

Labour Outlook

Autumn 2022 edition

Resist the Tory Offensive -
For Socialist Solutions to the Crisis



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Read Labour Outlook at www.labouroutlook.org and @LabourOutlook



As Truss prepares to deepen the attacks, Labour must show people we are on their side

Richard Burgon MP

Liz Truss spent years carefully crafting Thatcher-style photo ops to woo the Tory base. Just days into her new government, it's clear she wants to govern as Thatcher too.

From describing tax cuts for the richest as "fair", to briefings about a "bonfire of workers' rights" and a new push for fracking, this government will put corporate profits before people's needs whatever the consequences.

But as the Tories deepen their attacks on the majority of people, trade unions and social movements are fighting back, making it clear that enough is enough.

The RMT and CWU unions, alongside others, are rightly standing up to the Tory view that most people should accept becoming ever poorer while the wealthy get ever richer. They have my full solidarity and we need to build the widest possible support for their strike actions over the coming months.

It's very encouraging that Labour is currently ahead in the polls. But we cannot be complacent. Ed Miliband repeatedly led David Cameron and lost

in 2015. Kinnock was expected to win in 1992 but lost after the Tories dumped Thatcher.

We must never take any voters for granted. When people are standing up to the policies of this government, we must stand with them. If we give workers taking strike action against pay cuts the impression that we are turning our backs on them, that sends the wrong message to millions of people.

We need to use every minute ahead of the next election to show people that Labour is on their side. Key to that is doing all we can to force the Tories to drop as much of their harmful policy agenda as possible. Real change means our communities need a Labour government. But people can't wait for a general election that could be over two years away to get the protection they need from this economic crisis.

Where Labour has offered a strong lead - from the Windfall Tax to energy price freezes - we have forced the Tory government into important policy changes. We need to see much more of that. When we force such changes, it

provides important financial support to people. It also registers with millions of people that Labour has their backs and would deliver for them in government and so boosts our support.

There are a whole range of other policies from public ownership of energy and other utilities, to a £15 an hour minimum wage and wealth taxes on the super-rich that we should be putting forward now as popular solutions to this cost-of-living emergency. Many are becoming the new common sense with strong support in the polls - including from Tory voters.

Our system is going through crisis after crisis as a result of decades of neoliberalism. Millions of people are paying the price. The more we put forward a real alternative to this broken model over the coming months, the better chance we have of stopping Truss' reactionary agenda in its tracks and of ensuring she is booted out at the general election.

• **Richard Burgon is MP for Leeds East and Secretary of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs.**

Read **Labour Outlook** every day at
www.labouroutlook.org

The economic crisis has been driven by Tory policy

Diane Abbott MP

Each day we see another grim reminder of the scale of the attack on living standards that is currently taking place. Liz Truss' hard right agenda is simply a part of it.

We are living through what is generally called a cost of living crisis. But it is not really accurate. It is an attack on the living standards of ordinary people - a policy choice not a natural phenomenon.

The overall context is that recent forecasts unveiled by the Bank of England were eye-wateringly grim.

The Bank reckons that inflation could run over 13 per cent. It also believes inflation will be above the current level of 9 per cent this time next year.

It now also predicts a prolonged recession. On this analysis the slump is set to last more than 3 years and unemployment will rise to well over 6% before the end of 2025.

Tory economic policy has produced 'stagflation', which is actually quite rare, almost difficult to achieve. It is disastrous for workers, for anyone on benefits, for people on fixed incomes such as pensioners and for the army of people who will be made newly unemployed. In fact, it is no good for anyone except the profiteers, their cronies and their political representatives - the 1%.

This is a comprehensive crisis driven by government policy. It was the

government that left the workforce hobbled in the pandemic with deaths, Long Covid, and 80 per cent of wages people were already struggling to live on. It was the government that imposed an austerity budget in March when it was clear people were already struggling and froze pensions and public sector pay. And it is successive Tory-led governments who created a rigged system, a charter for privatised highway robbery in the energy market.

Labour must end it. We need a bold, radical programme that meets the seriousness of the crisis. Judging by the opinion polls it is also a programme that also chimes with public opinion.

First, we need inflation-matching increases in pensions and welfare. The poor and the elderly must not be made to pay for this crisis. Secondly, we also need the same for wage increases in the public sector for anyone earning up to twice the national average. The minimum wage must be increased to the living wage.

