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TORIES OUT!

Editorial statement

The opening shots of a lengthy general election campaign have been fired by the main capitalist parties in Scotland and Britain.

The Tories are in crisis and heading for a huge election defeat. Unity has shattered as multiple factions emerge in a desperate bid to hold onto seats. Splits and divisions are growing over a range of issues – although Tory MPs are all in agreement that the working class should pay the price of the deepening capitalist crisis.

Plummeting opinion poll ratings for prime minister Sunak mean it is odds-on that a Starmer-led Labour government will come to power this year.

But Starmer has made clear that from day one a government he leads will act at the behest of the capitalist class, not the working class.

Gaza

Just look at his backing for the Israeli government's war on Gaza and particularly the priorities of US imperialism. Starmer's actions are a carbon copy of Tony Blair's slavish support for the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan after 2001. Corbyn's manifesto pledges of public ownership of mail, energy, and telecoms have all been ditched by Starmer. The overwhelming majority of anti-union legislation will remain on the books under a Labour government. 'Fiscal responsibility' – i.e. cuts – are the watchwords of a Labour leadership committed to capitalism.

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- ☐ **Nationalise the rip-off energy companies under workers' control**
- ☐ **Councils set no cuts budgets and fight Tory austerity**
- ☐ **£15 an hour minimum wage now**
- ☐ **Trade unions build a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme**

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TORIES OUT! - BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE



Striking local government workers protesting at Holyrood. Photo: Philip Stott



What we think

....continued from page 1

Starmer talks about an end to “politics fuelled by division”, to “moderate your political wishes” and to follow a “politics that aspires to national unity”. After a year in which workers have had to struggle together against the cost-of-living crisis while those at the top have continued to make massive profits, this amounts to putting aside our interests to keep the capitalist show on the road.

Because despite what Keir Starmer says, working-class people do have a

“common enemy” – the bosses that make massive profits out of us working for them each day.

Socialist Party Scotland is fighting for workers’ action in the workplaces and trade unions – to fight for the kind of collective action needed to get the pay rises we deserve.

We are organising with others the steps necessary for a mass party that represents our class interests. And all of this comes back to the need to change society, for workers ourselves to run society on a democratic socialist basis. This capitalist system is rotten to the core and we desperately need an alternative. So while millions will welcome the end of 13 years of Tory rule, the need to build a political force to represent the working-class majority is more urgent and acute than ever.

trade unions

The trade unions, with more than six million members across Britain, have been at the forefront of the working-

class fight back over the cost of living crisis. And it is precisely the trade unions – or a number of key unions – that can resolve the complete lack of political representation by acting to build a new workers’ party. Socialist Party Scotland has championed such a demand for years and we will continue to do so in the run-up to the general election.

One thing that will not change in 2024 is the unending squeeze on living standards faced by workers. Official inflation has fallen from its previous high point but prices are still rising way beyond the current levels of wages and benefits. The wave of strikes that we saw from the summer of 2022 on will therefore continue this year as trade unionists are forced to take action in pursuit of pay rises that at least match rising costs.

With energy bills rising again in January 2024, the demands for the nationalisation of energy companies under working class control and management are as vital as ever.

And the new Tory anti-union laws – the minimum service legislation – can also provoke action by the unions if it is used to try and prevent workers taking action in the run-up to an election.

The special congress of the TUC in December 2023 included developing “practical solidarity plans for unions actively engaged in strategies of non-compliance”, supporting “any worker subject to a work notice, including with support from across the trade union movement, if their employer disciplines them in any way”, and ensuring “that where any affiliate is facing significant risk of sanctions because of this legislation, we convene an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee to consider options for providing practical, industrial, financial and/or political backing to that union”.

Workers’ action against the MSL can render it utterly ineffective, not least because the Tories are weak, divided and staggering towards election defeat.

Starmer’s Labour and the neo-Blairites are clear that the working class

will have to pay the price of the economic crisis. In this they are as one with the leadership of the SNP and their partners in crime, the Scottish Greens.

The Scottish budget currently going through Holyrood is a finished recipe for the decimation of public services. The Scottish finance secretary, Shona Robison, has been explicit that: “We must reduce the size of the public sector”. And the scale of the cuts raining down on councils, the NHS and public services will do just that. Elected politicians must refuse to make cuts and set budgets to deliver for the needs of workers and communities.

While the nationalists, with some justification, blame Tory spending cuts – in reality its their own refusal to stand up to Tory austerity, set no cuts budgets and build a mass movement for full funding for services that is also a major contributory factor in the crisis.

Yet even under the SNP’s plans for independence it’s clear that cuts would continue. SNP first minister Humza Yousaf said recently: “I’m not selling independence as being an overnight change, that somehow the day after we become independent there will be rivers of milk and honey and the manna will fall from the sky. There will be challenges, of course, there will be difficulties.”

And the reason for this is the SNP leadership are committed to the continuation of capitalism in an independent Scotland. While Yousaf is correct to say that in the UK “living standards are also abnormally low”, why would capitalist independence offer a route to increased living standards if wealth and economic power was left in the hands of the bosses?

public ownership

What would certainly offer a way forward to ending low pay, poverty and inequality would be bringing the major sectors of the economy into public ownership under workers’ control and management.

The immediate introduction of a £15 an hour minimum wage without age exemptions. A massive programme of investment into housing, hospitals and public services to reverse decades of underfunding. In other words socialist policies to transfer back to the working class the enormous wealth and resources stolen from them and then squandered by the capitalist elite.

It is vital that policies like these and others are available at this year’s general election. Even if no new workers’ party is launched this year, Socialist Party Scotland will put forward candidates as part of the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to offer that alternative.

The building of a socialist alternative to the parties of capitalism is essential. The ongoing slaughter in Gaza and the denial of a genuine independent Palestinian state shows how the struggle for basic democratic rights are linked to the struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

While making the case for the trade unions to launch a new workers’ party, Socialist Party Scotland is also appealing to young people and workers to join with us. Help us build the fightback against capitalism and for a socialist future to end war, economic and environmental destruction.

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SOCIALIST WORLD
 Committee for a Workers' International
 Comité por una Internacional de los Trabajadores

Socialist Party Scotland is affiliated with the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI). The CWI is a Marxist and Trotskyist international with parties and groups in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the US and Europe. Find out more about us and our ideas:

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TUC Special Congress agrees plan to resist anti-union laws NOW TURN WORDS INTO ACTION



Below: Junior Doctors in England could be first to face action under the MSL.
Photo: Elaine Brunskill
Top: Keir Starmer's Labour will maintain most of the current anti-union laws.

Rob Williams

Just after the Special Congress of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) on 9 December, called to oppose the Tories' new minimum service levels anti-union legislation (MSLs), the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) tweeted: "The TUC, representing 5.5 million workers, has just agreed a campaign of resistance to the new anti-union laws at a Special Congress. Crucially, unions have agreed they will refuse to tell their members to cross picket lines, a clear act of defiance against the Act."

FBU general secretary and this year's TUC president, Matt Wrack, opened the congress by reminding delegates that the reason why Sunak's government is resorting to their latest attack on the right to strike is because workers are fighting back against the cost-of-living squeeze.

The FBU's motion to the annual Congress in September was one of the main drivers behind the special Congress. It set out what could be a fighting strategy against the MSLs, if implemented seriously. Central to that resistance is non-compliance: unions refusing to follow employers' instructions to police their own strikes and select workers to effectively break their own strikes.

At September's Congress, Matt revealed that the minimum levels in the fire and rescue service could be as high as 70%, and in control rooms 100%, meaning a ban on strikes in that area! Matt said to Special Congress that, while defiance could come with risks, given the stakes, the biggest danger was passivity.

statement

The TUC General Council had produced a statement which incorporates important elements of the composite motion passed in September. The points that must form the basis of a real plan of action include:

- Develop practical solidarity plans for unions actively engaged in strategies of non-compliance
- Support any worker subject to a work notice, including support from across the trade union movement, if their employer disciplines them in any way
- Ensure that where any affiliate is facing significant risk of sanctions because of this legislation, we convene an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee to consider options for providing practical, industrial, financial and/or political backing to that union
- Refuse to tell our members to cross a picket line
- Call an urgent demonstration in the event a work notice is deployed and a union or worker is sanctioned in relation to a work notice

However, real detail and intent is needed. The fact that the statement was moved and seconded by the right-wing general secretaries of shop workers' union Usdaw and public sector union Unison will raise concerns with many union reps about the seriousness and determination that is necessary. Members of those unions must now apply pressure to their leaders to hold them to their words.

One of the main weaknesses of the General Council's statement is that it didn't name the date for a national Saturday demonstration in the New Year.

This would be a vital step in mobilising workers as well as sending a clear message to the weak and divided Tory government that a real fight was on.

Instead, the statement proposed to "mobilise the whole trade union movement to march with the sacked GCHQ workers through Cheltenham on 27 January", 40 years after Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher took away trade union rights there.

But there is no contradiction in supporting this march and also calling a national demonstration. Such a demo was called for by an FBU rep in one of the two panel discussions, which included union reps and members who have been on picket lines over the last year.

Rail union RMT rep Jim Buchanan told Congress that striking rail workers had regularly overcome the undemocratic voting thresholds brought in by the Trade Union Act 2016 by then Tory prime minister David Cameron, now returned to cabinet office by Rishi Sunak.

In the debate, Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "This law puts the Tories at war with workers." She told delegates that Unite had changed its rules so that it is not limited by the law. "The easy part of today is to agree the statement, but hard part will be to act... Real solidarity may take us outside the law. As it was said in 1921 [by the Poplar councillors], it's better to break the law than break the poor."

Labour employers

But, as with a number of speakers, Sharon warned that they couldn't wait for Labour, especially with Starmer praising Thatcher, a reminder of his refusal to support strikes. Matt Wrack reminded delegates that Thatcher had destroyed working-class communities.

The statement demanded that an incoming Labour government honours its "commitment to repeal this legislation within their first 100 days of office". But it is essential that the unions make demands on Labour now where it is the employer.

