

# Labour Internationalist

Monthly publication of the British supporters of the Organising Committee  
for the Reconstitution of the Fourth International (OCRFI)

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## Who we are, What we stand for

We believe that the working class needs to rely on its own efforts, both at home and around the world, to defend its interests against a capitalist system that is determined to extract maximum profit regardless of the human and environmental cost.

We believe that the capitalist system, based on private ownership of the means of production, cannot be reformed and has to be abolished by means of a proletarian revolution that will introduce socialism.

We stand on the founding programme of the Fourth International, the *Transitional Programme*, which says in particular: "It is necessary to help the masses, in the process of their daily struggles, to find the bridge between their current demands and the programme of the socialist revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands which stem from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class, and invariably lead to the same conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The working class's struggle against the capitalist system – on its own account as well as on behalf of all of the oppressed – needs to be united and based on class independence from capital and its national and international institutions.

This means defending the organisations which the workers have built, and helping the workers themselves to build new forms of organisation to carry out their struggle in ways which they decide on freely and which they control.

Often, this also means opposing those in the labour movement who ignore the mandate of their membership and co-operate with capitalism's plans, at the workplace, institutional or State level.

*Labour Internationalist* aims to be part of the fight against that process of integrating the working-class organisations into capitalism's plans.

*Labour Internationalist* therefore focuses on helping to advance the struggle by the working class in its own interests – locally, nationally and internationally.

Consistent with this view, *Labour Internationalist* defines itself as a forum of class struggle that is open to all individuals, groups and currents in the labour movement that are committed to political independence of the working class and to internationalism.

**More than 100,000  
dead, 1.72 million  
unemployed, hundreds  
of thousands of jobs  
cut**

**WE CANNOT LET THIS  
CONTINUE!**

**We are ready and  
willing to fight back –  
no more support for the  
government "in the  
national interest"!**

## EDITORIAL

As the Covid-19 death-toll passes 100,000, well in excess of the 70,000 civilians who died during the whole of World War Two, there is growing anger among workers and the wider population at the measures being implemented by the Tory government.

A government that is focused on blaming the public for the lack of progress in combatting the virus, on hoping that the vaccination programme will prove to be the solution to its continuing failures, and on instilling fear about new variants of the virus while covering up the fact that the variants only emerged thanks to the government's inaction, delays and inadequate measures. A government that continues to channel hundreds of millions in public money to its private-sector cronies and party donors every month, at the same time as thousands of people lose their incomes and their jobs.

People are being told to stay at home "to protect the NHS" by the same politicians who have driven the NHS into the ground, systematically starving it of public funding for more than 10 years in order to open it up to privatisation, the same politicians who voted against a pay-rise for nurses two years ago and then hypocritically co-opted the people's spontaneous expressions of gratitude and appreciation into a cynical "Clap for Carers" PR exercise. The same politicians who have inflicted exhaustion, clinical depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder on NHS and care home staff, and put thousands of families in the horrific situation of not knowing when their loved ones might receive treatment for other life-threatening conditions (in addition to the millions of people – 4.46 million in England alone – who are left waiting for more routine treatments that include knee and hip replacement surgery).

Meanwhile, the government's inaction, criminal negligence and corruption is still being ignored by the Starmer leadership and the TUC leadership, as they continue to support the latest in a long line of inadequate and mistimed measures, still prioritising the so-called "national interest" over the interests and obvious needs of working people.

The true meaning of "national interest" is to give the capitalists a free hand in destroying the lives and livelihoods of working people in their never-ending search for profit.

The complicity of the Labour Party and TUC leaderships in British capitalism's offensive against working people is echoed by the newly-launched Project for Peace and Justice, whose champions include Jeremy Corbyn and Len McCluskey (see "Open Forum", page 4).

The working class wants to fight back. And that fightback is taking place. Workers are resisting, despite too often being left hanging by those at the highest levels who claim to lead them. On 7 January, 9,000 engineers and call centre workers (GMB members) at British Gas began a national five-day strike in response to the company's "fire and rehire" plans, similar to the failed attempt at British Airways. Despite bullying and intimidation by British Gas management during the first

strike action, the GMB set five more 24-hour strikes between 20 January and 1 February.

One of the problems highlighted by the GMB strike action is the lack of broad unity and solidarity: of the 20,000 British Gas employees being pressured to accept worse employment contracts or lose their jobs, around 7,000 frontline office workers represented by UNISON accepted the company's new terms in December 2020, and 4,000 non-unionised staff also agreed to sign new contracts. But the workers fighting for their jobs are not responsible for the lack of unity and solidarity; that responsibility lies with their leaders, who are consistently refusing to link up the workers' acts of resistance into a common cause on basic demands – there are even reports of offers of solidarity being ignored.

