which demands the most forceful and militant fightback in living memory.

The ballot closes on 24 May. RMT members should vote 'yes' to defend all rail jobs, pay and conditions!

## 2022 National Shop Stewards Network Conference

Saturday 2nd July

11am-4.30pm Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

Workers fight the cost of living squeeze  
Trade union lead never more needed!

speakers include: Sharon Graham,  
Unite general secretary

www.shopstewards.net

# South London bus drivers rebuilding militant traditions

ANDY BEADLE  
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

On 11 May, bus drivers employed by Arriva in south London, members of Unite the Union, resumed their strike action. Their action began in late March against a 1.5% pay 'offer'.

This time, Croydon, Norwood and Thornton Heath depots were joined by Brixton, which had been excluded from the previous strike days over a legal point.

One long-serving Unite activist at Thornton Heath said he was proud to have won a convert. A driver who had worked during the March action is now helping on the picket line. Few buses ran out of Thornton Heath.

Patience and determination are rebuilding the traditions of militant trade unionism.

• The action has forced an improved offer from the company, which, as we go to press, members are being balloted on.



Thornton Heath ANDY BEADLE

## Walthamstow Primary Academy strike

# School worker "warriors" winning even more support of parents



WPA pickets WALTHAM FOREST SP

SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE  
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

"We're warriors!" That's how a union member at Walthamstow Primary Academy described their approach to the strike. What makes these women workers so formidable is their determination.

When the weather came in on the side of the employer, and so the picnic they'd planned as a chance to speak to parents was rained off, they didn't accept defeat. They improvised and came up with a plan that striking teachers everywhere could use - a picket picnic at the end of the school day when parents have more time.

Chatting over chocolate muffins allowed parents to get the strikers' perspective. The solidarity built over buns has strengthened the strike and piled pressure on management.

The following Tuesday the atmosphere on the picket was even better, with parents and students greeting strikers with even more warmth and support.

The parents know the teachers have their kids' interests at heart. They are looking at ways they can help the strike to win its demands to end unequal pay and bullying in the school. No one wants that environment for their children's education.

During the strike, classes are being asked to stay at home, or are covered by unqualified teachers, or even by parents or lunchtime supervisors! But parents have been told their education is continuing as normal. This is despite strikers offering to discuss compromises, and seeking conversations to end the strike.

As we go to press negotiations are ongoing. Victory to the WPA warriors!

# National executive election results: BLN well placed for major battles to come

Marion Lloyd, a Socialist Party member, stood for PCS president as part of the Broad Left Network slate in the national elections. She responded to the results announced on 13 May.

"Thanks to everybody who stood with the Broad Left Network in the NEC and group elections. A number of BLN supporters have already been elected into prominent positions in groups - congratulations to those who have been elected.

In the NEC elections, BLN supporters have increased their votes. The votes for other groupings, including for the Left Unity leadership of the union, have fallen.

We are well-placed to tackle the major fights that are coming. On pay,

as the cost of living squeeze tightens its grip. And, of course, the outrageous announcements by the Tories who want to cut over 90,000 jobs.

BLN supporters, whether active locally, in their workplaces, or in national positions, will continue to fight tirelessly for PCS members. We will not stop putting forward a fighting, campaigning programme capable of winning."

## Stop Press

DWP group executive results are in. Six BLN supporters, including four Socialist Party members, have been elected. See [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk) for further reports.



2019 BEIS strike PAULA MITCHELL



## Socialist Party congress 2022

# Social explosion is inevitable in Britain

The pressure building up against the cost-of-living squeeze and falling living standards will find outlets. **Judy Beishon**, Socialist Party executive committee, introduced the discussion on the political situation in Britain.

The Tories gave the working class facing rising prices no crumbs in the Queen's Speech. Some Tories worry about the consequences of this, with working-class anger brewing.

The Tories are greatly divided and the Boris Johnson government is reckless regarding capitalist interests.

### Tory division

Tory divisions have also opened up again on the Northern Ireland protocol (see pages 12-13). Underlying the Tories' crisis is the dire economic situation facing British capitalism and its long-term weakness.

The anti-Tory vote in the local elections went in many directions. Labour only benefited from that to a limited degree, because Keir Starmer has removed Jeremy Corbyn's more attractive policies from its programme.

Nevertheless, a Labour general election victory can't be discounted, because of the hatred of the Tories. If Jeremy Corbyn or the trade unions initiated a new party, it would have big potential to grow. In any case, a

new mass workers' party is urgently needed.

The role of the trade unions in organising workers, including in the gig economy, will be vital. The right-wing union leaders will view the Trades Union Congress (TUC) demo on 18 June as a chance to let-off steam rather than to prepare for coordinated action. But workers, and left union leaders, can build for it as a step towards taking action forward.

The Covid pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis have impacted on workers' consciousness and readiness to resist attacks. Judy concluded that this would make social explosions inevitable.

The first speaker in the discussion was Coventry bin worker **Hayden Jones**. His experience in the strike against a right-wing Labour council has convinced him that Labour is no longer a party for workers.

He and seven colleagues have joined the Socialist Party. His contribution – as a "proud member of the Socialist Party" – received a massive ovation.

**Mark Evans**, from Swansea and West Wales Socialist Party, noted the anger in society, yet a feeling of impotence exists for many at present. This is not true for every worker, particularly those who have struggled. Once

it moves, the working class is an unstoppable force, he said.

Others described battles over poverty, housing and health, in which the Socialist Party has participated. **Len Hockey** – Unite the Union secretary at Barts NHS Trust – described the strike victory against Serco. The workers will now be taken back in-house next year. The lessons from the workers' battle should be translated into a programme of action for the NHS nationally, he said.