Before the Congress, the TUC published a joint statement from a number of Labour mayors and council leaders opposing the MSL law. But with comments such as looking to "explore every possible option", they fall short of a categorical refusal to issue work notices. The unions must demand this.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch demanded that the Scottish National Party-led Scottish government and Labour-led Welsh government refuse to issue work notices, as well as Labour mayors such as Sadiq Khan in London. The TUC Special Congress has laid out a general plan of opposition and defiance to the MSL.

But it is essential that maximum pressure is built and maintained on the union leaders. A vibrant lobby of the Congress in pouring rain, called by the National Shop Stewards Network, attracted militant rank-and-file union activists, intent on fighting for the action that can win.

The strike wave of the last 18 months against the crisis-ridden Tory governments of Johnson, Truss and Sunak has seen the biggest level of action since Thatcher. It shows that should Sunak and any employers press the MSL button, if action is prepared and built seriously, the Tories can be defeated and thrown out.

CEO pay: Workers need pay rises"



Mihaela Ivanova

Tower Hamlets Socialist Party

As another year of crippling austerity begins, by the morning of Thursday 4 January, a FTSE 100 chief executive will have been paid more on an hourly basis than an average UK worker's annual salary of £34,963.

This disparity in wages is a glaring symptom of a system responsible for decades of increasing income inequality. Protected by the Tories, big business CEOs pocket absurd pay rises and bonuses at the expense of working people who have suffered through the longest wage squeeze in modern history. A City boss's average pay is a staggering 157 times higher than that of the average worker!

Many hope that things under a Labour government led by Keir Starmer would be different. But there is little chance that the 'iron-clad' fiscal discipline promised by Starmer will bring the desperately needed investment to the NHS, and other public services, and fund a pay rise for public sector workers.

Expect the continuation of what Tory rule has been – a government acting in the interests of profit.

Workers and young people have taken incredible steps to fight back against the rotten system that protects the interests of big business and profits over working-class interests. The resistance in 2023 is not lost as we walk into 2024 with more strikes, including junior doctors who have just concluded the longest strike in NHS history, and continued anti-war protests.

We need to fight for wages that rise at least with the cost of living and a minimum wage of at least £15 an hour, with no exemptions. We need a new mass workers' party to back up our fight for pay rises and to fight for socialist change.

Shipyard workers taking action

Electricians, labourers and cable hands employed by CBL Cable Contractors Limited based at the BAE Systems Govan and Scotstoun shipyards on the Clyde are due to take strike action, starting on 10 January until late March.

In November, the CBL Cable workers indicated their anger over the pay dispute by emphatically backing strike action by 100 per cent on an 88 per cent turnout.

Stevie Dillon, Unite regional coordinator, added: "CBL Cable workers are fully prepared to go on strike to get the 'shipyard rate'. They shouldn't need to go on strike to get what they are owed, but make no mistake, they are fully prepared to fight for what they should be automatically getting."

Energy costs up - nationalisation now

Energy bills are rising again in 2024. The energy regulator has increased the cap on average by £94 from January 1 2024, in response to rising global gas prices.

At the coldest part of the year, with households having to use more energy than usual, the reality is that the Tories are leaving millions to struggle with obscenely high bills, all so the energy companies can keep making gigantic profits. A recent YouGov survey found 34% of adults expect to struggle to afford their energy bills.

Meanwhile, the big energy suppliers are making hundreds of millions of pounds. British Gas profits soared nearly 900% in January to June 2023. The limited extra support is only available to those who receive means-tested benefits, something not all those struggling with bills receive.

The money the government does provide is coming from the Treasury

rather than from the profit-hoarding energy giants. It means we're paying through the nose for energy as well as our taxes funding energy companies' profits!

socialist alternative

Socialist Party Scotland will keep fighting for an end to this money-grabbing merry-go-round at the expense of hundreds of thousands of workers, pensioners, and students going cold in their homes.

The energy industry should be nationalised with no compensation to the bosses who have been siphoning money for years. And it should be run democratically on a socialist basis.

We would be able to invest in the improvements to infrastructure and provide the improvements needed to heat our homes efficiently. Only this will ensure energy security for all.

Cuts to mental health will devastate services

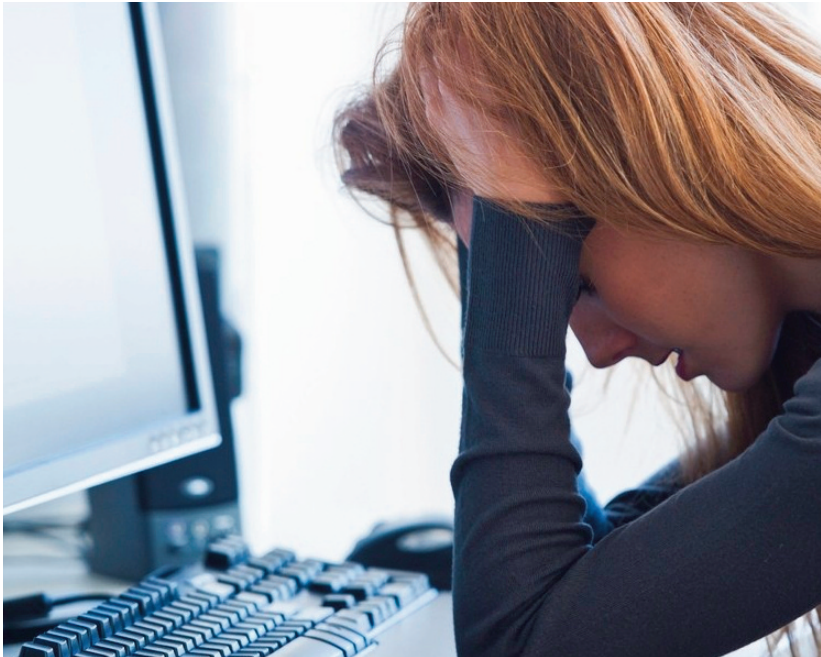


Photo JC Count/CC

Lynda McEwan

Psychiatrists and mental health organisations in Scotland have reacted with a mixture of disbelief and disappointment to the SNP/Green budget cuts to mental health services.

A staggering £30 million is set to be cut in 2024/25 including to programmes such as the Mental Health Outcomes Framework and the Mental Health Transformation Programme.

The Scottish government say they are committing to a 10% increase of NHS frontline spending for mental health by the end of this parliament, which if they were to achieve this would require an extra £180 million investment. But this is playing with figures as they are freezing and cutting funding for mental health services that are linked to NHS services such as in HSCP and in the third sector.

In all of these areas and in education there are staff shortages as thousands

are off sick or leaving often due to mental stress.

Finance secretary, Shona Robison has continually stated that she is being forced into making “tough decisions” which is capitalist politician speak for lacking the courage to stand up to Tory austerity. And when it comes to decisions, there are fewer tougher than having to turn away a patient in crisis due to lack of funding.

Crisis is precisely what mental health in Scotland is in. Calls to mental health helplines from people suffering from psychosis and alcohol related mental disorders have surged to disturbing levels. Young people, having gone through the challenges of isolation and anxiety due to the pandemic, are now facing long waiting lists to be seen by CAHMS who are struggling to catch up with referrals from as far back as 2018.

The continuing cost of living crisis has also impacted mental health in Scotland alongside the precarious economic outlook, increase in wars, threat

of environmental destruction and the rise of the far right.

The situation has gotten so bad that Police Scotland say that they are having to pick up the slack of a failing mental health system. Every month they attend around 20,000 mental health incidents.

In December last year police were called to a man in distress. They spent two hours unsuccessfully trying to get him help but stayed with him until they felt he was well enough to be left alone. Unfortunately an hour after leaving they learned he'd taken his own life. This is an incredibly sad indictment of where budget cuts leads to.

Police Scotland, found to be systematically sexist and racist in a report last year, are definitely not the best placed to deal with these issues, particularly as women and refugees are more at risk of mental health problems. The police themselves are also dealing with budget cuts, station closures, pay freezes, falling officer numbers and lack of training and have called for the Scottish government to commission a review of the whole system relating to mental health.

17 organisations have formed a coalition to call on the Scottish government to urgently increase funding to mental health.

The SNP/Green's could set needs based budgets across Scotland, providing the money these organisations desperately require. They could organise a mass campaign to fight for the funding Scotland needs from Westminster, standing up for once against the Tories and their rotten profit ridden system. The trade unions should also play an important role in fighting for workers mental health needs.

In cities like Glasgow, fighting socialist led branches like Glasgow City Unison have a record of defending services.

There is more than enough wealth in society to adequately fund the services to tackle head on the crisis of capitalist alienation that causes such seriously debilitating conditions.

Scotland's housing crisis demands emergency action



Walter Baxter / Langlee Housing Estate / CC BY-SA 2.0

Chris Sermanni
Glasgow City UNISON convener

There is a large scale housing crisis in Scotland. A number of factors have coalesced, including continued local government cuts, the cost of living crisis and decisions taken by the Tories in Westminster, that mean that an already precarious position is on the precipice of breaking point.

In answer to this, three local authorities have taken the unprecedented step of formally declaring a 'housing emergency'; Argyll and Bute, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Argyll and Bute cite a post-pandemic increase in demand for housing, and a diminishing availability of housing choice.

The situation is even more acute in Scotland's two largest cities. Edinburgh declared their emergency in November last year and reported that around 5000 households were in temporary accommodation.

It was also stated that around 200 bids were made for each socially rented tenancy that becomes available, highlighting the massive shortfall in the number of tenancies required to move households in to permanent accommodation. The availability and cost of private rented accommodation is out of control in the city, with rental inflation at 13.7% - the highest in the UK.

Glasgow followed suit in later in November last year. Glasgow declared it had around 5200 open homelessness cases in the city. As with other local authorities, Glasgow has a significant post-pandemic increase in demand for homelessness services, in tandem with the broader societal cost of living crisis. It is estimated that this increase is around 25%.

Homelessness services were already under significant strain, and last year UNISON and GMB submitted a workload grievance on behalf of their members as a consequence of the overwhelming increase in their workload as a consequence of this.

Rough sleeping in the city has increased significantly, consequent of a cut in emergency accommodation funding by the Scottish Government in late 2022.