Another problem is that – unsurprisingly – the Starmer leadership has remained deafeningly silent on this and many other examples of organised resistance by workers. It is hard to think of a single example of Starmer and his cabal even using the word "unions" in its stream of statements on the health and economic crisis.

The challenge for working people today is to recognise the obstacles being put in their path by their leaderships, and to refuse to be isolated. The challenge is to channel their frustration, fear and anger into fighting back practically against the attacks on their lives and livelihoods they are facing. But that fightback needs to be based on united action on common demands, based on linking up the various acts of resistance and strikes and co-ordinating the action that needs to be taken.

There is no more time to lose! More than 100,000 lives have been needlessly lost, and tens of thousands of livelihoods have been needlessly destroyed. As this criminally negligent government and its "national interest" supporters gaslight the people and abandon them to an even worse repeat of the disaster last spring, let us also remember and repeat that the emergency demands put forward by *Labour Internationalist* last April – including: requisition the billions given to the banks and big businesses and apply them to emergency measures to directly protect the population; requisition big companies to serve in the production of everything that is lacking today in the NHS; ban "temporary" layoffs, job-cuts and bogus self-employment; full pay immediately for all self-isolated workers, whatever their work status; financial security for all, scrap Universal Credit – are still in the best interests of the working class and must be met! Today, that list of demands must also include requisitioning the big pharmaceutical labs to produce the necessary vaccine doses at cost rather than at a profit for private companies.

And all of this can only be carried out by a government serving the interests of the working class, a workers' government that breaks with the capitalist system and its institutions.

26 January

# SNAPSHOTS OF THE CRISIS

## 2 January: Teaching unions defy government

The government continues to pressure schools to reopen, but the NEU advises primary school staff it is unsafe to reopen classrooms as scheduled by the government, and says that all primary and secondary schools should remain closed for two weeks after the Christmas break. The NASUWT and the ASCL also call for a temporary nationwide move to remote education for the vast majority of pupils. NEU Joint General Secretary Kevin Courtney condemns the government's "reckless approach to their central duty to safeguard public health", and says that NEU members who are penalised by their headteachers for refusing to work on school premises can rely on the union for support with any legal action. Meanwhile, the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) and the ASCL begin legal action against the government, demanding it reveal the safety evidence for its reopening schedule. The Labour Party's leader, deputy leader and Shadow Education Secretary make no comment, neither officially nor on social media.

## 4 January: Starmer keeps in step with government

The day after Johnson appeared on BBC's *The Andrew Marr Show* and said that schools "are absolutely safe", he announces another national lockdown, saying that schools "may act as vectors of transmission, causing the virus to spread between households" – a fact that had been highlighted by health scientists for months. When news of the latest government lockdown is leaked one hour before the announcement, Keir Starmer – who totally supported the government's policy and ignored the teaching unions – rushes to give an interview to Sky News, in which he "firms up" his position, including a call for schools to shut.

## 4 January: Covid-19 "out of control" in London

Prof Stephen Reicher, a member of the government's SAGE scientific advisory group, reveals on Sky News that one in four Londoners had tested positive for the virus, adding

that by World Health Organisation standards, any more than one in twenty is considered "out of control". Reicher condemned the government's and Keir Starmer's determination to keep schools open, saying "When a tsunami is coming towards you, 'wait and see' is not a wise policy."

## 7 January: GMB begins strike action at British Gas

The 9,000 British Gas engineers and call centre workers who are GMB members begin a national five-day strike in response to the company's "fire and rehire" plans, similar to the British Airways attempt which was finally dropped. The GMB accuses Centrica, the owner of British Gas, of "bullying" its 20,000 employees to accept worse employment contracts or lose their jobs. Around 7,000 frontline office workers represented by UNISON accepted the energy company's new terms in December 2020, and 4,000 non-unionised staff also agreed to sign new contracts.

## 8 January: NHS crisis caused by two decades of cuts and privatisation

Independent news website *The Skwawkbox* highlights a summary circulating among doctors which shows that the current collapse of the NHS is due to two decades of real-term cuts and privatisation under New Labour and the Tories. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of hospital beds in the UK was cut from 240,000 to 164,000, a reduction of 32 percent. During the same period, the UK's population rose by 14 percent, with the percentage of people aged over 65 increasing every year and putting more pressure on the system, coupled with unfilled clinical posts in the NHS heading into the pandemic in 2020.

## 13 January: Record daily death-toll pushes total past 100,000

Government figures show a record 1,564 deaths in one day, bringing the UK total involving Covid-19 to 101,160. The government's official figure, which only counts deaths known to have happened within 28 days of a positive Covid-19 test, stands at 84,767. On 26 January, the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

said the UK had passed the 100,000 threshold on 7 January, based on death certificates. That same day, the government's official figure also passed 100,000 (to 100,162) after 1,631 daily deaths were reported within 28 days of a positive test.