### Change and instability

**Rob Williams**, the Socialist Party workplace and trade union organiser, replied to the discussion. It is not grinding poverty or misery alone that lead to struggle developing, but also the insecurity felt by changing conditions and economic instability. Rob said there is not another party that supports and engages with workers' disputes as much as we do, and participates as seriously.

There is a rising tide of workers' militancy. But the threat of recession could mean a new phase, and change the character of workers' disputes from offensive battles over pay, to defensive ones on jobs and conditions. The Socialist Party is also giving a lead in the unions on the question of political representation for the working class.



Coventry bin worker Hayden Jones. His experience on strike against a Labour council has convinced him that Labour is no longer a party for workers. He and seven colleagues have joined the Socialist Party. He's now a "proud member" JANE NELLIST

## Fighting for socialism from Carlisle to Cornwall

You can be active in the Socialist Party anywhere between Cornwall and Carlisle fighting for socialist ideas. We are building both in areas where activity has just begun or restarted, like Swindon, Salisbury, or Bournemouth, and in cities where we are extending our influence.

**Sarah Sachs-Eldridge**, for the executive committee, introduced the discussion on how to strengthen and build our party to get socialist ideas out to workers and young people. Our members have not only maintained but built the party through determination and self-sacrifice. Even in the difficult period of the pandemic, we participated in all the main struggles that took place, often as the biggest organised presence like in the Black Lives Matter protests and many industrial struggles, boldly offering ideas.

**Ali Cooke**, a young member organising our work in Salisbury, explained how important sustaining our regular public activity, selling the Socialist and discussing our ideas is for finding new members for the party.

### Victories

A broad sweep of reports of interventions was given, including into election campaigns, paper sales and stalls, trade union and community campaigns, like in Southampton, where the St Mary's Leisure Centre has been saved by a determined campaign (see page 11). Particularly inspiring were the reports of groups of workers who have been attending party branches to listen to and discuss our ideas.

Confidence and enthusiasm came through in every contribution from newer members and those with years of experience. And **Isai Marijerla** replied to the discussion by explaining that is because we have the confidence that capitalism can be got rid of. Workers in struggle see us as allies, whether in disputes or in social movements.

Our branches and their meetings are important to discuss ideas and plan the work, but also to develop

the political education of every member through reading and discussing Marxist ideas. Every area has to have a strategy to build, and use it to develop its influence in the local workers' movement, Sarah concluded.

In the discussion **Linda Thraves**, branch secretary of Swansea and West Wales, emphasised how branch meetings are the priority, and the role of the branch secretary is vital in organising these. Our meetings are also part of every member's democratic responsibilities, she said.

**Ali Cooke**, a young member organising our work in Salisbury, explained how important sustaining our regular public activity, selling the Socialist and discussing our ideas is for finding new members for the party.

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The Socialist Party congress took place from 14 to 16 May in London – the first since February 2020 because of Covid. Congress is the most important democratic decision-making body of the Socialist Party. It is always a very important event, an opportunity to step back to clarify our ideas. Kevin Parslow writes about some of the important points raised during the weekend's discussions.

South West London delegate Deji Olayinka MARY FINCH

## Socialist ideas for people looking for answers

For the last eight months, Socialist Party members have been discussing a new draft programme for the party. This had been circulated in a publicly available 'What We Stand For' pamphlet.

Throughout that eight-month discussion, members have suggested additions and amendments. **Lenny Shall**, speaking on behalf of the Socialist Party executive committee, explained that the programme encapsulated how we are adapting to a changed situation.

The What We Stand For document points to the workplace as the site of developing struggles – where the battle is over the surplus value created by the working class, but expropriated by the capitalists – and how workers' consciousness can develop during struggle.

The Socialist Party's programme helps to draw new people into the party. Our programme is subject to continuous discussion and development.

**Mia Hollisling** from Wales welcomed What We Stand For for not falling into the traps of either promising reforms without socialist change, or stating baldly that only socialism can solve our problems, without dealing with the specific needs of workers.

**Clive Heemskerck**, in his reply to the discussion, promised that the updated What We Stand For would now be produced as a pamphlet.

One main thrust of the document is how does the working class rebuild its organisations. The conditions of the working class today are reminiscent of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – casualised and with little rights – but, just as that was the time when a workers' political party was founded, still with the possibility of leading the struggle for socialist change.

What We Stand For serves a purpose for this period after the defeat of Corbynism, with many looking for answers as to the way forward.

## £18,443 raised in fantastic finance appeal

The cost-of-living squeeze affects the Socialist Party too! **Ryan Aldred**, a Socialist Party organiser in south west England, inspired people at congress to increase their regular membership subs to the party.

For the Socialist Party, raising finance is not separate from the other important work we do, said Socialist Party treasurer **Isai Marijerla**.

Socialist Party national committee member **Dave Griffiths** has actively

supported the Coventry bin workers' strike. Dave gave a witty but determined fighting fund appeal.

Workers need a force with which to fight back, he said, and the Socialist Party provides a political alternative. We need the cash to go full steam ahead in our campaigning. We are the people with an idea of what to do in the trade union movement. His appeal for funds raised a magnificent

£18,433.

# World revolt is on agenda

The first discussion was on perspectives for the world situation, introduced by Socialist Party general secretary **Hannah Sell**. Hannah explained how all aspects of society are in flux due to Covid. And that there was never any prospect of the post-pandemic world under capitalism being sunny uplands.

There has been a dramatic escalation of crises, and a fall in living standards internationally. These will lead to revolts around the world.

This process is typified by events in Sri Lanka, which are a foretaste of what will develop in other countries, the "first domino to fall", as Jim Hensman from Coventry later put it (see 'Sri Lanka: Biggest mass movement and strike forces prime minister's resignation' at socialistparty.org.uk).