These 'housing emergency' declarations are a cry for help. Local authorities in general are at breaking point due to over a decade of Tory austerity, which has been largely passed on by the SNP and Greens at Holyrood.

The most recent Scottish Government budget does not go close to offering resources to address the problem. Some money was set aside for homelessness, but falls significantly short of what is needed, and does not come close to mitigating existing shortfalls in funding.

Significantly more alarming is the decision taken to cut the affordable

housing budget by £200m, around 26% of the overall budget. The vast majority of houses built by this fund are socially rented tenancies, and therefore an intrinsic requirement to address the country's housing crisis.

Homelessness charity Shelter summed up this decision: “Instead of rising to the challenge of ending Scotland's housing emergency, the Scottish Government has chosen to make it worse.”

The Tories recent decision to accelerate their asylum decision making process has dire financial consequences for asylum dispersal cities, such as Glasgow.

By speeding this process up, a significantly increased number of positive asylum cases will require emergency accommodation, and also permanent accommodation. This accelerated process comes with no additional funding from the Home Office. Glasgow alone estimates they will have an additional 1000 households, at a costs of tens of millions of pounds, devastating the HSCP budget.

Glasgow has a proud reputation as a city that welcomes asylum seekers, and has been enriched culturally over the years by this fact. The Tories callous and reckless approach to asylum decision making, and asylum seekers in general, leaves those seeking refuge in the city vulnerable to the far right and the Tory press who may seek to exploit the situation.

capitalism has no answers

The truth, of course, is that the political choice to embark on a planned and sustained attack on public spending has led to services being drastically underfunded and an alarming shortfall in the resources needed to tackle homelessness for the working class in this country, and asylum seekers alike. A united working class struggle for homes for all led by the trade unions is needed to cut across racism.

Capitalism has no answers to this crisis. The chairman of NatWest highlighted the fantasy-like world the bosses live in by declaring that it's not that difficult to buy a house in the UK today. Ordinary people face a choice of paying eye watering sums for private lets, paying a significant deposit and increased mortgage rate for a house, or adding their name to a waiting list for a socially rented home, often waiting several years to be made an offer. For many, there are in fact no real choices at all. The solution to the housing problem lies with socialism.

End all cuts and fund needs budgets to local authorities, combined with a mass programme of quality, affordable council house building to provide enough homes for all.

DEBT, LOW PAY, MENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING BUILD THE SOCIALIST FIGHT BACK



Daniel Lauchlan

Youth in Scotland encounter significant obstacles, as evidenced by striking statistics that emphasise the need to tackle these problems with a socialist programme.

The expense of education, a crucial problem, has witnessed a threefold increase in university tuition fees for international students and large increases in student debt for Scottish students over the last decade. As per the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the amount of debt owed by students

in the form of loans has reached an astonishing £121 billion. This significant financial burden is negatively impacting the economic prospects of young people.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) reports that almost 3.5 million workers in the UK are involved in precarious work arrangements, which exacerbates the challenges they face.

The gig economy, which is defined by temporary and flexible employment, has a disproportionate impact on young people, restricting their ability to get steady employment and receive adequate wages.

The housing crisis is clearly manifested by the sharp decline in homeownership among young people, which has decreased from 59% in 2004 to a mere 37% in 2019, according to data provided by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

The escalating rental expenses worsen the problem, forcing several young people into unstable living arrangements.

Mental health challenges are rampant among the youth, with the Mental Health Foundation reporting that 70% of young people in the UK have experienced mental health issues, often exacerbated by societal pressures and economic uncertainties.

While the NHS remains a major gain

by the working class, chronic underfunding and increased demand have strained the system. A British Medical Association (BMA) report highlights that mental health services for young people face a significant funding gap, hampering timely access to crucial support. Young Socialists and Socialist Students gives full support to the striking BMA junior doctors in England.

In terms of social safety nets, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) reveals that welfare spending on young people has been consistently reduced over the past decade, leaving them vulnerable to economic shocks without adequate support.

These statistics underscore the pressing need for a socialist programme to address the structural inequalities and systemic challenges caused by capitalism which is incapable of providing for accessible education, stable employment, affordable housing, robust healthcare, and a comprehensive social safety net.

- ☐ For a £15 an hour minimum wage and trade union rights for all workers
- ☐ For free, fully publicly funded education and living grants for all
- ☐ We want a socialist future, take the banks, big companies and industries into democratic public ownership under the control of the working class

SNP-Scottish Green budget takes an axe to public services



SNP Finance secretary Shona Robison. Photo: Scottish Parliament/CC

Philip Stott

December's SNP – Scottish Green draft budget has delivered a devastating blow to public services in Scotland that were already locked into a spiralling crisis.

An estimated £1.5 billion shortfall has been bridged by a combination of, overwhelmingly, cuts to spending and some tax increases. A new 45p tax band has been created for those earning over £75,000. But overall the modest tax hikes for the richest 5% will contribute a paltry £80 million a year.

The SNP Finance secretary, Shona Robison, even before the budget was unveiled had declared war on the public sector. We must “reduce the size of the public sector”, she insisted. Speak-

ing to the parliament, Robison stated: “Quite simply we cannot spend money that we do not have, and we cannot mitigate every cut made by the UK Government.”

So, as always, the SNP with the support of the Scottish Greens have voted to pass on Tory austerity. Capital spending will be slashed. On paper, funding for the NHS and local government goes up but real inflation and with health, social care and council services stretched to breaking point, a tsunami of cuts in local government is certain in the new year.

Even before the budget a quarter of councils feared they will not be able to balance their budgets next year.

A Local Government Information Unit study found that it was “only a matter of time” before one effectively went bankrupt. All councils who re-

sponded said they were planning spending cuts and 97% said they would be hiking fees and charges.

With £1 billion extra money needed for councils “just to stand still”, the underfunding of the so-called council tax freeze will add yet further cuts to local government budgets.

Funds for housing are to be reduced by £200 million. Glasgow and Edinburgh councils having already declared housing emergencies amid rising waiting lists and homelessness levels at record numbers. The social impact of these cuts will be catastrophic.

Parents with children who declare themselves homeless can now face a wait of more than a year before a permanent home is available. In Edinburgh, the average wait for families is 611 days while those in Glasgow wait 381 days.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations responded: “Today's budget is an absolute hammer blow for tackling homelessness and poverty across Scotland and will have long-lasting consequences for the nearly 250,000 people throughout Scotland stuck on a waiting list for a social home, as well as for existing tenants and the housing associations which support them.”

Rail (£120 million) and colleges and universities (£100 million) will also face cuts.

Professor Richard Murphy, writing in the pro-Scottish government National newspaper, commented: “Let me be blunt. In this situation the SNP government in Holyrood is in much the same position as the very large numbers of English councils, who now seem to be queuing up to declare bankruptcy.”

Certainly the SNP and Scottish Greens are guilty of political bankruptcy in the face of a capitalist crisis that is deepening for the working-class majority.

Robison warned trade unions recently that there was a “relationship between head count and pay”.

A clear warning to local government workers that any future pay rises will be paid for by more job losses and service cuts at a time when many council services are already cut to the bone.

The 4.3% increase in the NHS budget for health boards will be a cut in reality with real inflation still at stubbornly high levels.

The number of people in Scotland who waited 24 hours or more in A&E in the first half of 2023 was more than 250 times higher than in 2019.

The number waiting more than eight hours rose from 11.9 to 15% of patients, while those waiting more than 12 hours rose from 5.3 to 6.7%.

Robison insisted that the Scottish government had no choice but to accept cuts.

But a left government standing on socialist policies at Holyrood could fight the with savage cuts from Westminster. (see article below)

SNP leader backs US/UK bombing campaign in Yemen

Amidst the US/UK opening of a new front in the Middle East with the recent air assault on Yemeni Houthi militias, the SNP's Westminster leader, Stephen Flynn, said the party supports the action.

Speaking on the BBC, the Aberdeen South MP said it was important to “defend freedom of navigation” and claimed it was “vital to prevent further increases in the price of goods during a cost of living crisis.”

He reserved criticism of the Tories for the fact that parliament had not been re-called before the military assault and the possible repercussions that may follow.

Given the SNP's calls for a ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza war, many may find the SNP's position nonsensical. In reality, the attack on the Houthis will only increase the pressure towards a growing regional conflagration.

In truth, the SNP leadership's intervention reflects the fears of big business that the targeting of the Red Sea by the Houthi militias will cause significant economic problems for world capitalism.

A socialist attitude, in contrast, can give no support to imperialist interventions. The SNP leadership have a record of being pulled into backing the major powers, not least in the Afghanistan war following 2001.

Only a struggle for the overthrow of capitalism internationally, including the establishment of a democratic socialist federation of the Middle East can offer a way out of the nightmare.

A socialist approach to fighting cuts

Socialists stand for budgets based on the actual needs of workers and communities. That means rejecting the lie that there is no money to adequately fund vital services and the jobs of workers who deliver those services.

Just look at the profits being made by the corporate giants and the wealth accumulated by the super-rich over the past decade alone. In addition, billions have been found by the Tories and Labour to fund the wars in Ukraine, Iraq and Afghanistan.

A socialist approach would involve setting a needs-based budget at Holyrood that fully funds local government, the NHS, housing, transport, social security benefits, wage rises that at least match inflation etc.

It would also allow for a reversal of the more than decade of austerity inflicted on public services. The level of funding required for such a budget can be worked out through consultation with the trade unions in those services, local authorities, elected councillors, community organisations and so on.

Inevitably, there would be a sizeable gap between the funding available

from Westminster and the needs-based approach of a socialist government, or a council. But by setting out clearly and well in advance the amount required to deliver a needs budget, and the amount likely to come from Westminster alongside revenue from tax, a mass campaign to demand that government fund the difference can be built.

Such a campaign would involve mass demonstrations and protests, the building of coordinated strike action – for example a one-day general strike by the trade unions to apply pressure on in this current case a weak, divided and terminal Tory government staggering towards defeat at the next general election.

The response of the SNP, Labour, the Scottish Greens et al when this strategy is put forward – including for no cuts/needs budgets at council level – is to claim we do not have the powers. That is as big a lie as the idea that there is no money for public services or wage rises.