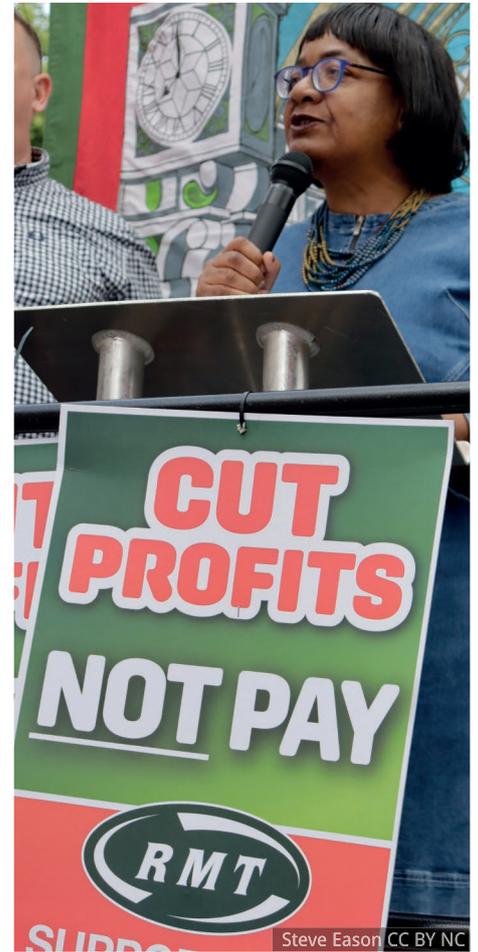
But we also need to ensure that none of this is frittered away with further prices rises. That means taking control of the major privatised industries initially through regulation of prices, investment, pay and shareholder dividends. We should nationalise those who cannot cope with an unrigged system.

To get out of the crisis we need a major programme of public-led investment, including a National Investment Bank, to ensure the stupidities of privatisation and under-investment are reversed.

The mantra that 'there is no money left' is false. We just need to tax the money in idle hands of the huge companies who refuse to invest it. We can and should put it to good use for the 99%.

There is an alternative - let's fight for it.

• **Diane Abbott is MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington**



Stand Up To Racism International Conference

From the Rwanda deportation flights and the Nationality and Borders Act, racism is at the heart of government policy. Join Stand Up To Racism's international conference featuring a host of leading anti-racist voices including Bell Ribeiro-Addy and Shami Chakrabarti.

Attempts to divide and rule through the scapegoating of refugees, migrants and the Muslim community are central to attempts to deflect criticism of those truly responsible for the cost of living crisis - our current government.

Ministers also deny the institutional racism exposed by the Black Lives Matter movement and highlighted by disproportionate deaths amongst black workers and communities in the COVID-19 crisis and the recent appalling case of ChildQ.

It's crucial that we oppose attempts to divide our communities in the face of the growing economic crisis. We need unity. Join us in fighting to build a mass antiracist movement.

Saturday, 15 October 2022, 11am-5pm

London and online

Register at <https://bit.ly/SUTRconf2022>





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We need to come together, fight and win

**Mark Serwotka,
General Secretary, PCS**

The coming months are going to be like something we have never experienced before, with multiple crises all unfolding at the same time. Unions need to be up for the fight because the outlook is unimaginably bleak.

14.5 million people are living in poverty. Millions are already struggling. Once the January energy price rise comes into effect, it's predicted that 39 million people will be in fuel poverty, a staggering 54% of the country. This level of suffering in one of the richest nations on earth is unconscionable.

So why are things so bad and going to get much worse? The answer is simple: a relentless attack on people's living standards by successive Conservative governments. Billions of pounds have been slashed from the welfare state, public services and housing. On top of this, pay has stagnated and millions of

workers haven't had a real-terms pay rise for over ten years.

It was working-class people who paid the price for the 2008 banking crisis and it will be an injustice if the fallout of the crises-ridden last few years sees the same thing happen again. After being battered by austerity for more than a decade and now abandoned by the government at a time of crisis, workers are saying enough is enough.

The insulting pay offers put forward by employers and their pay review bodies fall way short of what's needed during a time of double-digit inflation and have been roundly rejected by unions. Couple this with further assaults on terms and conditions and it's no surprise there's already been a wave of strike action across the country, with workers from the public and private sectors taking a stand. More unions are balloting their members at the moment or will be doing so very soon, including my union PCS.

The attacks are on every front and they're never-ending. That's why PCS is holding a national statutory ballot on the issue of pay, pensions, redundancy pay

and job cuts. Our demands are for the government to not only shield members from the impact of the cost of living crisis but to compensate them for the decades-long onslaught on their living standards.