### Ukraine

But the other side of world developments has been the increased level of tension between nation states, exemplified in its most brutal form by the war in Ukraine. This is a turning point in world relations. The war has emphasised the uncertainties now endemic in the capitalist system internationally.

The Ukraine war is in part a proxy war between Russia and Nato. That it is taking place is a symptom of the decline of US imperialism which, while still the world's strongest powers, is increasingly unable to 'call the shots'.

The Putin gangster-capitalist regime invaded Ukraine, knowing the

US and Nato would be powerless to prevent it – particularly as only a few months ago the US had to retreat from Afghanistan.

However, the war will weaken Putin's regime and prepare the ground for gigantic struggles in Russia. The western capitalist powers will also be weakened further by the Ukraine war.

Europe has both tensions between nation states and within them. Germany, the economic 'powerhouse' of Europe, is in crisis, and Macron won the support of only 38% of voters in the second round of French elections.

The pandemic and Ukraine war have caused enormous economic dislocation. But Hannah made the point that the capitalist economy was already in crisis even before the pandemic, and had not recovered from the 2007-09 financial crash.

Socialist Party national committee member **Robin Clapp** later said the "world economy was on a precipice", with experts predicting slowdowns in growth or recession internationally. Any 'solutions' to capitalism's problems will increasingly create new problems and help prepare massive social explosions.

Hannah pointed out there is also a crisis in the leadership of the workers' movement internationally. However, some sections of workers are fighting back – in France where there were big May Day demos warning President Macron not to attack living standards in his second term.

The movement for left-winger

Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the first round of presidential elections can be replicated in other countries (see 'Mélenchon vote shows potential' at socialistparty.org.uk). The intensity of the crisis and the experience of left formations mean lessons can be learnt, and new formations can have a more explicitly working-class character.

Sometimes right-populists gain from the current vacuum in the workers' movement. But Hannah concluded on an optimistic note, that new working-class formations will emerge and help to build the forces leading the struggle for socialism.

### Climate change

Socialist Party members spoke in the discussion with points on South Africa, the Spanish state, France, and the escalating crisis throughout the Middle East. **Nathan Sharpe** from Nottingham commented on the effects that climate change will have on the global economy.

Concluding the discussion, **Tony Saunois** – general secretary of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), the socialist international organisation the Socialist Party is part of – pointed to mass movements in Sri Lanka and Argentina now putting a general strike on the agenda, which poses the need for workers to take power in society.

The discussion gave us the outlines of likely developments in the next period as a guide to action in building socialist ideas internationally.





## Socialist Party congress 2022

### Youth anger will burst out



Socialist Party youth organiser Theo Sharieff MARK BREST

In every session of the congress young members spoke, showing the growth of the Socialist Party among a new generation faced with the need to fight for a future.

Youth organiser **Theo Sharieff** introduced a discussion dedicated to this central plank of our party's work - boldly offering young people socialist ideas to fight for their future.

All the problems facing older workers - cost-of-living crisis, housing, etc - affect youth, sometimes even more sharply. The anger of youth will find an outlet somewhere, and our party is readying to participate wherever that anger explodes.

**Ferdy Lyons**, a hospitality worker from east London, spoke on how Unite the Union is organising in that industry - the largest employer of young workers. Unite is launching a workers' combine for all its members in hospitality. We will help that with our socialist ideas and methods to attract to the unions as many young workers as possible. Socialist Party members are building support for the Youth Fight for Jobs campaign alongside others.

Other speakers discussed how we fight alongside young workers in the

civil service and the NHS. **Tony Bligh** from Plymouth related the difficulty of working three jobs to clear debts accumulated during lockdown. The idea of a living wage of £15 an hour for all is vital to stop the exploitation of young workers 'earning' as little as £4.81 an hour.

**Amy Sage** from Bristol discussed the real challenges to organising among young people when the problems are many and the understanding of how to fight for a socialist alternative is relatively low.

Socialist Party members in the universities play leading roles in many Socialist Student societies. On campuses the official student organisations have abandoned the fight for free education and have not offered a lead on the fight against cuts, for women's safety or in solidarity with the UCU.

**Helen Pattison** - summing up on behalf of the Socialist Party executive committee - said that young members of the Socialist Party (and even 'less young' members) have a really important role to play in getting Marxist ideas and methods of organisation out among a new generation.

### Marxism and women's oppression in the new era

This final discussion was introduced by **Christine Thomas** for the executive committee. The Covid pandemic, she said, has further exposed the level and extent of women's oppression. Pre-existing inequality means women are still responsible for most household and caring tasks. And in the workplace, women workers are on average paid 20% less than men if they are in full-time work.

So when Covid struck, women were more likely to quit jobs and work less hours, while also juggling demands of home working, education and childcare. But lockdown has also had a radicalising effect on a layer of women, who are questioning why gender inequality is still so pervasive as well as moving into struggle against the bosses trying to make workers pay.

The pandemic was also the backdrop to the protests following the murder of Sarah Everard. Internationally, anger at the inequality caused by the 2007-08 economic crisis had spilled over into anger at all forms of inequality and injustice; the context for huge protests by women against issues such as gender

violence, sexism and reproductive rights. In the US the likely Roe v Wade overturn is provoking new protests.

Inherent in the current situation are more flare-ups and protests, including over gender inequality issues. Movements by women internationally in the last few years have won reforms, such as the right to abortion in Ireland, and Argentina.

But because of the economic crisis of capitalism, and the way the system is structured and organised, there are also limitations to movements that are restricted to changing the law and changing attitudes. Socialists have to intervene and try to orientate movements towards the working class and the trade unions, to also fight for concrete demands like equal pay, childcare, housing, refuges, health care etc, linking those to the struggle to change the system.