The power to fight for increased funding by mobilising mass struggle by the working class is always there. Its the

political will that is missing from the pro-capitalist parties who see themselves literally as a conveyor belt for cuts while patting themselves on the back for ‘balancing the books’.

As Socialist Party Scotland has explained many times, councils and the Scottish government have real powers. Powers over borrowing – particularly local government – reserves and the use of normal financial mechanisms like capitalisation which allows for funding of some day to day spending from capital budgets.

Trade unions in many areas across Scotland, especially those influenced by a socialist approach, demand no cuts budgets every year from councillors. They explain how a one-year no cuts budget could be used to help build a mass movement for increased funding by mobilising the working class.

This was exactly the approach taken by the socialist-led Labour council in Liverpool between 1983 and 1987. The council adopted a strategy proposed by Militant supporters – the forerunner of the Socialist Party – that refused to make the cuts demanded of it by the



Thatcher government.

Liverpool road

The councillors set a budget to expand council house building, invest in sport centres, schools, nurseries and job creation. This meant setting a deficit budget and demanding the Tories give Liverpool back some of the money stolen from it during the previ-

ous years. In the end, after a series of mass demonstrations and a city-wide general strike,

Thatcher capitulated, and Liverpool in 1984 won major increases in funding that helped transform the lives of working-class communities in the city.

Imagine if MSPs and councillors today were to adopt such a fighting approach to opposing cuts and demanding increased funding.

Even if one council in Scotland were to take the ‘Liverpool Road’ it would electrify and transform a terrain which has seen every single council – of any and all political colour – capitulate to austerity.

That's why the building of a new political force in Scotland, and indeed throughout Britain, is an urgent task. Were the trade unions to help launch a new workers' party that adopted a socialist approach on cuts – that stood in elections on a policy of making big business pay not the working class.

As we go into the new year and new rounds of austerity budgets in local government, health and social care, we will step up the demand for an end to the cuts agenda, for fully-funded services and the building of a mass working-class political vehicle to fight for these policies.

RED CLYDESIDE: A HIGH POINT OF WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE

Red Clydeside - the period between 1911 and 1919 - marks one of the highest points of the class struggle in Scotland. Moreover, a period where socialists and Marxists, including John Maclean, played a central role. **Brian McLelland**, a member of Socialist Party Scotland, looks back at the events of the time.

Red Clydeside refers to a significant era of the labour movement in early 20th-century Scotland, centred around Glasgow and the River Clyde industrial area. This period holds great importance for socialists today, offering inspiration and valuable lessons for ongoing industrial struggles.

The key lesson of Red Clydeside is the critical potential power of the working class to challenge and overthrow capitalism. Several notable events unfolded during this era, including rent strikes in 1915, huge anti-war demonstrations, a massive engineering workers' strike in January 1919, and the Battle of George Square later that month.

Red Clydeside emerged with the 1911 strike at the Singer factory in Clydebank – the world's largest sewing machine factory at the time. The unfair dismissal of three women workers resulted in a strike by 12 women workers on the morning of 21 March 1911.

The strike quickly gained solidarity, with over 10,000 workers striking by noon, even without trade union involvement. However, due to a lack of leadership and collective organisation, the strike failed to achieve a victory, and 400 leading activists were dismissed. Despite the defeat, the strike showcased the spirit of class solidarity and foreshadowed future struggles.

From 1910 to 1914, Clydeside experienced a surge of industrial action. Working days lost to strike activity in this period were four times the level recorded for 1900-10. Previously acquiescent groups of workers became increasingly radicalised, with women and unskilled workers playing significant roles.

Trade union membership rose sharply, with the number affiliated to the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) rising from 129,000 in 1909 to 230,000 in 1914.

housing

While British capitalism was leading the way internationally with its mighty productive forces generating colossal profits for the owners of the shipyards, steelworks and coal mines, the working class was forced deeper into poverty. Glasgow was known as 'the engine room of Britain' for its concentration of heavy industry. However, those workers tending 'the engine room' were living in terrible conditions as the city failed to accommodate its hugely increasing workforce, with overcrowding and poor sanitation rife. The population expanded from 200,000 in 1851 to around one million in 1911.

As war broke out in 1914, thousands of working-class men left their homes to join the armed forces, being led to the slaughter in the name of protecting the

profits and stature of the British Empire. The war machine required vast production in the arms industry, which led many thousands of other men and their families to move to the city to provide the required workforce. Meanwhile Glasgow's housing stock was stagnating. The developing housing crisis worsened, with landlords seizing the opportunity to increase rents. Many families, especially those with absent main wage earners serving in the war, could not afford the higher rents. The housing stock was increasingly overcrowded and dilapidated – in the years 1912-15 alone, the population of Glasgow increased by 65,000 while only 1,500 new housing units were constructed.

Soon after the rent increases, eviction orders were being put in place as well as intimidation tactics by landlords. In response, local people in Glasgow organised a widespread campaign against evictions and rent increases. The Glasgow Women's Housing Association, led by figures like Mary Barbour, spearheaded the rent strike movement courageously. The first rent strike took place in Govan, with tenants staging mass demonstrations against evictions. Similar protests erupted in various areas around the city, culminating in large-scale demonstrations of up to 25,000 people in the city centre.

While the organised labour movement supported the rent strikes, direct involvement only came when attempts were made to break the strikes by targeting strikers' wages through arrestment orders. 18 strikers were summoned by the Small Debt Court. Thousands of shipyard workers showed solidarity by downing tools and marching alongside 'Mrs. Barbour's Army' to the court where the case was being heard. The pressure exerted on the authorities resulted in the abandonment of the court proceedings and the implementation of a Rent Restrictions Act, securing a victory for the working class. And although the act itself was only meant to be in place until six months after the end of the war, certain sections of it were not actually repealed until Thatcher's third term in office!

John Maclean

Red Clydeside witnessed influential anti-war activism driven by the working class. The Clyde Workers Committee (CWC) emerged as a key force, uniting Clydeside workers against repressive legislation like the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 and the Munitions of War Act 1915. Led by trade unionist Willie Gallacher, the CWC represented workers in shipyards and engineering works in Glasgow. Revolutionary socialist John Maclean and his political allies aided the CWC, countered media attacks on striking workers, exposing government and



The Battle of George Square - January 31, 1919

employer hypocrisy in prioritising profits over workers' lives through weekly and sometimes daily bulletins. Maclean was always calling for the industrial struggle to be backed with a proper political struggle for socialism, including building a revolutionary party to carry out that strategy.

However, as he was not directly involved in the trade unions and workers' committees (although he was often invited to participate in workers' meetings and taught Marxist economics to hundreds of shop stewards from the factories and yards) his influence could only go so far. Gallacher, on the other hand, followed a more syndicalist approach, believing industrial action alone could achieve socialism, which proved problematic later.

The Women's Peace Crusade, spearheaded by Helen Crawford, Mary Barbour, Agnes Dollan, and Mrs Ferguson, emerged as another significant anti-war vehicle. It focused on grassroots, working-class activism, diverging from the middle-class-oriented Women's International League. They organised open-air meetings and demonstrations in work-

ing-class communities, culminating in a major march to George Square on 17 December, 1917, where they broke through police cordons to occupy the City Chambers.

Significant events in Russia in 1917, starting with the overthrow of the Tsar in February and particularly the working class taking power in October led by the Bolsheviks, rejuvenated the revolutionary spirit of Red Clydeside. A massive May Day demonstration of around 80,000 people championed the defence of the Russian Revolution, socialism in Britain, and the release of John Maclean, who had been imprisoned in early 1916 for his anti-war propaganda.

The ruling class feared Maclean's influential Marxist teachings that inspired Glasgow's working class. Eventually the determined campaign to free Maclean was granted its aim – the demonstrators all marched to Duke Street prison to celebrate their victory.

Maclean and other workers' leaders on Clydeside ardently supported the Bolsheviks and vocally advocated for their cause. Maclean's appointment as Russian Consul in early 1918 further in-

tensified support, and a massive march and demonstration followed.

However, Maclean was arrested again in April 1918, and sentenced to five years in prison for sedition. Maclean made his own defence in the court and gave a famous speech from the dock, which included the immortal words: "No human being on the face of the earth, no government is going to take from me my right to speak, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. I am not here, then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot."

The Glasgow May Day demonstration in 1918 shared similar goals as the previous year but now took place on a working day, bringing many workers out on strike. They expressed support for the Bolshevik government, demanded an immediate end to the war, and called for Maclean's release with increased fervour.

Later in 1918, the workers achieved the aims they had been campaigning for so courageously, with the armistice signed on 11 November, and Maclean released from Peterhead Prison seven



From 1910 to 1914, Clydeside experienced a surge of industrial action. Working days lost to strike activity in this period were four times the level recorded for 1900-10.

advocating a 30-hour week.

However, the leadership of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) ignored the workers' position and negotiated for a 47-hour week with employers.

This led the CWC to organise a shop stewards' conference demanding a stronger campaign for a 30-hour week, which resulted in a compromise of a 40-hour week demand. The conference also agreed to call for a general strike on 27 January 1919.

The response to the general strike call was overwhelming, with 40,000 workers from Clydeside factories and engineering works out by 29 January. Miners from nearby regions joined in with solidarity strikes, and discharged servicemen served as flying pickets, expanding the action.

The ASE and miners' union leadership opposed the strike but couldn't assert much influence. Striking miners occupied their union headquarters, demanding support for a general strike.