The situation in other unions will be similar and we all need to channel this anger into a joint campaign across the public and private sectors that can win for members.

We can share ideas and tactics on how to organise, and how beat the government's anti-trade union legislation and we can discuss where joint-up, targeted action can have the biggest impact.

Now is the time for the TUC and the unions within it to be bold and radical.

The following months will be decisive for our movement as we build a campaign against a backdrop of an unprecedented crisis for our members. The consequences if we don't get this right will be disastrous. Now more than ever, we need to come together, fight and win.

• A longer version of this piece is available at [LabourOutlook.org](https://labouroutlook.org)

Resist Truss & co's anti-trade union laws

**Sarah Woolley,
General Secretary,
Bakers, Food and
Allied Workers Union**

The Tories have always held trade unions in contempt, as we empower workers to stand together to demand better and support them doing so, which goes against their ethos of helping the rich get

richer and the working class 'knowing their place'.

This new round of restrictions is nothing more than the Tories flexing their muscles in an attempt to remind working people who are in charge.

They are focusing on making strike action more difficult and supporting employers to strike bust, after increasing the powers of the Certification Officer in what we can only presume is an attempt to strangle trade unions financially,

These anti union laws are a priority for the Tories rather than supporting people struggling with the cost of living. Yet the reality is working people are worrying about what is to come when the true cost of the energy price hike is felt, and

are being pushed further into poverty, often relying on foodbanks and charity to survive. Many are starving.

In the court of public opinion though, the Tories are well off the mark with this new round of trade union restrictions.

Public support is increasing for unions taking action, and will continue to do so as workers fight back, win better wages terms and conditions and continue to smash the restrictions in place.

What the Tories need to start realizing is that they may be in Government, but we are 6 million working people strong and growing - and we are the powerful ones.

Keep Organising, Keep Agitating, Keep Winning - most importantly keep standing in Solidarity with each other!

A pivotal moment

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP

Boris Johnson is Prime Minister no more, but it's really no time to celebrate. Sadly, things are about to get a whole lot worse.

We are already in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, investment bank Goldman Sachs has predicted inflation of 22% by early next year and many talk of a recession worse than that in 2008. This is on top of an already weak economic picture following 12 years of austerity that brought our public services and social safety net to absolute breaking point.

So all eyes are on the new Prime Minister Liz Truss. What support will she offer during this period of pain, where people will go cold and hungry and many may lose their homes, livelihoods and hope?

Well frankly the answer is sadly not much, other than low taxes, fracking and a resolute refusal to impose a windfall tax on the excessive profits of oil and gas producers.

This is the Prime Minister who is against wealth distribution, thinks tax cuts that favour the rich are fair, is pro fracking, co-authored a book calling British workers among the worst idlers in the world and advocated widespread roll out of enterprise zones offering freedom from corporate and personal taxes and minimal regulation.

Of course, we have seen a brief flurry of largely insufficient cost-of-living support measures in an attempt to boost the PM's poll ratings but thereafter we are heading down a very dystopian road indeed.

A road which revives the most malign

and destructive aspects of failed 1980's right wing 'trickle down' economic doctrine.

And if you dare to speak out when your health and safety or employment rights are thrown out the window? Well the PM has also promised to introduce legislation targeting action by trade unions and increasing the ballot threshold required for strike action. This is despite her own Leadership election vote share being less than this proposed threshold!

But amidst this despair, have hope, because a movement is building. And we are at a pivotal social and political moment.

Thousands of people are already mobilising to campaign within their communities to demand action on the cost-of-living crisis.

And those demands aren't radical, they are simply the very bedrock of any civilised society. Ensuring everyone has the means to maintain a decent standard of life.

Demands like:

- A real inflation-proofed pay rise as well as inflation-proofed rise in pensions and benefits
- Roadmap to a £15 an hour minimum wage
- Banning fire and rehire and zero-hour contracts
- Repealing anti trade union laws and rolling out a new deal for workers
- Not only freezing the price cap but



solving the long-term failure of privatised energy through public ownership.

- A right to food for all, universal free school meals and a reinstatement of the universal credit £20 uplift.
- Rent caps, mortgage repayment caps for homeowners at risk, a mass council house building program and a charter for renters' rights.
- And to meet these demands there is the simple request of asking the wealthiest to pay their fair share in tax.

