

# MAKE THE

**Let's start with the good news.** The labour movement is stepping forward once more. There have been a series of small but important strikes and some victories. Sharon Graham, the new Unite leader, has been determined that all her union's members are given full support when they take action.

The call from the People's Assembly for widespread action against the so-called cost of living crisis received a good response and the recent Kill the Bill protests and demonstrations have been well-supported with thousands of mainly young people taking to the streets. Other movements and campaigns have been active on a range of crucial issues, from health to housing and in support of migrants and their rights.

These are the green shoots of our political recovery and we have to cherish and nourish them.

The bad news is that we have a veritable mountain to climb and the supposed party of opposition, the Labour Party, is in full retreat and shifting fast to the right.

We are in the midst of a full-scale offensive by the ruling class which – despite the chaos of the Johnson regime – is determined to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. Billions of pounds of public money have been siphoned off to friends and associates of this government. They have used the pandemic to transfer enormous sums of money into the pockets of the rich through fraudulent contracts via the so-called VIP fast lane. The rich have never been richer.

While ordinary families and working people are facing energy price rises, food inflation, and exorbitant housing costs, the establishment is demanding that there be no wage increases and Universal Credit has been cut by £20 a week. There are national insurance rises to come. When the Tories introduced in parliament real cuts to pensions and social security, the Labour Party whipped its MPs **not** to oppose these cuts.

There have never been more food banks and many are forced to choose between heating and eating. NHS waiting lists stretch into the millions and the privatisation of the NHS is taking place in real time now. No serious action is taking place to solve the ecological crisis. And in the midst of this the drums of war beat once more.

This situation is deeply unstable. To some extent the continued crisis around Johnson's premiership reflects this as do the ever present right-wing mobs outside parliament. Brexit is a disaster and has brought nothing of the promised economic gains; the levelling-up agenda is a hollow shell bringing nothing to hard-hit working people; and sections of the Tory Party egg on the anti-vaxxers and the conspiracy theorists.

This is a political tinderbox which contains as many dangers for the working class as possibilities.

The Labour Party can provide no answers in this situation. Its front bench spend their time talking up Thatcher and Churchill and attacking the left and any struggles that emerge. Where are they in the ongoing struggles? Nowhere to be seen: in the time of Corbyn they would have been alongside us. Those days are gone. But we have to act now – if we don't there is every possibility that the initiative will shift to the far right.

The difficult task we have now is to turn our attention and all our efforts to creating a new political force that will support and help lead the necessary struggles of working people. Left Unity commits itself to this task and to working with all who seek the same outcome.

This is the time for a People's Alliance of the Left.

## **NEW WAYS OF ORGANISING: PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE OF THE LEFT**

Left Unity is committed to working together with like-minded radical socialists and progressive social movements to develop possibilities for political unity. We aim to build a mass ecosocialist voice in this country.

We are active within progressive social movements and build alliances where possible, such as the Ecosocialist Alliance. Although we understand the value of standing in elections where consistent local work makes this possible, we do not see this as the main purpose of working together. It's just as important to be active in campaigns together and to discuss the political situation so we can advance joint action. We aim to highlight the interconnectedness and systemic nature of the multiple crises of capitalism, and the need for system change: an

# RICH PAY

explicitly ecosocialist analysis.

As a significant contribution to building this left cooperation, Left Unity participates in the initiative by Thelma Walker (former Labour MP for Colne Valley) to create a People's Alliance of the Left (PAL).

PAL is an alliance of a number of left parties, people and organisations whose purpose is to network and foster collaboration and joint working, discussion and policy development on the radical left; ultimately to bring about a socialist government. Any group who agrees to a basic set of principles – to be socialist, environmentalist, intersectional and internationalist – can join. See these principles in detail at [leftunity.org/peoples-alliance-of-the-left-pal](http://leftunity.org/peoples-alliance-of-the-left-pal)

People wishing to get involved can join by joining one of the participant parties (including Left Unity) or by affiliating their organisation, trade union or campaign group if they agree with the PAL principles. We hope that many diverse ecosocialist and radical left organisations and movements will join and PAL will become a truly representative left alliance.