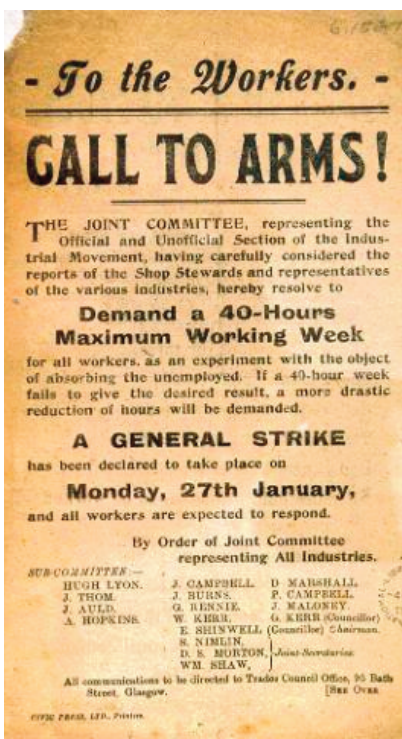
George square

On the Wednesday, another rally took place in George Square wherein the Lord Provost met with the strikers' delegates. They were promised representation to the government and asked to return on Friday for a response. However, this turned out to be a critical mistake, the ruling class began actively drawing up plans to break the strike as they feared it spreading across Britain. 100,000 workers in Belfast were already striking for a 44-hour week.

On Friday 31 January, tens of thousands of workers assembled in George Square to hear the negotiation outcome. Police surrounded the square, and at 12.20pm, they launched a fierce baton charge, attacking and arresting CWC leaders Davie Kirkwood, Manny Shinwell, and Willie Gallacher. Accounts vary on the police charge with some saying it was unprovoked, others that it was from workers raising the red flag above the crowd, others that it was from strikers forcibly stopping trams running through the adjacent streets. At any rate, the police were fully intent on intervening to break the strike.

Despite the attack, the demonstrators stood their ground, engaging in battles with the police and eventually driving them back. They regrouped and marched, with ex-servicemen leading, to Glasgow Green where the police awaited.

Again, the strikers fought back, forcing the police to retreat. The government had ordered troops into the city to re-



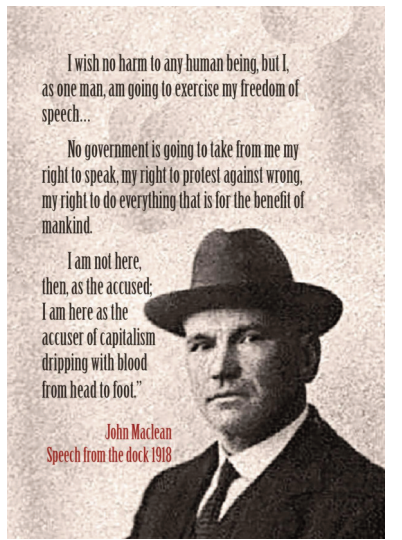
Above: Working-class women marching against rent rises in 1915. Left: The official notice of the declaration of a general strike in January 1919

hours, the movement faced increasing challenges as the revolutionary wave post-1917 ebbed for a period.

Repressive measures and anti-working class legislation from the ruling class, coupled with its influence on the bureaucratic trade union leadership, also contributed to the movement's decline. Although a couple of years later it erupted at an even higher level during the 1926 general strike in Britain.

We must continue to organise against such measures and unite in struggle across the board to fight for the socialist transformation of society, taking inspiration from the legacy of Red Clydeside.

The industrial base on the Clyde has diminished since those days but the basic chorus of united struggle against the bosses for a fairer, socialist society must be remembered and brought to life once again, to reverberate throughout the various public and private sector disempowers we encounter today.



Above: The back cover of the Socialist Party Scotland pamphlet Red Flag Over the Clyde by Jim Cameron. Email info@socialistpartyScotland.org.uk for a copy.



WE ALL NEED A PAY RISE!
"I KEEP UP THE FIGHT FOR REDUCTION IN MY RENT"
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PCS election result shows the battle for the future of the union is on



Marion Lloyd (at front) on a PCS picket line. Photo: Rob Williams

After a hard-fought campaign the results of the PCS general secretary and assistant general secretary elections were announced in late December.

Fran Heathcote was elected general secretary with 10,340 votes. Marion Lloyd, a Socialist Party member standing on behalf of the Broad Left Network grouping in the union, lost by just 783 votes, with 9,557 votes.

Marion's vote is an indication of the strong mood among PCS activists for the union to take a more fighting stance on behalf of its members. Fran Heathcote's victory was narrow, despite being the 'continuity candidate'; currently national President of the union and backed by the outgoing general secretary Mark Serwotka.

The turnout in the election was very low, 11.5% compared to 18.6% in 2019.

This undoubtedly reflects a feeling of disappointment among many members at the weakness of the union's leadership over the past period. Nonetheless, an important layer of activists drew the conclusion that they needed to vote in order to get the campaigning leadership the union needs.

The mood for change was also reflected in the re-election of John Moloney as assistant general secretary, with 11,705 votes compared to 8,152 for his opponent, an unelected full-time official of the union, who was also backed by Mark Serwotka.

John and Marion stood on a joint 'action not words' ticket, pledging to campaign to rebuild the PCS's national campaign on pay, pensions, redundancy rights and jobs, including fighting for a 10% pay rise and a £15 an hour

minimum wage. Both also pledged to remain on their civil service wages, and to donate the rest of their salaries to union campaigns.

Over the last two years we have seen the biggest fall in living standards since the 1950s. For civil servants, like many others, that has come on top of a decade of real-terms pay cuts. Trade unionists have responded with the biggest and most sustained strike wave for three decades.

Many have drawn important lessons from that experience, including the need to elect militant fighting leaderships. However, electing fighting national leaders is only one step to strengthening and transforming our trade union movement.

Socialist Party members in PCS will be campaigning as part of the Broad Left Network for the election of a team of National Executive Committee members on the same campaigning policies as we fought on in this election, as part of a campaign to strengthen the union at every level.

That will be vital, because, as Marion has argued, it is clear that – whoever is in government – workers are going to have to fight for decent pay, conditions and public services.

Keir Starmer's Labour is not offering anything fundamentally different. Starmer has retreated from almost all the anti-austerity pledges contained in the 2019 Labour manifesto under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.

He has even praised Maggie Thatcher, whose crimes against trade unionism included banning the predecessor of the PCS, the CPSA, from GCHQ.

Trade union leaders who are prepared to defend workers interests whoever is in government are going to be vital in 2024 and beyond.

Campaign to build a fighting UNISON

Jim McFarlane

Dundee UNISON branch secretary (personal capacity)

UNISON members in Scottish local government voted to accept a revised pay offer in late 2023 after members in schools and co-located early years settings had taken three days of strike action in September.

At least five branches had taken their own branch-based position to call for a rejection of the offer as they felt the revised offer was not enough to call off further planned action and that more could be won.

Many also felt the aim of £15 an hour, although welcome, is dependent on an upturn in the capitalist economy and council finances. The prospects for an economic upturn for the economy or council finances are bleak.

The recent comments by Shona Robison, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, that the size of the public sector workforce would have to be reduced and that there was a "relationship between head count and pay" is a clear warning to local government workers that any future pay rises will be paid for by more job losses and service cuts at a time when many council services are already cut to the bone.

mass anger

There was an outpouring of class anger seen across Scotland when thou-



sands of school and early years workers took 3 days of strike action.

Many taking part in strike action for the first time, as young workers in that sector flooded into UNISON membership and took bold and lively action on the picket lines and demonstrations.

There was a clear feeling that although this was about council workers' pay it also reflected the anger against years of austerity, lack of resources, increased workloads and responsibility and feeling their job roles had been undervalued by employers and government for far too long.

10,000 people are reported to have joined UNISON in local government. Significantly, hundreds of new work-

places reps have come forward to.

These new members and reps need to see a fighting democratic union that is serious about winning on pay and other issues.

We need leaders who are prepared to build and sustain effective action when employers and government are not prepared to value its workforce or the services they provide.

The next round of negotiations and campaign for the 2024 pay deal should be taking place now.

If there is no satisfactory pay offer in place by the settlement date of 1st April then balloting for strike action should take place then and not allow the employers to drag talks out for months.

That campaign should start now, the networks built up through the recent action can be strengthened. Local branches and reps have a key role in this.

Activists organised in the Scottish UNISON Socialist Network (SUSN) can help give a lead in building an effective leadership at branch and national level to strengthen the organisation and campaigning work of UNISON as well as holding politicians of all capitalist parties to account for the deliberate underfunding of public services.

Strike action has shown to build the union, to build the activist base and can go further in improving future pay settlements to what members deserve not more pay rises that are below the rate of inflation, join us.

☐ Contact and join SUSN via email at scottish.usn@gmail.com

TV Review: Mr Bates vs The Post Office

BOSSES PREPARED TO RUIN LIVES



Photo: ITV

Gary Clark

recently retired secretary of CWU Scotland No.2 branch

Watching this very moving four-part drama on ITV, no one could fail to feel anger and sorrow for the subpostmasters in their fight against probably the worst case of injustice over a period of almost 25 years.

Potentially over 700 wrongful convictions have taken place, thousands of lives destroyed, four suicides taken place, and 33 former subpostmasters have died waiting on their convictions to be reversed. At present, only 93 have had their appeal heard and reversed.

The series shows the lengths that the Post Office and Fujitsu, the IT company behind the failed Horizon computer system, went to in covering up their corrupt failings, especially former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells. She resigned in 2019 and was awarded a CBE in 2020 for her work. This provoked mass anger amongst Post Office workers at the time, and they will have huge support for their call for her CBE to be removed. Police investigations into fraud offences by Post Office management are under way.

public ownership

It should be remembered that the Post Office is still nationalised. The scandal proves something we in the Socialist Party have always said – nationalisation in itself does not go far enough. The Post Office is run by management like a private company. Instead, workers' control is vital.

The series also highlights the weakness of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters (NFSP), which is not a trade union but a federation of small businesses which run Sub-Post Offices. These are different from the larger

Crown post offices which are directly managed by the Post Office. The failings of the NFSP led to the formation of Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance (JSPA), led by Alan Bates, whose story the series focuses on. The JSPA took on 550 cases against not only the Post Office, but also the government.

The show highlights how far management will go in the interests of the capitalist class, including destroying peoples' lives. More miscarriages of justice are now being reported since the programme has aired.

Dozens were jailed, many have been made bankrupt, seen their reputations ruined. The scandal has split families and seen people shunned by their communities, some being attacked in the streets, and labelled thieves and criminals. This will live with subpostmasters for the rest of their lives.

fighting for justice

I would support the removal of the CBE from Paula Vennells, but it should not stop at that. The whole senior post office management team should be removed and face criminal charges for what they have done during the last 25 years, and questions need to be asked about the government's role too.