We must all play our part in this movement for change. This is a pivotal moment in labour history when we fight for our children's futures, for the lives we know they deserve: a full pay packet and a full and fruitful life.

• **Rebecca Long-Bailey is MP for Salford and Eccles**

DAY CONFERENCE

Solidarity - Struggle - Socialism

Join the in-person conference hosted by Arise – A Festival of Left Ideas

Saturday, 10 December, 10:00 – 16:30. Conway Hall, Central London

A national conference bringing together the Left & anti-Tory resistance movements in unity to discuss next steps in the fightback.

Themes, sessions & international guests to be confirmed - put the date in your diary today!

With: John McDonnell MP • Sarah Woolley, BFAWU General Secretary • Richard Burgon MP • Mick Whelan, ASLEF GS • Nadia Whittome MP • Zita Holbourne, Black Activists Rising Against Cuts (BARAC) • Lord John Henty QC • Hilary Schan, Momentum • Ben Chacko, Morning Star • Sabby Dhalu, Stand up to Racism • Heidi Chow, Debt Justice • Mick Burke, Socialist Economic Bulletin • Rachel Garnham, CLPD • Ruth Hayes, Labour Women Leading • Matt Willgress, Labour Outlook • Sakina Sheikh AM • Steve Howell, author, Game Changer • Holly Turner, NHS Workers Say No • Jon Trickett MP • Laura Smith • Barry Gardiner MP & more.

Register now at <https://bit.ly/ariseconference2022>



Defend Labour Party democracy!

Labour Party democracy is in a fragile state. Forde has exposed a damaging 'monoculture' at HQ and serious issues with racism and sexism, which remain unaddressed. Many members have no confidence that they will get a fair deal from Labour's disciplinary processes, with proscriptions meaning members who have given so much to Labour locally being expelled for minor retrospective associations, with appeals seemingly unforthcoming. We are seeing dubious practices against left MPs in trigger ballots and well-supported

candidates from the centre-left and trade unions excluded from parliamentary selections for no good reason.

But there is still much to fight for. Despite the factional suspension of Jeremy Corbyn from the Parliamentary Labour Party, multiple CLPs have once again put forward a rule change that would ensure fairer treatment – we will not give up on Jeremy! We must support Labour's Women's Committee in demanding that our standalone, policy-making Women's Conference is maintained and listened

**Rachel Garnham,
Vice-Chair, Campaign
for Labour Party
Democracy**

to; and support Labour Black Socialists and Disability Labour in challenging the Party's racism and ableism. Finally we must fight for a policy agenda to make the Labour Party worthy of the name, that will support trade unions and public ownership and take the fight to the Tories.



Real change in Ireland

In May, the people of the north had their say in an Assembly election. They voted for real change.

They voted for parties to work together to tackle the cost-of-living emergency, put money in their pockets and fix the health service.

Michelle O'Neill, as First Minister Designate, is ready to lead our team into the Executive to begin that work.

Workers and families need help now. They need an Executive in place. But the DUP, aided and abetted by the Tories, are holding the people to ransom by blocking a government being formed because they refuse to accept the outcome of the election.

And this is at a time when ordinary people are struggling to heat their homes and thousands of others are stuck on hospital waiting lists.

The big challenge for the new British Prime Minister Liz Truss is to immediately work to restore the Assembly and Executive.

To end the partisan approach which acts the interests of the DUP and disregards the wishes of everyone else.

Liz Truss should stop facilitating the DUP's destructive and self-serving boycott of government and end her sabre-rattling and reckless threats to break international law.

And she should get back to the table for talks with the EU to find solutions and give certainty to businesses in the north.

We need a change of policy and tack from this British government.

We need a Labour Party, as the opposition, to hold this Tory government to account and stand against their hostility to the Good Friday Agreement and attempts to tear up the Protocol which is helping businesses here to create jobs.

While the Tories undermine our economic interests and help deny people in the north a government, they have done little to cut household bills.

They are allowing big energy companies to walk away with eye-watering profits as they rip people off with huge price hikes.

Action needs to be taken urgently to shift the burden off workers, families and businesses.