Class society is the root cause of women's oppression and only overthrowing capitalism will lay the basis for the ending it.

In the discussion, delegates spoke about how more women seem to be interested in our ideas; our interventions in the Sarah Everard protests

and campaigns against sexism and for women's safety; our proud history of fighting on issues of concern to women such as through the Campaign Against Domestic Violence in the 1990s, which was taken up by the trade unions, or the menopause campaign fought for in the teachers' unions.

**Bea Gardner**, a new parent, explained how under capitalism mothers face impossible challenges from the expense of childcare when going back to work and how some working-class women are debating whether it is financially worthwhile to go back to work after maternity leave. She and other parents are developing the socialist programme for parents!

**Faria Attique** from West London talked about the barriers facing women of a South Asian background and the patient work she is involved in to develop our socialist programme in a way that offers a way forward.

The final contribution from the floor came from **Lynn Gunnigle** from Devon, who joined the Socialist Party two years ago. Women, she said, are conditioned to feel useless, but the Socialist Party had empowered her.

**Sarah Sachs-Eldridge** summed up a "fabulous discussion", in which we had all learnt a lot. Every branch should now plan to continue this discussion - and all the discussions at Congress - as part of preparing the Socialist Party to be ready to offer a way forward to all those entering struggle.



MARY FINCH

### Southampton leisure centre saved

#### Now keep it in public hands



Save St Mary's campaigners SAVE ST MARY'S

#### PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SAVE ST MARY'S LEISURE CENTRE CAMPAIGN

News that Southampton Labour council intends to re-open St Mary's Leisure Centre is a victory for all those who have campaigned long and hard to protect this popular, well-used council leisure facility.

The defeat of the Tories in the Southampton council elections is in perhaps no small part due to their decision to close the leisure centre, sending a message that they do not value public services that we pay for through our council tax.

We hope this decision will encourage others in the city to fight to defend public services and to restore the damage inflicted in cuts over the last decade and more.

The key question that remains outstanding is how St Mary's Leisure

Centre is to be run and funded. Our campaign from day one made clear that we want a council-funded, council-run community leisure centre as the best way to ensure its future.

The Freedom of Information requests we made proved that the Tory propaganda was untrue. The attendance at the centre was rising not falling, the building was sound and not falling down, and maintenance costs were exaggerated to justify closure.

We have requested a meeting with the new Labour council to put our views forward, and call for no delays in the immediate reopening of the centre. Our thanks go to all those who supported our campaign in the community, local trade unions and especially the Socialist Party who launched this campaign and once again succeeded in preventing the closure of the centre.

### CWU begins to build for national action in Royal Mail

#### Vote 'yes' for a no-strings inflation-based pay rise

#### SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN CWU

The Communication Workers Union (CWU)'s social media is filling up with photos of defiant gatherings of postal workers all over the country holding up posters saying "vote yes" to action.

Negotiations over the 2022 pay deal have broken down. The CWU has activated the official four-week process, so that, unless a resolution can be found, the union can take industrial action.

Leaflets and posters are being distributed and gate meetings taking place.

In 2021 the CWU agreed a new 'Pathway to Change' agreement, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by CWU members in an individual ballot. The agreement included a pay deal for 2020 and 2021, but not 2022.

#### Profit and payouts at the top

The work of CWU members has transformed Royal Mail finances. In 2019, the bosses believed their losses would be around one billion pounds. Instead, Royal Mail made significant profit.

We were key workers during the pandemic, continuing to serve the public on the front line. Many

members suffered from Covid, possibly caught while working. We also suffered at the start from lack of PPE.

We had to implement changes to the work, which often meant the job was harder to perform. This included staggered attendance times to improve social distancing, and getting public transport to first delivery points. In fact, we introduced the biggest number of revisions in decades.

And Royal Mail achieved a pre-tax profit of £311 million in the six months to 26 September 2021. Revenue rose by 7% year-on-year to £6.1 billion.

On the back of this, Royal Mail awarded £400 million to shareholders!

Simon Thompson, CEO of Royal Mail, wrote to the CWU to say: "Our people have been exceptional through the pandemic to deliver for the country in such challenging circumstances and the cost-of-living pressures they face are real. We also acknowledge that our people have worked hard and have earned a pay rise."

And the offer? Nothing at all, unless we accept strings!

#### Pay cuts and strings for us

If we accept all the strings, we will get 2% backdated to April 2022. Once

all the strings have been introduced, we would get a further 1.5%, but not backdated.

RPI inflation is 9.4%! We have national insurance rises this month, energy prices have more than doubled and fuel is also increasing to record levels.

The strings include Sunday working no longer being voluntary, increased flexibility and annualised hours - so you work different hours depending on the volume of work, and overtime and finishing times are removed. They include a reduction of sick leave and a review of all allowances and supplements. They also include a two-tier workforce, with new starters on inferior pay and conditions.

The Pathway to Change agreement is clear that any proposed changes to working practices should be discussed with the union and should not be linked to pay.

We have been left with no alternative. The Royal Mail board has insulted all CWU members with a pay offer which is really a pay cut, and which is dependent on issues which have not even been mentioned over the last year.

Now is the time once again for all CWU members to rise up and fight for what we deserve.



PAUL MATTSOON

### Northampton - winning support for socialists in Unison

#### HARRISON CAIRNS NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Our Socialist Party branch is leafletting for elections in public sector union Unison. On 12 May, we were outside Northampton General Hospital. We handed out well over 100 leaflets.

The left won Unison's national executive elections last year. But the right wing still controls the health service group.

Nurses, admin staff, domestics, grounds staff, and doctors took our leaflets. A doctor eagerly listened to us. He took a leaflet and was going to talk with his colleagues about it.

A grounds staff worker, who heard me mentioning Unison, came over for a leaflet. A few minutes later, three of his colleagues came round to do the same.