## 15 January: Government ten months too late on travel ban

A full 10 months after the first recorded Covid-19 death in the UK, the government announces a travel ban into the UK on anyone who cannot prove they are virus-free. In late April 2020, there were press reports saying that the government planned to quarantine for two weeks anyone arriving in the UK from abroad. At that point, nobody travelling to the UK – even from virus hot-spots like China, Italy, Spain and France – was checked on arrival, including the 3,000 Atletico Madrid fans who arrived in Liverpool on 11 March, when Madrid was already a virus hot-spot and under partial lockdown. On 5 May, it emerged that 18.1m people had arrived in the UK by air between 1 January and 23 March, and only 273 were formally quarantined. On 13 May, one of the government's chief scientific advisers revealed that at least 95,000 people had entered the UK from overseas after the coronavirus lockdown was imposed. On 10 May, the government announced a quarantine for arrivals from abroad...from 1 June.

## 17 January: Lecturers and students threaten strike action

The University and College Union (UCU) says it will ballot its members to strike against the resumption of in-person teaching if any university attempts to organise the return of its staff to campuses over the next six months while staff feel it is unsafe. The move comes as the National Union of Students demands that universities stop charging students fees and offer them rent rebates while they are unable to use their accommodation, with thousands planning rent strikes.

## 17 January: UK has "world-beating" death rate

Johns Hopkins University CSSE Covid-19 data show that the UK leads

the world in terms of the seven-day average of new daily Covid-19 deaths per million people. In the period studied, the UK had 16.55 deaths per million, compared to 14.82 in Portugal, 10.03 in the United States and 9.5 in Azania/South Africa.

### **25 January: ONS understates death figures in education**

On 22 January, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) criticises the ONS for lack of clarity and context in the ONS's data on the risks associated with different occupations, and in particular the ONS's analysis on schools, which was exploited by the Tories to support their discredited claim that schools were safe environments. Various media quoted the latest ONS data, reporting that 139 education staff had died of Covid-19...which would mean nine

staff coming back to life compared to the ONS's death-toll of 148 in June 2020. This figure allowed the media to claim that education settings carry no higher risk than elsewhere. On 25 January, the *TES* publishes the true figure of at least 570 deaths, quoting the @ToryFibs analysis of the ONS data showing that the ONS understated the headline figure by excluding staff over the age of 64. The same day, the NEU reveals that Department for Education data showed that rates of infection among education staff is between twice as high and seven times as high as in the wider population.

### **26 January: Unemployment reaches four-year high**

In its latest figures, the ONS says that the unemployment rate rose to 5.0 per cent in the three months to the

end of November, representing around 1.72 million people. This is 418,000 more than in the same period the previous year, and 202,000 higher than in the previous quarter. The number of payroll employees has fallen by 828,000 since February 2020. Job losses were most heavily concentrated among younger workers (aged 25-34), and in the retail and hospitality sectors. Analysis by the Alliance for Full Employment – based on other data sources, such as tax records, the benefit claimant count and business surveys – suggests that unemployment is already more than 2 million and likely to rise to 3.5 million later this year. According to the ONS, almost 4 million people were on “furlough” at the end of 2020.

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## **OPEN FORUM**

### **Project for Peace and Justice: Quitting the fight inside the Labour Party**

The newly-launched Project for Peace and Justice, whose champions include Jeremy Corbyn and Len McCluskey, aims to “bring people together for social and economic justice, peace, and human rights, in Britain and across the world”, to talk about the damage done by capitalism in so many aspects of life. It aims to “form a network with other organisations to support communities in this difficult period while campaigning for a more decent and just economy”, but is silent about the practicalities of fighting back here and now.

By refusing to directly challenge the capitalist institutional framework today, and more specifically by refusing to challenge the Starmer leadership's support for that framework, the Project for Peace and Justice surrenders any right to speak on behalf of working people and instead acts as a diversion away from the fightback that needs to be waged.

Right now, Starmer and his supporters are giving a free hand to the Johnson government, and at the same time they are suspending Labour Party members and shutting down CLPs that dare to exercise basic party democracy by discussing the issues of the moment. While Starmer and Co. go about actively destroying the Labour Party as a party of the working class, the Project for Peace and Justice seems set on just offering tea and sympathy. This is a political choice which cannot be ignored.

*Labour Internationalist*

### **Stefan Cholewka's notes of the month**

#### **Workers are fighting back in the north west and around the country**

**By Stefan Cholewka, GMATUC Secretary (personal capacity)**

**W**orkers around the country are fighting back against the current attacks on their jobs and livelihoods being carried out by employers with the government's blessing, but the Labour Party and TUC leaderships are shamefully continuing to ignore the many examples of workers' resistance as part of their

endorsement of the government's measures in the so-called "national interest".

There is no lack of workers' fightback in the north-west region.