As well as bringing together the radical left and social movements, there is also an electoral element to PAL. Those parties that stand in elections (Breakthrough, NIP, TUSC, Left Unity) will try to avoid standing against each other. They will offer mutual support to each other's candidates where possible. Under first past the post, electoral success is difficult to achieve, but with the rapid rightward move of the Labour Party it has never been more urgent to build broad left unity. Join us.

## **WHAT IS LEFT UNITY?**

Left Unity is a radical left, ecosocialist political party, founded in 2013, because the main parties all supported the policies they call 'austerity': deep cuts in public spending designed to destroy the social and economic gains working people have made over many decades. We critically supported the Labour Party, under Jeremy Corbyn, in the hope that, in government, they might reverse this. However, with its change of leadership following the 2019 general election, the Labour Party is reverting to its previous positions. A political party championing radical policies in the interests of all our communities is vital. That is what we do.

Left Unity stands for equality and justice. It is ecosocialist, feminist, environmentalist, anti-racist and against all forms of discrimination.

We are committed to defending all those worst affected by the pandemic crisis, the ensuing economic crash and climate catastrophe. We advance alternative social and economic policies based on supporting public services and redistributing wealth. At this time of many interlocking crises, our vision has never been more necessary.

We are ecosocialist because our aim is to end capitalism and protect the planet and all its people. If humankind is to survive, it has to establish a sustainable relationship with the rest of the natural world. Our vision of society is one without gender oppression and exploitation. We are anti-racist, anti-fascist and opposed to all forms of discrimination. No society is just and equal while some people remain without the support needed to achieve their full potential.

Left Unity is internationalist because there are no national solutions to the ravages of capitalism and the climate catastrophe it is creating. We are a member party of the European Left Party [european-left.org](http://european-left.org) a political party at the European level. Member and observer parties of the EL are socialist, communist, red-green and other democratic left parties who share basic principles and political aims. All members of Left Unity are members of the European Left and able to participate in its discussions and activities. One such initiative is the No Pasaran conference against the rise of the far-right in Europe, which Left Unity was central to initiating and which this year takes place in Berlin.

Democracy is at our heart. Our goal is to transform society: to achieve the full democratisation of state and political institutions, society and the economy, by and for the people. We recognise we cannot advance democracy unless we are democratic within our own party. Members play a full part in our decision making and policy development on the basis of one member one vote. If you agree with us, please join us online at [leftunity.org/membership-form](http://leftunity.org/membership-form) or for more information contact [office@leftunity.org](mailto:office@leftunity.org)

# LEFT UNITY

# BANK ON US

## COST OF LIVING SOARS: UNIONS STRIKE BACK

Workers have been hit hard by austerity with years of below inflation pay increases. They are now facing a massive rise in the cost of living.

Cost of living increases are the highest for 30 years with prices on essential foods even higher than the official 4.5% inflation rate. Figures from December 2021 show coffee prices up 70%, pasta up 25% and margarine up 27%. Electricity bills are set to soar by 50%, with transport and petrol rising even more.

The education union NEU estimates that experienced teachers have lost 21% of their salary. Supply teachers report their pay rates have been slashed by 50–80% since they were privatised and agencies moved in. Key workers in healthcare, education, food and distribution, local government and the civil service have been offered a 0% pay increase. Part-time and low-paid workers struggle to make ends meet, while people in receipt of benefits have seen their payments slashed.

Left Unity calls for an immediate £15 an hour minimum wage for all, strictly enforced and adjusted regularly in line with inflation and housing costs in areas such as London. The state should guarantee a minimum income for all based upon the minimum income calculator [minimumincome.org.uk](http://minimumincome.org.uk)

Unions are organising and fighting back. Scunthorpe Scaffolders employed by Activo (UK) Ltd have been on strike for weeks in order to get the agreed pay. Unite has organised lively pickets and is inspiring others to fight. Their slogan is 'stick together, don't scab, pay the rate'.