With such a positive response, I'm sure support will grow for a true left leadership in our unions that really represents workers.

Unison health service group

elections run until 25 May. Socialist Party members Brian Loader (East Midlands), Adrian O'Malley (Yorkshire), John Malcolm (Northern) are standing, while Steve Bell (South East) has already been re-elected unopposed.

Read more at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)

#### Get all the latest union news...



A weekend of socialist discussion and debate on ideas to change the world

Ticket prices frozen at 2021 rates until 1 September

# SOCIALISM 2022

19-20 November

Queen Mary University, London

Includes Rally, Saturday 19 Nov, 5.30-7.30pm

Tickets and info: [www.socialism.org.uk](http://www.socialism.org.uk)

### SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	RECEIVED	TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2022	DEADLINE: 30 JUNE 2022
Eastern	1,019	1,200		85%
East Midlands	1,510	1,850		82%
Northern	553	750		74%
Southern & SE	1,183	2,350		50%
London	2,167	4,600		47%
Yorkshire	1,126	2,550		44%
South West	696	1,800		39%
North West	401	1,150		35%
West Midlands	830	2,600		32%
Wales	656	2,300		29%
Other	3,165	3,850		82%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,304</b>	<b>25,000</b>		<b>53%</b>

#### Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate) or call 020 8988 8777

or make cheques payable to Socialist Party,  
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



## TV review: Sex, Mind and the Menopause

NICKY DOWNES  
NEU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEU)

I was one of the few women that didn't watch Davina McCall's first menopause documentary 'Sex, Myths and the Menopause'. As a trade union officer for the National Education Union (NEU), it was such a busy time supporting education staff in schools around Covid. But some of my women friends raved about it and said it made them feel included.

I had high hopes then that the follow up 'Sex, Mind and the Menopause' would be worth watching and would push the boundaries on women's health.

To begin with it raised some really important points about women and work. The statistics are shocking: 44% of women say that menopause affects their work and one in ten women quit their job due to it.

The programme then featured a teacher who had been dismissed after menopause symptoms affected her work. At this point I expected Davina to talk about what women could do to be treated fairly at work - maybe mentioning their rights under the Equality Act - but all she referred to was how one manager had set up a successful menopause support group in a prison.

It was such a missed opportunity. A number of years ago, in a motion to the conference of the National Union of Teachers (a forerunner of the NEU), Jane Nellist and I raised the issue of how older women were losing their jobs in teaching and how this could be linked to menopause. We discussed how menopause is a workplace issue and that all schools should

have policies and make adjustments.

It shocked us at the time how little younger women knew about the menopause, and how little understanding there was among managers, particularly men. It was noticeable that Davina included no men in her programme. Menopause was seen as a purely women's issue.

I've continued to keep menopause on the agenda in both schools and the Local Authority in Coventry. One male trade union rep once said to me that menopause was the latest fad. He doesn't say that any more, and he's actually as vocal as I am in promoting the need for robust menopause policies.

I understand the focus on HRT and a medical approach to the menopause that Davina is promoting. It can be very beneficial, and we should be fighting for equal access to NHS resources for all women, and the trans and non-binary community. However, it is a choice to take HRT and not the panacea.

My mum had breast cancer that was directly linked to her long-term use of HRT. (She was also treated by the infamous surgeon Ian Paterson, but that's a whole other story). I chose not to take it during my menopause.

Davina McCall has achieved a great deal from raising the issues and educating women about the menopause. I just wonder if there should be another programme made that highlights how societal change and the work of trade unionists can bring about better working conditions for menopausal women that will also, of course, benefit all. Who doesn't need a well-ventilated workspace and easy access to toilets? Maybe the title just wouldn't be catchy enough.



Davina McCall: Sex, Myths and the Menopause CHANNEL 4

## Take the bereavement industry out of the hands of the profiteers



HARRISON CAIRNS  
NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

It's said that the only assurances we have in life are death and taxes. And in a capitalist system, they can be as cruel and emotionless as each other.

As a Unite the Union and Socialist Party member working in the bereavement industry, I see every day the stark contradictions between providing necessary support and services to grieving families, and the extortionate prices these services are provided for.

Looking at an industry that is dominated by private companies, from small individual funeral directors to big umbrella companies like Dignity and Funeral Partners, the end goal is profit for bosses and shareholders, while the everyday workers are paid minimum wage or, more correctly labelled, poverty wages.

I know, for example, that the cost of the gas for an entire week is covered with only two cremations. Seeing as some weeks we did eleven to fifteen cremations a day, the sheer amount of profit this lone site makes must be ridiculous.

Since the pandemic began, this industry has gone mostly unnoticed, as key workers working all hours provide a service requiring compassion

and care during a difficult time for families. Yet the treatment of a staff under this system is far from its front-facing facade.

With stressful targets demanded by bosses, funeral directors and staff work longer and longer hours, struggling to ensure that compassionate care and support is provided for the bereaved. It is unsurprising that people have been leaving the industry due to the mounting pressure and feeling unable to continue in such an environment.

In my own experience, I've worked to the small hours of the morning to ensure cremations are completed to the highest standard, only to be back in work by 7am for a new day, without even a thank you from management.

I've also seen colleagues bullied and belittled by management for not completing excessive workloads.

As a member of a union, I know I'm able and willing to fight. Yet this isn't the case for many of those trying to provide a service. This industry definitely needs union support.

Profiteering by these big companies and shareholders off the misery of families is inhumane and void of compassion and decency. The chance to grieve shouldn't be a privilege only for the wealthy; it's a need and should be the right of everyone.

I would say this industry needs local authorities to take branches of funeral directors, crematoriums and cemeteries in-house, so that an affordable, cost-effective service can be made possible for many more people.