We should also be calling for all the post offices closed over the past number of years to be reopened, with workers – staff and subpostmasters – organised in trade unions such as the CWU.

After years of Tory inaction, the series has ramped up public pressure on the government which is now considering exonerating all convictions. This should be supported, along with compensation for all those effected. But these measures themselves won't bring justice; the fight goes on against the bosses and their system prepared to ruin lives in pursuit of profit.

Biggest ever Northern Ireland strike likely on Jan 18

Northern Ireland will see its biggest strike wave ever on 18 January, involving over 150,000 workers. Across the public sector, workers are demanding pay rises, as well as ensuring pay parity, where relevant, with public-sector workers in Britain.

The strike action will hit education, public transport and healthcare among other services. Carmel Gates, the general secretary of NIPSA, the largest trade union in the North, has described the 18th as being on the order of a general strike.

Northern Ireland's public finances are in severe crisis. Senior civil servants in Belfast who are running Northern Ireland in the absence of the Stormont Executive have slashed services severely.

The North has the worst hospital waiting lists in the UK. Little wonder

that so far a dozen unions have called for a mass strike action on January 18. "We are preparing a general strike for 18 January to force his [Heaton Harris's] hand, if he hasn't delivered by then, said Carmel Gates.

Supporters of Militant Left (the CWI in Ireland) are playing a key role in some of the trade unions and local trades union councils in preparation for the historic strike action. Several mass workers' rallies will take place on 18 January, including in Belfast, Derry, Omagh, Enniskillen and others.

The 18th January will show that the working class is the single most powerful force in society. Important initiatives towards building a political alternative for the working class with a bold socialist programme that can cut across the sectarian divide, can arise from this historic day of action.

Review: **Chile 1973** - How and why the revolution was crushed



Palacio de La Moneda on September 11, 1973. Photo: CC by 3.0 CL. Allende. Opposite Photo: Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional Chile/CC

Oisín Duncan

The fiftieth anniversary of the 1973 coup in Chile has generated a lot of discussion about the revolutionary events which preceded it. Salvador Allende, elected President leading the Popular Unity coalition in 1970, introduced reforms and socialist measures such as nationalisations. But the Allende government left the armed forces and other state forces in the hands of the bosses.

Ultimately he was removed and murdered in a bloody coup. The harsh lessons demonstrated in Chile in the 1970s are vital for revolutionary socialists to learn for the next era of struggle.

Take for instance the personal experiences author Tony Saunois, CWI secretary, recounts in the foreword of the book, visiting to build the forces of the CWI under the military dictatorship which followed the coup. Through his account, we can bear witness to the brutality of the dictatorship, and also to the bottomless ingenuity of the Chilean working class in response.

Additionally, and with interest to Marxists in Britain, coup leader General Pinochet's friendship with former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher reflects the international scope of events in Chile; the role of the US is perhaps more well-known, but the role of British imperialism is subject to far less discussion (another great reason to buy this book!).

Moreover, the Chilean ruling class pushed a political narrative, aided by some cultural similarities to Britain (it was even nicknamed 'the England of Latin America'), to cover up some of the massacres which took place under so-called 'democratic' governments (for example, the Puerto Montt massacre of 1968). Similarly, the ruling class in

Britain has covered up several violent episodes of repression during the 1984-85 miners' strike, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and more.

The parallels with Britain continue with the retelling of union leader Jack Jones' contribution to Labour Party Conference in 1973, after the coup, when Jones correctly warned that a government led by Labour left winger Tony Benn in Britain would meet the same fate as Allende's.

There were other international links; Fidel Castro had gone on an official state visit to Santiago and gifted Allende an assault rifle. While the imagery of this exchange may appear obvious, Castro also urged the government not to go too far too quickly, lest they provoke the reaction of US imperialism. This was bad advice.

There was nothing special about the 'democratic traditions' or 'constitutional armed forces' in Chile; the ruling class would use whatever means at its disposal to drown the revolution in blood.

By urging caution, Castro contributed to the false notion that leaving the officer corps untouched was correct, when in fact it contributed to the downfall of the revolution.

So, having understood that a democratically elected government was overthrown in a violent coup in Chile in 1973, should socialists conclude that elections have no role in our activity? The Communist Party and the Socialist Party it included had made very serious mistakes previously in the electoral field, which had actually led to Communist Party members being imprisoned in concentration camps. The correct lesson drawn from this was that cooperation with workers' organisations was the way forward, not accommodation with the bosses. Even without the high membership of those

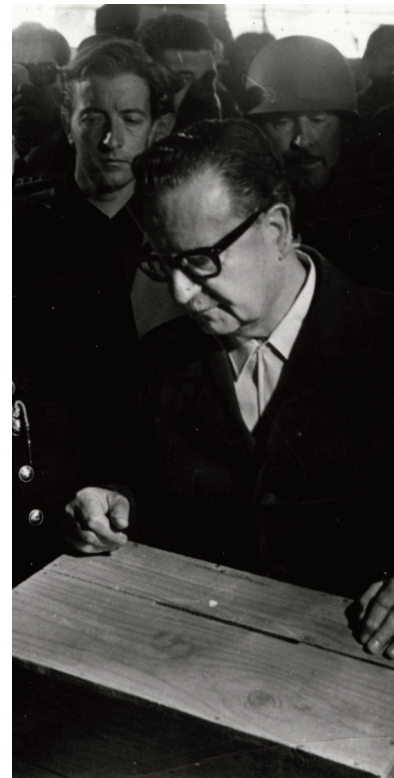
parties at that time, socialists must still meet the working class where its political consciousness lies. At this point, there is a glaring absence of mass parties standing in elections who would even touch Popular Unity's programme under Allende, so we have to build them!

mass working class parties

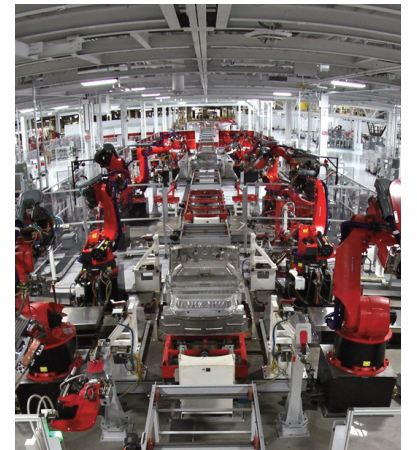
The need for mass democratic working-class parties is borne out by the degeneration of the current Boric government in Chile, elected initially as the voice, albeit self-appointed, of the mass movement in 2019 against the Piñera government and the holdover constitution from the dictatorship. Having been elected, Boric almost immediately accepted establishment politicians and even IMF economists into his cabinet, a complete betrayal of his supporters. Frustratingly, this example is reflected in many countries in Latin America and other regions, and underlines the need for revolutionaries to seriously take up the electoral question.

This is where some of the supplemental material in the book becomes incredibly useful; Appendix III, a reprint of the pamphlet the CWI produced just after the 2019 mass movements in Chile, Ecuador and other countries, skilfully explains the role of calling for a constituent assembly in the midst of such a struggle, but also the pitfalls of going along with any ploy by the bosses' representatives in using that demand to demotivate the masses.

Appendices I and II are more article reprints, this time all the way from the 1970s and 1980s respectively, detailing what our comrades were writing at the



Solidarity strikes against Tesla spread



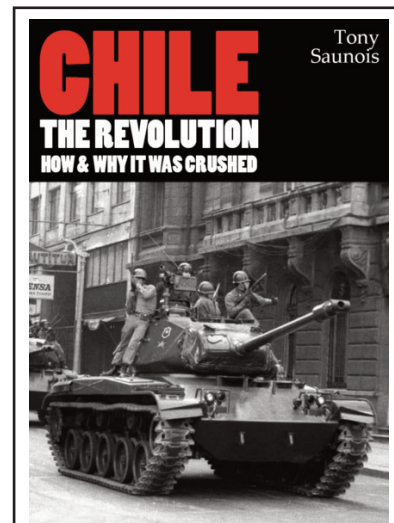
Adam Harmsworth
Coventry Socialist Party

time of the revolution itself, and under the heavy repression which the counter-revolution wrought on Chilean workers and youth. It shows that we are not just armchair Marxists; although we did correctly predict a coup was likely in 1973, it was an attempt to warn the most militant layers of the class in order to avoid this disaster.

Later, as we were building up forces and eventually our sister party Socialismo Revolucionario, we found success discussing with established activists in the underground anti-Pinochet movement, and discussing with them the need not just to overthrow the dictatorship, but capitalism as well.

Ultimately, after reading this book, I felt incredibly proud to be a member of an international which put forward a revolutionary alternative to the dictatorship, not just an accommodation with capitalism.

However, the more important part of this book is the analysis of the ideas of Popular Unity, including its errors and lessons for today. If we want to fight for a socialist revolution in this period, then we will have to avoid the same path of Allende's government, understand fully the role that the state will play while controlled by the bosses, and the need to challenge that control in order to build a socialist society.



● Chile: How and why the revolution was crushed, by Tony Saunois, is available for £10 from Socialist Party Scotland and also leftbooks.co.uk

On 27 October, 130 engineers at Tesla workshops in Sweden began strike action against the car giant. They have been demanding Tesla recognises their union IF Metall and negotiates a collective bargaining agreement. Striking workers have raised six-day weeks and unavoidable overtime as part of their motivation.

Tesla and its notorious billionaire boss Elon Musk have refused union recognition for any of their workers across the globe. Currently some 90% of Swedish workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements.

Unions fear that if Tesla wins, other companies will be inspired to reject collective bargaining and end union recognition as standard. Some fifteen trade unions across Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland have now joined in solidarity and launched sympathy strikes against Tesla.

That includes dockworkers refusing to unload Tesla vehicles, mechanics at independent workshops refusing Tesla cars, postal workers leaving letters and packages for Tesla untouched, and even waste collectors no longer collecting from Tesla sites.