Other battles have already been won. 560 Stagecoach drivers in South Yorkshire, in Unite, won a 10.7% pay increase following successful strike action. United Voices of the World has organised members in Harrods and forced the luxury produce store to increase restaurant wages from £9 to £11.50 an hour and to pay 100% of the service charge to members. Just Eat takeaway food delivery drivers have been striking against pay cuts in Sheffield since the 6th December and this has become the longest continuous action in this sector.

Delivery company Stuart saw its profits increase by 80% only to cut the base rate of pay for employees. This kind of behaviour cannot be tolerated.

It is clear that we cannot wait for Labour to get elected to resolve the cost-of-living crisis. Join a workplace or community union. They can offer support and solidarity: protests, donations, pickets and advice. Left Unity would repeal all anti-union laws removing restrictions on workers' rights to organise in defence of their wages and conditions. We support a legally enforceable charter of trade union rights, including an unrestricted right to strike.

The anti-austerity movement is regenerating around the cost of living crisis. Get involved!

## RENATIONALISE THE NHS: KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC

Private health businesses have made massive profits from contracts given to them by the Tory government. A £10 billion deal with private hospitals is being championed by both Labour and Tories, but this is money that the NHS desperately needs to clear backlogs, purchase equipment and make long-term investment in staff pay and working conditions.

The Tories' latest Health and Social Care Bill will not solve years of underfunding, the staffing crisis or social care costs. But it will help make it easier for the private sector to get NHS contracts to make profits.

Left Unity is clear that we want the Bill scrapped and we want to defend and improve our National Health Service.

Every part of the NHS should be defended as a publicly run, publicly owned, publicly accountable system providing free care. Access should be universal and equitable – market forces have no place in healthcare. We need a modern system in which employees, councillors, patients and carers are represented on all appropriate health bodies and where clinical need rather than cost and 'balancing the books' determine priorities. Alongside this we must create a new national care and independent living service (keeping disabled people at the centre of all decision making).

End the NHS cuts. There must be an immediate moratorium on A&E and hospital closures. Any reconfigurations must be clinically, not financially driven and must show they have won public and professional

support for alternative, improved services.

The NHS should be funded through taxation, and borrowing where necessary, according to the level of social need.

Mental health services have been shamefully neglected over decades and need to be expanded and integrated into the broader NHS. There should also be a focus on workplace health, public health and social care.

There should be no profit in healthcare. Abolish the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) introduced by Labour and cancel the PFI debts. Reduce the Department of Health's reliance on expensive external management consultants. Oppose the TTIP trade deal which would further open up the NHS to the market.

Health research is essential but the private pharmaceutical industry exploits patients and the NHS. Left Unity would restrict the private pharmaceutical companies and ultimately replace them with a non-profit system of pharmaceutical production that can be shared free of charge and assist developing countries with the production and distribution of much-needed treatments.

## THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The scale and urgency of the climate and ecological crises are now apparent to most people, not just to climate-change scientists. It's simply not possible to ignore the overwhelming evidence of rising average global temperatures: the resulting increase in extreme weather events across the world (floods, storms and wildfires); rising sea-levels already impacting on many communities in the southern hemisphere; the staggering loss of Earth's natural habitats and biodiversity.

Recently, NASA announced that the last eight years were the hottest on record, with 2020 the hottest and 2021 the sixth hottest years. Moreover, ocean temperatures in 2021 are the hottest on record, with that record being broken for the sixth consecutive year.

But while we should be alarmed, we're not yet in a 'we're all doomed' scenario. While COP26 failed to meet the high expectations that many had, there are some positives to be taken. Fossil fuels have finally been identified as the main drivers of the climate crisis, with coal being singled out as the worst of all. In addition, progress in meeting COP aims will now be reviewed yearly, instead of every five years.

The most encouraging thing about COP26 was that it revealed a much larger and much more radical global climate movement. What gains came out of COP26 are largely down to the fact that billions of people around the world are now demanding real climate action. Encouragingly, Extinction Rebellion has now made the end of fossil fuels one of its core demands.