I will be endeavouring to convince those I meet every day to fight for change, for better conditions and pay, and hopefully, in time, a whole new direction for this industry.

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## Israel: Brutal repression at funeral of murdered journalist provokes Palestinian rage

AMNON COHEN

Millions around the world were shocked and outraged by the video footage of baton-wielding Israeli police attacking the huge funeral of Shireen Abu Akleh, beating pallbearers until the coffin nearly fell to the ground. Shireen, one of the Arab world's best-known journalists, was shot by Israeli sniper fire while covering an Israeli special forces attack on the Jenin refugee camp - an area handed over to ostensible 'Palestinian rule' as part of the 1993 Camp David peace accords.

The initial Israeli government blaming of Palestinian fire for Shireen's death was debunked within hours by analysis of video footage. Other Israeli right wingers suggested that Shireen was no more than a paid propagandist for Israel's enemies, and from the moment she chose to enter a combat zone, she was fair game. But news coverage is a key battleground in the war. Video journalism of the kind pioneered by Abu Akleh has acted as a thorn in the side of the occupation, broadcasting footage of military atrocities and contradicting the official government narrative.

The Israeli state has tried to suppress such coverage. Over the years, many Palestinian journalists have been arrested for 'incitement', and TV stations have been shut down. At least 46 Palestinian journalists have been killed by the Israeli army since 2000. In May 2021, the Israeli air force destroyed the media offices of Al Jazeera in Gaza, which was broadcasting footage of devastation inflicted on ordinary Gazans by the Israeli military assault.

The footage of the Israeli police baton assault on Shireen's funeral graphically illustrates the nature of the Israeli occupation, showing the brutality which Palestinians experience on a day-to-day basis. Israeli capitalism has failed to resolve the national conflict, and attempts to achieve through police and military repression what it has failed to achieve politically.

If the shooting of Shireen was intended to suppress coverage of the Israeli assault on Jenin refugee camp, it did the opposite, propelling it into international headlines. The ferocious attack on the mourners graphically displayed the authorities' true attitude to Palestinians in general, and failed to deter tens of thousands who transformed East Jerusalem into a sea of rage and defiance.

### A government of change?

The right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu regime was removed from office in June 2021. A Trump-like figure, his 12-year rule was marked by corruption and the ratcheting up of the national conflict to shore up his support at home. Weekly mass demonstrations demanded his departure. But, as the Socialist explained at the time, the crisis in Israeli society was not the result of Netanyahu's personalty. Netanyahu's rotten regime



Photos of Shirin Abu Akleh in the streets of Jerusalem  
OSPF7/CC

was a reflection of the crisis of Israeli capitalism itself. A system run for the interests of the tycoons and corporations, which offered ordinary Israelis stagnating wages, the most expensive prices in the world and permanent warfare, could only shore up its base by a right-populist appeal to the most nationalist and racist elements in Israeli society.

Netanyahu was replaced by the so-called 'government of change' - a coalition led by former settler leader Naftali Bennett, spanning everything from the right-wing settler parties to the Israeli Labour Party,

the 'anti-occupation' liberal Meretz party, and the Islamist United Arab list. The glue holding this unlikely coalition together was their rejection of Netanyahu, and it survived by its left wing making continual concessions. The minister of public security (which bears ultimate responsibility for the brutal behaviour of the police at the funeral) is Labour politician Omer Bar-Lev.

The rise of this 'government of change' ended the protests for the removal of Netanyahu, but it did not end the brutal repression of the Palestinians, nor attacks on the living



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the international socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to. The CWI is organised in countries across the planet. We work to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against capitalism, and to fight for a socialist world.  
socialistworld.net

standards of Israeli workers.

One month ago, Israeli police stormed the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem arresting 400 and injuring 160. And recently the Israeli high court authorised the biggest confiscation of Palestinian land since 1967, evicting 1,000 Palestinian residents of Masafer Yatta in the West Bank.

The miserable conditions of ordinary Palestinians have only worsened. This year alone, over 50 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli military, including eight children. And after a period of relative calm, there has been a spate of individual terrorist attacks which have killed 18 Israelis.

The most recent was an axe attack by two Palestinians in the village of Elad, which killed three. These attacks appear not to have been planned or organised by any of the Palestinian organisations, but are individual actions of enraged individuals.

Socialists condemn such individual terrorist actions, (as well as the Israeli state terrorism daily inflicted on the Palestinian masses). These indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians cannot advance the struggle to end Israeli oppression, but can only serve to deepen the racism in Israeli society.

### Why is Palestine different?

Many Palestinians are asking 'why are we different? The world is outraged by the carnage in Ukraine, but is silent when we are killed.'

But the 'world' in this context is taken to mean the capitalist and ruling class, who have no concern for the horrific suffering of ordinary people, whether in Ukraine, Yemen, Palestine, or in their own counties. Their expressions of concern for Ukrainians are part of their propaganda war against Putin's gangster capitalist regime.

The brutal repression of the Palestinian masses will not be ended by the crocodile tears of capitalist politicians, by the United Nations, the so called 'international community' or 'international law'. It will only be achieved by the mass struggle of the Palestinian masses themselves. The first 'Intifada' (uprising) in 1987 and the enormous turnout to the funeral show the courage, determination and power of the masses when they are prepared to fight.

Capitalism means permanent war, repression and impoverishment for Israeli and Palestinian workers alike. Only by reviving the traditions of the first Intifada, the Arab Spring, and the Israeli social movement of 2011, and building united working-class movements, can the capitalist regimes be replaced by socialist societies, which will end the murderous brutality of the Israeli occupation.



# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY ELECTION: A POLITICAL TURNING POINT

## MILITANT LEFT (CWI MEMBERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND)

The results of the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 5 May mark a significant political turning point. For the first time since partition in 1921, a nationalist party has emerged with the greatest number of seats. The largest party in the Assembly holds the position of first minister, and the second largest party the position of deputy first minister. This means that Sinn Féin Vice-President Michelle O'Neill will become the First Minister in the new power-sharing executive when it is formed.

The positions of first and deputy first minister are co-equal in terms of powers, but Sinn Féin holding the first minister position is a hugely symbolic moment both for Catholics and Protestants. Most Catholics are in a celebratory mood while most Protestants are fearful for the future.

Every election in the North is treated as a mini-referendum on the constitutional future by the main parties and the media. The outcome of this election is undoubtedly a watershed moment, but it is important to register not just what has changed, but what has not changed. Sinn Féin has emerged triumphant, but its share of the vote only edged up by 1% - from 28% to 29% - and it returned with exactly the same number of members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) as before: 27.

It took pole position because of a significant fall in the vote of the major unionist or Protestant-supported party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The DUP dropped from 29% to 23.7%. As a result it lost four seats, and now has 25. The DUP lost votes to the more moderate Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), but many more to the hardline Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV).

It also lost the votes of many working-class Protestants who could not stomach voting for a party which has

delivered nothing on the economic and social issues.

The biggest winners in the election were the Alliance Party, which seeks to win votes from both Protestants and Catholics. In 2003, it won under 4% of the vote, but it gained 13.5% this time around, and more than doubled its number of seats. Traditionally, Alliance attracted an older and more middle-class vote, but this is clearly changing. Its right-wing economic policies (it is in favour of lowering taxes on big business and imposing water charges, for example) do not appeal to disillusioned young people seeking an alternative.

The trebling of its vote over the last 20 years is accounted for by several factors. It has taken votes from both the more moderate wing of unionism, represented by the UUP, and the more moderate wing of nationalism, represented by the SDLP. In some constituencies, Alliance will be seen by these voters as a better option than allowing a hardline party from the 'other community' to win the seat. It is not just that Alliance provides a home for softer nationalists and

unionists, however. It is now seen as the most credible alternative to the main sectarian parties for those who are sick of the politics of division. It took votes from the Green Party on this basis and, as a result, both Green Party MLAs lost their seats.

It is important to note that while Sinn Féin emerged as the largest party, the votes cast for all unionist parties remain ahead of the votes cast for all nationalist parties. The total nationalist vote was almost identical to the last election in 2017, at about 41%.

The unionist vote did go down, from 45% in 2017 to 43% of the vote, but it remains just ahead in both percentage terms and in the number of seats (37 v 36). As a result, the balance of forces has not tilted decisively, and Sinn Féin's demand for a border poll within five years will not gain enough momentum to force Boris Johnson's hand at this point. Nevertheless, Sinn Féin and other nationalists will raise the issue more than ever in the period ahead, and this will destabilise the situation even further.

The third winner in the election

was the TUV which, while it did not increase its seat tally (one only) it gained 7.5% of the total vote. One in six unionist voters now support its hardline positions on the Northern Ireland Protocol. Its vote is a clear indicator of the mood in Protestant areas and the dangers that lie ahead.

The TUV is closely linked to the forces which have mobilised for a series of anti-Protocol rallies over the last year. Alongside it on the platforms have stood a new generation of young loyalists who have the ear of a layer of young Protestants, both in rural and urban areas. The rallies have referenced historical events from the past when unionism armed and resisted by force or the threat of force.

The TUV vote will act as a check on the DUP if it tries to go into the executive with only minimal or cosmetic changes on the Northern Ireland Protocol. The DUP are seeking at least significant changes in the Protocol before they will consider going into government. The Protocol results in checks on goods passing from England, Scotland or Wales to

Northern Ireland. This has resulted in delays and some localised shortages but the real problem for Protestants is symbolic as it creates a new border in the Irish Sea. If Brexit had resulted in a similar hardening of the North-South border, there would also be turmoil and Sinn Féin would have collapsed the institutions.

In the short term, it is unlikely that a new executive will be formed. Boris Johnson is threatening to unilaterally set aside the Protocol. There may be a sudden development in the coming days, but it is also possible that negotiations will continue for months. Whatever happens next, the North will remain in a state of crisis. Previously, an executive had to be formed within eight days after an election and, if it was not, a new election would be called.

The period for negotiations has now been extended to six months. In the meantime, the law allows a shadow Assembly to meet and monitor shadow ministers who continue to exercise their functions, but this arrangement has now been thrown into crisis as the DUP has refused to nominate a speaker for the Assembly.

Politics will stumble on against a background of fractious negotiations, with the danger of Protestant anger being expressed on the streets in demonstrations. These could become larger and possibly result in street violence, as seen in the rioting last spring and summer. Catholics, even those who did not vote for Sinn Féin, will be angered by the delay. It will appear to them that the

DUP is determined to block the appointment of Michelle O'Neill as first minister.

Class issues like the cost-of-living crisis and housing were very prominent in the election campaign. Politicians from all parties felt obliged to reflect this in their material and in their media appearances. Much hot air was generated as politicians fell over themselves to promise the earth. These are the same politicians who delivered nothing over the last five years and most voters know they will deliver nothing on these issues over the next five if an executive is ever put back into place.

These are the contradictions of Northern Ireland politics. On a day-to-day basis Catholic and Protestant workers unite in their workplaces, and in community campaigns, and struggles together for a better future. Simultaneously, workers are divided on issues relating to identity and nationality. In this election, the divisive issues were dominant and ultimately determined the result of the election. The fact that one-third of voters did not vote at all, and that one and six of those who did voted for anti-sectarian parties is, however, significant.