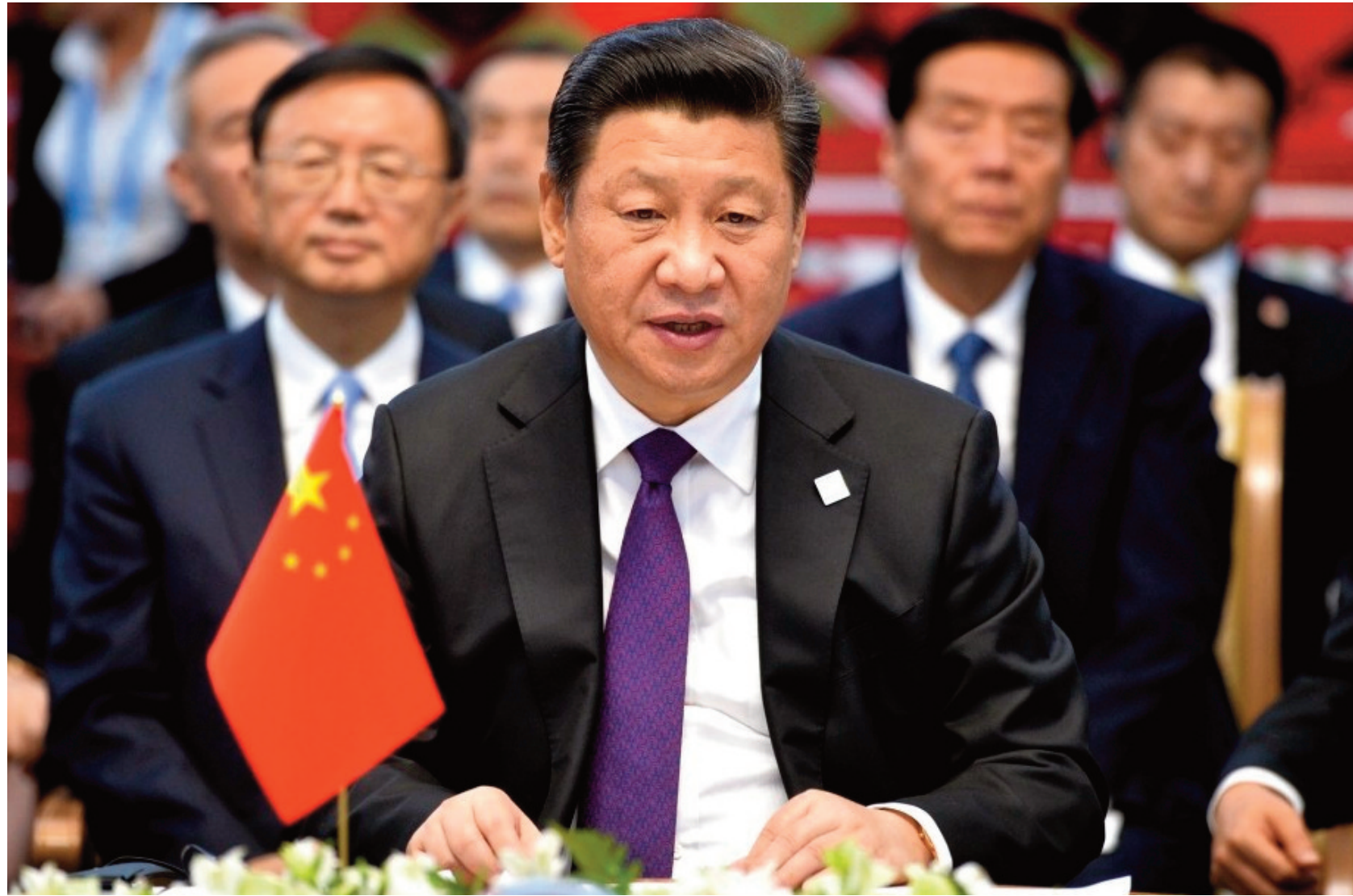
Musk fears that if Tesla loses this fight, more of the company's 127,000 workers will be inspired to strike and unionise. German union IG Metall has said that a non-unionised Tesla factory near Berlin with 10,000 workers had workers reporting "extreme workload [and] excessive production targets". If Swedish Tesla workers can win recognition, then Musk may face the horror of tens of thousands of overworked Tesla workers demanding reasonable working conditions.

Tesla has already gone to court to sue the Swedish Transport Agency and state-owned mail carrier PostNord for holding onto Tesla licence plates. He also condemned the sympathy strikes in his very blunt and arrogant manner, tweeting simply: "This is insane".

With the ranks of Scandinavian workers coming to the defence of trade unionism against the world's richest man, this strike may last for some months. And whether Tesla wins or not, threats to collective bargaining will likely grow.

Ultimately, the Swedish working class will need to be convinced to fight for a socialist system where workers run Tesla and all factories under their own democratic control and management.

China: Growing class anger as multiple crises face CCP rulers



President of China Xi Jinping is facing growing challenges, photo kremlin.ru/CC

Lance Law

The Chinese Communist Party dominated state in China is facing a narrowing of support in society. For decades, the leadership of CCP has relied on economic growth to maintain its legitimacy. However, this model is not as powerful as before. Social problems have been increasingly revealed and the cycle of capitalist crisis has been significantly accelerated.

Starting from the “Reform and Open” policy in 1978, and completed in Jiang Zemin’s reform in late 90s, the ruling class of the state that had seen capitalism and landlordism abolished in the years following the 1949 Chinese revolution has become a special form of capitalism controlled by CCP bureaucrats, which is not the same as western capitalist states, but there is no difference in the exploitation of the working class.

They hide behind a socialist-like narrative and using economic growth to cover the expanding gap between rich and poor. However, with the growing size and power of the Chinese proletariat, as a result of the rapid urbanisation of past 30 years, social conflicts and a growing questioning towards the Chinese ruling class’s character, make this recent social crisis more remarkable for the working class.

The beginning of 2024 sees the Chinese economy still in crisis, and the living quality of workers and young people is not getting better as the government promised. After the Chinese government cancelled the lock down policy, under the pressure of the protest called the “white paper revolution”, there was a short-term bounce back on economy.

However, this wave of recovery was much shorter and smaller compared to

the recovery in 2020. At that time, people were expecting to get back to “normal life”, and that higher incomes in the future will cover their loans and bring them a better life. Yet two years later, both urban and rural areas face a crisis and rising poverty.

Many young couples in China gave up having children as a result. Chinese society now faces the first population decrease since 1962. For the same reasons, under the impact of worsening quality of life, Chinese people are less passionate on house buying and consuming in society. Young people are looking to cut back on spending leading to the decrease of economic consumption.

The Chinese government has tried to stimulate the market, but people are less willing to spend their money. The economy is even facing the crisis of deflation, which leads to inefficient export and investment.

Another crisis facing the Chinese economy is real estate industry. This was already happening before the pandemic, and has been accelerated with most of the population of China losing the ability to pay off debt. During the past 30 years, the real estate industry has been bound to the growth of the economy and rapid urbanisation, and has been seen by the ruling class as a way to making financial investments rather than a place to live.

Under the illusion of rapid growth, the Chinese working class and youth have to clear out “6 wallets”, which are 2 wallets of a couple and 4 wallets from each of their parents, to purchase a house and carry debt for 30 years. This flesh-eating industry now has reached its limit. Heavy debt has brought negative impact to living quality, increased the gap between the rich and poor, and also enlarged the decrease of internal consumption.

The extremely long working hours of Chinese workers is making things even worse. In 2023, the average number of working hours has reached 48.7 hours per week. The economic crisis brings heavier pressure on the working class, which is the reason for low wages, long working hours and unemployment.

As of June 2023, the youth unemployment was already over 20%, and overall unemployment also increased to 5.5%. Suppression on the workers makes people have no time and money on consumption.

The budgets of provincial governments within China are also facing a crisis. Local governments were relying on “land finance”, extremely dependent on real estate and construction industries. Indebtedness of local and provincial governments has rocketed. Pressure on financial income makes local governments seeking a way to make cuts such as reducing expenses on medical care, decreasing the salary of civil servants and more.

averting crisis

Against this backdrop, the CCP-led state is increasingly intervening to try and avert the financial, economic and social crisis. Before the pandemic, Chinese government, facing the overheated bubble of house prices, and responded by pushing down house prices, represent by a slogan: “Housing for living, not for speculation.”

This reform includes policies such as introducing a property tax, restrictions on how many properties could be owned etc. The CCP hoped this reform could ease the social conflict, and bring more investment to high-tech industry rather than real estate industry, which already is in danger.

Under the social, economic and fi-

nancial dilemma, the bureaucrat capitalists and its state machine are losing the confidence from society. According to the Chinese Labor Bulletin, the incidents of workers’ struggle in 2023 is 1779, compare to 2022, which is 831. In 2018, before the pandemic, the incident count was 1883. There has not yet been a qualitative change in the numbers of workers’ struggles.

On the other side, this still weak but growing working-class force has made ruling class take action in the media and propaganda. The CCP not only use nationalism and the narrative of “The Great Rejuvenation of Chinese Nation”, but also try to pander to growing left-wing public opinion. The attitude of

being “anti-capitalist”, the increasing reference to Marxist theory on official announcements, and, only in a few times, supporting workers during strike actions, has shown a recent shift by the ruling class.

This strategy is not only to try to ease the class conflict, but also to maintain its legitimacy, to claim themselves as a “revolutionary” party. Till now, it still works. Many people seeking for social reform are willing to believe that Communist Party of China could make the society better. But on the other side, this action of trying to strengthen their legitimacy is a sign of weakness that will eventually undermine their legitimacy.

Marxism

The bureaucrat capitalists claim to defend Marxism and revolution is ironic as it is the ideas of genuine Marxism which will eventually end their domination. The similar contradictions can be found all around modern Chinese society. One of the examples is at the end of 2023, more than 10,000 thousand people rallied in Shaoshan, Hunan, calling for another revolution.

Similar events happened across the whole country, and over 1 million people took part online. These revolutionary left-wing protests are mainly influenced by Maoist ideas, but support for the idea of a new revolution for the Chinese working class is widespread here.