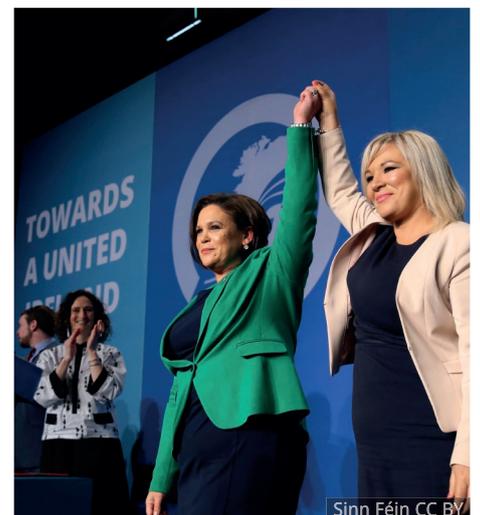
Órfhlaith Begley MP

We need to see taxes on fuel slashed and VAT on energy bills cut to help our businesses to protect jobs and keep their doors open.

There are big challenges and a tough number of months ahead for workers and families, but also for political leaders.

Sinn Féin is ready to do the business and form an Executive immediately and do the job that the people elected us to do.

• **Órfhlaith Begley is Sinn Féin MP for West Tyrone**



Now is the time to speak up for Palestine

Craig Jevon Smith

**Matt Willgress,
Labour & Palestine**

In August, Israel's renewed bombing of Gaza killed 44 Palestinians, including 15 children, and was described by the UN Special rapporteur description as an act contrary to International law.

This followed from the Israeli army's killing of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and the outlawing of 7 Palestinian NGOs.

These events clearly show the nature of the continuing illegal occupation and denial of the Palestinian peoples' fundamental rights - and are illustrative of the conclusions of leading human rights organisations including B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people.

Policy at Labour Conferences in 2018, 2019 and 2021 give a clear framework for solidarity, but far too often the Party leadership does not clearly speak up for the Palestinian people.

Now is the time for all the labour and union movement to renew calls for an ethical policy with regards to all UK trade with Israel in line with policy passed at previous Conferences, including banning trade with illegal settlements and ending the ongoing arms trade.

- **Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign at palestinecampaign.org**
- **Follow Labour & Palestine at www.twitter.com/LabourPalestine and www.facebook.com/LabourandPalestine**

For Peace & Disarmament

**Sam Browse,
Arise Festival volunteer**

August saw the conclusion of the UN nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, with delegates meeting in New York to negotiate and agree their obligations under the treaty, which aims to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament.

As the Ukraine war continues, alongside America's military build-up in the Indo-Pacific, it's no surprise that the

conference ended in acrimony and failure.

NATO's new Strategic Concept document mandates an increase in nuclear stockpiling, while Russia's arsenal is on high alert. The Ukraine war and China's challenge to US hegemony has heightened the threat of nuclear conflict to a level unseen since the 80s.

Our own Tory government is stoking the tensions with bellicose rhetoric. It has agreed to the return of US nuclear weapons at RAF Lakenheath, whilst Liz Truss boasts of her readiness to push the nuclear button.

We need an independent, multipolar foreign policy that puts people and planet first: working across borders to address all rights abuses and all aggressive wars, the climate emergency, the refugee crisis, and the health inequalities exposed by the pandemic.

Our alliance is not "the West versus the rest" but between the working people and peace campaigners of every country against the warmongering boss class - socialist internationalism versus the barbarism of war and nuclear disaster.

- **Get more information at www.stopwar.org.uk and www.cnduk.org**

Cuba - End the blockade!

Cuba's economic difficulties continue to have a significant impact on peoples' lives. Shortages of basic food items and medicines, planned power cuts, and delays to public transport challenge every family. The tightened blockade and Trump-era sanctions, the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and the health service, and an increase in world prices, have seen the most severe economic crisis since the 'special period' in the 90s.

Despite Biden's campaign promises the blockade remains in place, and announcements to reverse some of Trump's policies have yet to be implemented. Allowing remittances to resume, processing family visas, and opening some travel opportunities will help, but much more could be done if the US was genuine in its stated desire to help Cuba's people.

As has always been the way, Cubans are forced to rely on their own talent, ingenuity, and resilience to survive. The incredible achievement of Cuban scientists in producing three home-grown COVID-19 vaccines illustrates the potential the island has to thrive.

Yet at every turn the nefarious shadow of US policy blocks Cuba's path forward.

We must continue to press our own government to develop relations with Cuba, and strengthen our campaigning against the illegal US blockade, now in its 60th year.