We all now have to increase the pressure on subsequent COPs and on governments. Left Unity – an explicitly ecosocialist party – campaigns for a just transition for all workers, and for global climate justice. Consequently, we played a leading role in the formation of the Ecosocialist Alliance, so we can work with like-minded groups and individuals to press for the changes needed: changes which capitalism cannot deliver; a 'system change' approach that, ultimately, aims at replacing capitalism with a socially-just and ecologically-sustainable ecosocialist society.

## NO ONE IS ILLEGAL. NO BORDERS

Immigration controls are inherently racist and unfair. They criminalise people on the basis of where their parents were born, what language they speak, the colour of their skin, and whether or not they support 'British values'. Left Unity is against immigration controls and for freedom of movement.

Borders lead to deaths on a large scale: in the Mediterranean and in the English Channel; in the backs of lorries; freezing to death in no man's land between Poland and Belarus; people deported to unsafe countries. And so we say **No Borders**.

Every few years, government – Labour or Tory – proposes new measures against migrants and refugees. Whenever it appears their actions can't get any worse, they come up with something even more draconian. In 2014 government brought in legislation requiring landlords and employers to check immigration status. Now they are attempting to go even further with the The Nationality and

Borders Bill:

Criminalising migrants who come into the country without a visa  
Rejecting asylum claims from refugees who did not come by a government-sanctioned route

Stripping people's citizenship without notifying them in advance

Extending no recourse to public funds

X-ray testing to determine (often wrongly) a migrant or refugee's age

Criminalising young people who help migrants and refugees – grouping us together with traffickers

Pushing back boats across the English Channel (which is against international law)

Making it more difficult for modern slaves and trafficked people to get protection and not face deportation

And much more.

This Bill, and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill are politically closely related. Both are nasty manoeuvres being conducted by the Johnson government focusing on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities as well as on migrants and refugees. They stir up resentment and hostility against these communities then launch attacks on them. Migrants and Travellers are seen as outsiders, not 'one of us', having a different un-British culture. Both pieces of legislation attack the right of freedom of movement.

Things may be looking bleak, but it does not have to be so. Trade unions can support people who refuse to implement this, and previous, legislation. Movements like Docs not Cops, and Patients Not Passports, are already active on the ground. Recent events in Glasgow showed that deportations can be stopped if the community comes together to support their neighbours. New organisations are emerging like Solidarity Knows No Borders and more traditional bodies such as Amnesty and Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants are challenging more. We work with these organisations in immediate opposition to the Nationality and Borders Bill whilst arguing for our perspectives, and taking the argument into the trade union movement.

## DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Powerful protest has been a big feature of the past few years, whether it's Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, Sisters Uncut, or support for the Palestinian People. Campaigns and movements have been on the march because there is a strong appetite for democratic and inclusive change. The government's response has been a new Bill in parliament to strip away our democratic rights to protest.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is aimed at giving police even more powers to shut down protests, and wants to criminalise people for taking to the streets to challenge injustice and demand change. Not surprisingly it has sparked Kill the Bill protests in towns and cities across the country.

This is an unprecedented attack on the right to protest and is of grave concern to us all. The right to protest was hard won and we cannot see it eroded or stripped away by the Johnson government. The issues we are fighting on are too urgent and serious to be suppressed.

The government wants to give police more powers to shut down protest, and stop and search without suspicion. It threatens freedom of expression and assembly; it aims to criminalise the way of life of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and harms access to the countryside.

Thanks to popular mobilisation there has been a partial victory. Responding to massive protest against the Bill, the House of Lords stopped some of the worst government proposals during the amendment stage but there is no doubt it remains a huge blight on the democracy of this country and the government will look for a way to come back and finish what it started.

We won't let the attacks and bans push us out of activity, intimidate us or prevent us from working to build the kind of just and peaceful world that we want to see. Throughout history it is protest that has brought key improvements to our lives, bringing equality and opportunity to all, free from discrimination. These cannot be taken away.

Left Unity stands alongside Kill the Bill and all organisations working to defend and extend our rights. We oppose all government attacks on our civil liberties.

## JOIN US

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