The CCP could not ban them as they took place on the commemoration day of Mao Zedong’s birth, which is December 26th. For the event of 2023, it is the largest rally ever, and the proportion of young people has significantly increased.

Going forward, the Chinese working class and youth are fighting for independent worker-controlled unions, and the right of assembly. This will increasingly bring them into collision with the CCP and its “Marxist” rhetoric

With this growing awareness, support for collective ownership, democracy in the workplace, and genuine revolutionary Marxist ideas will eventually become the largest force among the working class. It is long-term fight to achieve. The road is tortuous, and the future is bright.

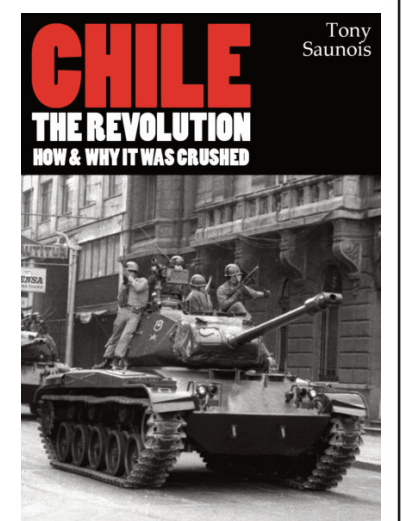
New book on the 1970-73 Chilean revolution

Fifty years since it was crushed, the Chilean revolution of 1970-73 remains a reference point, not only in Chile, but internationally, for both the working class and its organisations and the capitalist classes.

The working class and radical youth need to be armed with an understanding of the Chilean revolution, so that in the future, when the working class is again within reaching distance of a successful socialist revolution, it succeeds in conquering power and transforming society.

The Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) is publishing a new book to bring the lessons of the Chilean revolution, and its crushing, to the new generation of working class and young activists.

Written by Tony Saunois, CWI secretary, from 1984 Tony spent a number of years working in the



Underground opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship within Chile.

To order a copy of the book, get in touch with Socialist Party Scotland.

Email us at info@socialistparty-scotland.org.uk

Stop Israeli state terror



Devastation in Gaza. Photo: WAFA/CC

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This shows we need mass democratic socialist struggle to stop Israeli state terror.

regional conflict

A regional war may not be prevented. The attacks by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels from Yemen on the Red Sea shipping lane (which accounts for 12% of global shipping), in support of Hamas, have been met with a bombing campaign by the US supported by the UK government. Iran has responded by sending warships to support the Houthis.

The first days of this year have seen widespread bloodshed by multiple actors with differing interests in the region. Israeli missile strikes killed a Hamas deputy leader and five others in Beirut, Lebanon and an Iran-backed military commander in Iraq.

Islamic State (IS) have claimed responsibility for killing 100 in a bomb attack at a event in Iran marking the death of General Suleimani who was assassinated by the Trump administration in the US.

Hezbollah in Lebanon, a Hamas ally, declared it will have to retaliate to the IDF assassinations.

Already there has been constant fire exchanged between the IDF and Hezbollah since October 7th. Yoav Gallant wanted a pre-emptive strike against Hezbollah after the October 7th attack. Benny Gantz, a right-wing politician in Israel’s war cabinet and a possible successor to Netanyahu, declared: “if the world doesn’t get Hezbollah away from the border, Israel will do it”.

What comes next after the war? It will prove impossible for the IDF to root out Hamas and its ideology. Even at the time of writing they haven’t located or executed the Hamas leadership in Gaza.

Clearly there are splits in the Israeli ruling class. Yoav Gallant proposes “operational freedom” for the IDF and governance involving Israel, some kind of Palestinian stooge authority, Egypt and a US multinational force. Echoes of the failed US-led coalition occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US tries to talk up a Palestinian Authority widely discredited in the eyes of the majority of Palestinians for colluding in the West Bank with the IDF occupation, engaging in corruption and failing to solve poverty.

The far right elements of Netanyahu’s coalition want to inflict another “Nakba” catastrophe, ethnic cleansing and mass removal of the Palestinians.

Finance minister Smotrich has argued “what needs to be done in the Gaza strip is to encourage emigration ...if there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million Arabs, the entire discussion on the day after will be totally different”.

Many Palestinians will have questions on the ‘balance sheet’ of the 7 Oc-

tober attack by Hamas and other groups that indiscriminately killed civilians.

The attacks can appear to have made some important achievements. The world’s attention is again on the plight of the Palestinians. The ‘normalisation’ of relations between the Israeli and Saudi regimes has been scuppered, at least for now.

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners have been released in exchange for the hostages taken in the attack. And after two months of fighting Hamas is still undefeated and inflicting casualties on the Israeli army. But at what cost? With mass casualties and the threat of further displacement has the struggle for self-determination for the Palestinians’ moved forward?

mass socialist struggle

Socialist Party Scotland stands for an immediate withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza and a lifting of the blockade. 30 years since the world capitalist powers supported the promise of the Oslo Accords for a capitalist two state solution they have proved to be a dead end.

For socialists Palestinian self determination can only be achieved by a democratic mass struggle, a third “socialist intifada” not the failed methods of Hamas or Fatah.

Democratic structures need to be built by a mass movement and be the basis for a working class based mass party to challenge the current Palestinian pro capitalist leadership.

Such a movement would be beacon to workers, poor and the youth across the region. It could even directly appeal to workers in Israel to struggle for decent living standards against their own reactionary capitalist regime.

No capitalist solution is possible. Only a socialist programme based on public ownership of the means of production and a democratic socialist economy would meet the needs of the peoples of Israel and Palestine.

The Committee for a Workers’ International stands for an independent, socialist Palestinian state alongside a Socialist Israel, with guaranteed rights for all minorities as part of a Socialist federation of the region.

Here in Scotland we can have no trust in capitalist politicians. We need top continue to build mass demonstrations and student walkouts and for a mobilisation from the trade unions. Discussions should be initiated between trade union reps and shop stewards in relevant industries including arms, logistics and transport over what workers’ action can be taken against the war.

Tory and Labour politician’s stand firmly behind the Israeli state terror, that’s why we need a new mass workers’ party based on the trade unions that fights to end the cost of living crisis, stands in solidarity with Gaza and fights for a socialist programme to end war, occupation and capitalism.

whatwestandfor



Capitalism is an ailing, crisis-ridden system based on the exploitation of the majority of the world’s population by a small, super-rich elite who own most of the wealth and the means of producing it. This way of organising society, in which the pursuit of profit comes before everything else, causes poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, wars and oppression across the globe. Socialist Party Scotland organises working-class people to fight against the attacks from this rotten system on our lives and livelihoods, and for a socialist alternative: a society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few. Building fighting democratic trade unions in the workplaces and a new mass workers’ party is a vital part of the struggle to change society along socialist lines. Because capitalism is a world system, the struggle for socialism must also be international. Socialist Party Scotland is part of the Committee for a Workers’ International which organises across the world. Our demands include:

work, pensions and benefits

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

pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.

public services

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. End all PFI/PPP/NPD schemes. Bring private and third sector social care into public ownership. Childcare facilities should be publicly owned under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.
- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone’s health needs – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers’ control and management.
- Nationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers’ control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees for all and write off student debt, and marketisation, and introduce a living grant. Schools to be under the democratic control of councils, school staff and parents.
- The right to quality, affordable homes for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers.

environment

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy and ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- For a massive programme of job creation in publicly owned renewable energy that would create tens of thousands of jobs in Scotland.
- Nationalise the energy sector, under democratic workers’ control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a socialist economic plan to switch to clean, green energy. Guaranteed jobs and no loss of pay or conditions for all workers moving over from fossil fuel production.
- A democratically planned, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution. Reverse all cuts to transport, including Scotrail. Modernise and expand rail, bus and ferry services

democratic rights

- For the right of nations to self-determination. Build a mass working class movement to win indyref2. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a

socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Scotland, Wales, England, and Ireland.

- End discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For a woman’s right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. Housing and support services to be fully resourced with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker’s wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties’ coverage allocated in proportion to their votes at elections.
- For a new mass workers’ party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations! Scrap Trident. End the colossal spending on arms. Invest in socially useful production with guaranteed jobs for workers transferring over from the arms industry.
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the Scottish and 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 EU bosses’ club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers’ organisations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

JOIN SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND



Mass democratic socialist struggle to..

STOP ISRAELI STATE TERROR



- End the siege – for the immediate permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from the occupied territories
- For a mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for liberation
- For the building of independent workers' parties in Palestine and Israel and links between them
- For an independent, socialist Palestinian state, alongside a socialist Israel, with guaranteed rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East
- No trust in the capitalist politicians, internationally or in Britain. Fight to build a workers' party that fights for socialism and internationalism

Matt Dobson

Nowhere is safe for the 2 million Palestinians subjected to IDF relentless bombing and ground attacks in Gaza. The north of the strip has been decimated into ruins; civilians were ordered to flee south where the Israeli state is now cruelly concentrating its firepower.

Deaths from the onslaught since the October 7th attack now approach 25,000. Thousands more are missing, uncaptured under rubble. Gaza's teeming refugee camps lack basic infrastructure and the population face sewage, famine and disease.

The IDF military spokesperson Daniel Hagari stated in early January it has begun a new less intensive phase in the Gaza war. This was in preparation for US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's fifth visit to the region since this latest war began. US imperialism, as part of its geopolitical agenda gives support to the Israeli state but at the same time it has

been pushing for restraint in the conduct of the conflict to try to prevent an escalation into a regional war. Such a conflagration would have dire consequences for geopolitical stability and the capitalist economy worldwide.

However, the unreliability of Prime Minister Netanyahu has been shown when he and defence minister Yoav Gallant stated the same day that "the war will continue for many months". In the West Bank, the bombing and daily incursions by the IDF are increasing.

We have seen the UN, made up of capitalist nations, being unable to force even a temporary pause by the IDF since mid-December.

In reality the hostage exchange and pause in fighting in Gaza over a month ago came about as a result of the pressure of the mass movement and demonstrations across the world in solidarity with the Palestinians, often in defiance of authoritarian bans and threats.

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