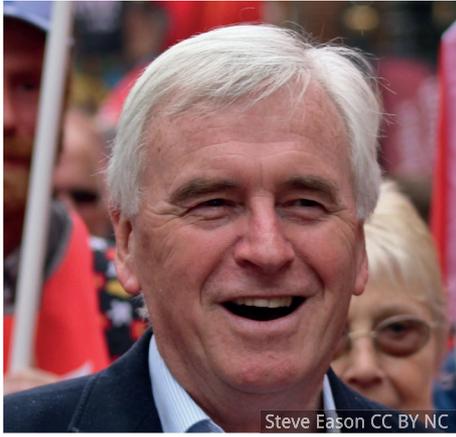
- **Support the CSC's Viva la Educación appeal sending essential teaching resources to schools at vivaeducacion.org.uk**

**Natasha Hickman, Cuba
Solidarity Campaign**



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Labour must stand with workers taking action



Steve Eason CC BY NC

John McDonnell MP

The last year has seen a new wave of radicalism sweeping through the trade union movement with a surge in industrial action, and a resurgence of rank-and-file activity and engagement.

Years of the “quiet life” approach, of “servicing” the members rather than taking the lead in organising them for action are over.

Unions are organising resistance to the class offensive from the establishment, winning strike after strike for their members and crucially, also increasingly winning the battle for public opinion.

After 12 years of austerity, with wages often still below wage levels of a decade ago and the growth of casualised, insecure work, trade union members

are increasingly looking to their union for protection and are prepared to take action.

Numerous industrial disputes have broken out across the trade union movement in this period starting with the college lecturers in UCU to RMT’s London Underground workers and PCS members successfully striking in the Royal Parks, to Unite beating off fire and rehire tactics of employers across the economy, and more recently the summer of solidarity with the RMT, TSSA and ASLEF transport strikes, the Criminal Bar strike, CWU strikes in BT and Royal Mail, and many more on the way.

This wave of action is a reaction to the economic realities working-class people are facing. Millions are being hit by the deepening cost-of-living crisis, which has become the key mobilising factor in the increasing wave of industrial disputes, and that is why there is an unprecedented level of sympathy for strikes that have taken place.

In this context, it is extremely concerning we have arrived at a situation where a Labour leader instructed shadow ministers not to attend picket lines.

Concerned perhaps at the reaction of the right-wing media, crass decisions have seemingly been made not to back our unions in disputes, no matter how just their cause.

This won’t help us win the Labour Government we all so desperately need,

as it isn’t just a complete misreading of the mood within the Labour and trade union movement but also among the general public, who as are consistently backing those taking action.

When I joined the party, Labour MPs joining picket lines was not exceptional; it was expected of them. Indeed I remember when Labour cabinet ministers joined us on the Grunwick picket lines.

The trade union movement had founded the Labour party to serve as the voice of labour in parliament. To be a Labour party member in those days, you had to demonstrate that you were a trade union member. The basic responsibility of trade union members is to support one another. It’s called solidarity. There was no exemption from the basic duty to show solidarity just because party members and trade unionists had selected you to be an MP and serve the movement as a minister or shadow minister. And this should be the case again.

For Labour to win and to do what is right, our duty is clear - to stand up for one another in the Labour and trade union movement as this summer of solidarity becomes a massive wave of resistance against the Tory offensive and an Autumn of Action.

• **John McDonnell is MP for Hayes and Harlington**

Left wins in Young Labour – for a socialist future

Fraser McGuire, Chair of East Midlands Young Labour

The results of the Labour Party’s internal elections were announced on September 1st and showed clearly that there is still appetite for genuine socialist ideas within the party. In the Young Labour (YL) elections, the Socialist Future slate won twelve out of sixteen positions on the National Committee, whilst winning a majority on the new Labour Students (LS) committee.

Earlier this year Keir Starmer slashed YL’s funds, cancelled the annual conference

for young party members and stopped the YL committee from having access to their Twitter account- effectively censoring them. This was criticised by many young activists as an attack on a democratically elected committee that represents thousands of party members.

The new YL committee has a very clear mandate from the young members of the party, whilst also reflecting the steadily increasing support for socialist policies amongst young people outside of Labour. This unequivocal democratic mandate should provide ammunition for the new committee to fight for the restoration of YL funding and more autonomy. It is significant that the

victory of the Left in the YL elections comes despite a considerable number of YL members becoming disillusioned and leaving the party. This goes to show the continuing strength left-wing ideas maintain.

At a time of huge pressures on workers’ pay, driven by accelerating inflation and incompetent government, a key goal for the new leadership of YL over the next two years must be strengthening relationships with Trade Unions and grassroots extra-parliamentary campaigns as this will empower many more young people within our communities.

Let’s fight for a socialist future!