Many of these are clearly turned off by the sectarian nature of politics and would be open to a political alternative that was both anti-sectarian and addressed the issues of low pay, job insecurity and weakened public services. If a credible anti-sectarian and cross-community party of the working class begins to develop, there is a large potential base to be won over.

## Cross-Community Labour



**If a credible anti-sectarian and cross-community party of the working class begins to develop, there is a large potential base to be won over**



Councillor Donal O'Cofaigh stood in the Assembly election for the constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. Donal was elected as a councillor in May 2019, and since then has established a high profile as a fighter for ordinary people. He stood as a candidate for Cross-Community Labour Alternative.

**Donal O'Cofaigh (left) with supporters on the campaign trail**  
MILITANT LEFT

This is a broad coalition in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, including activists who previously belonged to the British Labour Party during the years when Corbyn was leader, a group of activists in Dungannon who work with former councillor Gerry Cullen, and activists from the Committee for a Workers' International tradition, including members of Militant Left, to which Donal belongs.

The campaign was focused on class issues and gained a real echo. Two newsletters were distributed in all the major working-class areas, and a manifesto went into every home in the constituency. Despite the small team involved, most of the constituency was canvassed. The campaign was a success in that a clear socialist alternative was articulated and brought to the doorsteps across the constituency.

Donal won 602 votes which is a credible achievement given the circumstances. The vote achieved was a modest success given the huge pressures in what was a tense, high-stakes election. Fermanagh and South Tyrone saw one of the highest turnouts of any constituency as a reflection of sectarian polarisation, and it also saw the lowest total votes for anti-sectarian parties. There is little doubt that some voters who were looking to Donal returned to either sectarian camp in the privacy of the ballot box because of the pressures in wider society.

Donal lost votes to the Alliance Party which stood a candidate who did not live in the area, and ran a very limited campaign, but who still won 2,500 votes, carried along on the 'Alliance surge', which saw it increase its vote in all areas. Other potential supporters simply stayed a home as they

did not believe that Donal could win. All forces who are broadly 'on the left' suffered setbacks in the election across the North. The Green Party lost 20% of its vote and both its seats. People Before Profit, which stood on a left-nationalist platform, lost votes for the second Assembly election in a row. It managed to defend its single seat in West Belfast, but it has lost 40% of its vote since 2016, even though it stood in twice as many seats.

Donal's campaign team is looking to the future and considering how to approach the next local elections in 2023. The priority must be to defend Donal's seat, and nothing can be taken for granted. The possibility of standing other candidates across Fermanagh and South Tyrone is being considered. A slate of candidates, from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds, standing together on class issues, would send a very powerful message.

Cross-Community Labour was established in 2016 as a vehicle for those who believe that a mass left alternative can, and should, be built. It has stood candidates in several constituencies since 2016, but in this election Donal was the only candidate. It is possible that it will stand more candidates in next year's elections outside Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and wide-ranging discussions with others about this possibility are now essential.

Cross-Community Labour represents an idea: that Catholic and Protestant workers and young people have more in common than divides them, and a political united voice is necessary if we are to win a better life for all, and overcome the divisions in the working class. Only class politics offers a way forward.

Each election presents an opportunity to build support for this idea. Donal's stand on 5 May was another small step in the direction of independent working-class representation. Defending Donal's seat in next year's council elections, possibly alongside a slate of other candidates, is the next.



Stormont, the Northern Ireland Assembly building WRIGHT/CC



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# the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

# YOUTH PRICED OUT

## WHILE

## BOSSES PROFIT

## BUILD TRADE UNION-LED

## ACTION TO FIGHT FOR

## OUR FUTURE

## Mobilise a mass youth turnout to the TUC demo on 18 June

**A** major cost-of-living crisis looms over young people in Britain. Young workers make up the majority in some of the most precarious sectors, like retail, accommodation, and food services. The use of zero-hour contracts and discriminatory youth rates of pay is widespread.

We want independent and fulfilling lives of our own, but how can we move out of our family homes when rents are so high? How can we go to the places we want when petrol, or transport and bus fares, are simply unaffordable? After we graduate from university, how can we save for any kind of secure future when we're plagued by a lifetime of student loan repayments?

While the cost-of-living crisis makes life for us - the working-class majority - harder, the likes of supermarket chains, housing companies, and the energy and fuel giants make record profits. We say that the massive wealth hoarded by the top companies should be used to provide a decent future for all workers and young people.

But the super-rich won't just give away their wealth when asked. In order to make them pay up, the working-class majority in society must come together as a mass movement to fight for decent jobs, pay and homes for all.

Workers who are organised in the trade union movement give a glimpse of the way forward. The trade union movement - with 6 million members organised in workplaces across the country - is potentially the most powerful vehicle for mass collective struggle against the super-rich and their defenders within the political establishment.

More and more workers are organising in their unions to take strike action and fight against real-terms pay cuts. Unite the union members alone won £25 million in pay rises during the first 100 days of new general secretary Sharon Graham's leadership. HGV drivers in Liverpool and employed by Wincanton won 17% and 24% pay rises respectively after taking strike action. This isn't to mention the stand taken by JustEat couriers, bus and train drivers, university workers and others. These strikes prove when workers stand together we can take on the bosses and win!

For young people to resist the spiralling cost of living, we need to get organised too. That's why it's crucial young workers not only join, but get involved in, their trade union, and campaign for the action necessary to fight for our futures.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) - the body joining together all the trade unions in England and Wales - could play a vital role in fighting for young people's futures. It has organised a national demo on 18 June. Let's fight for a mass participation of young workers, to give our generation a glimpse of the full force of the trade union movement.

● **Youth Fight for Jobs campaigns for trade union action for young people's future. Find out more at [youthfightforjobs.com](http://youthfightforjobs.com)**