The nine weeks of strike action by **Unite** members at the Rolls Royce factory in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, succeeded in preventing the closure of the site, saving 350 jobs. The agreement reached with the company includes a 10-year manufacturing guarantee for the site, a guaranteed minimum headcount of 350 workers, and the creation of a "centre of excellence" training school with the restarting of an apprenticeship programme, which will create jobs for the local community.

Shop stewards were well-organised on the site, and their organising capacity inspired other campaigns across the union. They had an established strike fund which allowed them to take action, and the unique community connections made by the strikers added strength to their campaign.

**GMB** members taking strike action at British Gas received strong support from local MPs and councillors. The union has thanked everyone who had already given support in the dispute and is saying that it is seeking support from other unions as it plans further strike action. However, unlike the Unite dispute at Rolls Royce

Barnoldswick, which took inspiration from community campaigning and local trades council support, there has been a lack of response from the GMB to Greater Manchester Association of Trades Union Councils (GMATUC) affiliates who have been attempting to get in touch with the GMB to give practical solidarity and support on the ground.

The campaign by **NEU** members on safety at work in schools included the issuing of Section 44 notices, which boosted their confidence to take on more substantial safety campaigns and issues. There will be further issues that need to be dealt with as schools re-open. The problem with nursery schools still being open has also been highlighted, in addition to the specific issues regarding special schools.

The **UCU** has raised safety concerns with Novus (prison education provider), as teaching has been kept on-site in prisons. In higher education, there are three universities (Manchester Metropolitan, Liverpool John Moores, Lancaster) in dispute over the failure to transfer learning online. There is also a dispute over redundancies at the University of Central Lancashire, where UCU members gave strong support for action in a consultative ballot with a very high turnout, and are now looking to proceed to a statutory ballot.

## **The TUC is asking Johnson to ban "fire and rehire". We must fight for a ban on ALL job-cuts**

**By John Caseman, Unite member, Bristol**

**T**he latest official unemployment figures are not unexpected, but still make for grim reading. The unemployment rate is up to 5.0 per cent, the highest since 2016, which means 1.72 million people officially without a job – though the real total is probably higher, given that not everyone without a job gets included in the official count. We are told that the number of payroll employees has fallen by 828,000 since February 2020, and that young workers and workers in retail and hospitality have been hit the hardest.

Then we have the prospect of the government's "furlough" scheme ending in April, when another 4 million-plus workers will face the "choice" of simply being sacked or being "fired and rehired" on drastically-cut wages and worse conditions – assuming they will have a meaningful contract at all.

So, what is the TUC's response to these grim figures? It is teaming up with business leaders to plead with the Tories to extend the "furlough" scheme, with TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady going one further: "*Fire and rehire tactics have no place in modern Britain and must be outlawed.*" Fair enough. But then, she said: "*Boris Johnson promised to make the UK the best place in the world to work in. It's high time he delivered on this promise.*"

Hang on, the same Tories who have given billions to big business to enable them to "fire and rehire", the same Tories who have slashed and privatised the NHS for 10

years, forcing down wages and worsening work conditions, the same Tories who have forced hundreds of thousands of people to rely on food banks – THEY are the ones who Frances O'Grady thinks should provide the solution?

Besides, aren't ALL job-cuts unacceptable, especially in the current crisis?

Workers across the country – Unite members at Rolls Royce Barnoldswick, GMB members at British Gas and many others – are already showing what the right response has to be: fight back, organise strike action, and link up that fightback as broadly as possible to make sure it is successful.

But it's not just down to workers in individual workplaces to fight to defend their jobs. It's time to remind ourselves what the age-old union slogan "Unity is Strength" really means. The national leaders of our trade unions must make sure that the TUC is mandated to organise a national mobilisation against ALL job-cuts.

The bosses are taking advantage of the pandemic to drive down labour costs, imposing worse pay and conditions through "fire and rehire" and other tactics. Meanwhile, more than 100,000 people have died, more than 1.7 million people are unemployed, and hundreds of thousands more are facing unemployment in the weeks and months to come.

We must make this stop now.

## NEWS FROM THE PICKET LINE

### **Reading hospital security staff on strike over pay**

Security staff (Unite members) at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading will be striking over 20 days between 4 January and 12 February, as part of a battle with their private-sector employer over pay, harmonisation of sick pay, and enhanced pay for working nights, weekends and overtime.

The 23 security guards have already taken five days of strike action in 2020, which ended on 18 December. They voted unanimously to take strike action against Kingdom Services Group Ltd, a major corporate service provider with a £100 million-plus turnover. Unite has condemned the employer for using agency staff to undermine the strike.

Unite regional officer Jesika Parmar said: *"Our members are seeking a modest pay increase to £12 an hour for security officers and £13.00 an hour for security supervisors (...). Our lowly-paid members provide security 24/7 at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, which is on the Covid-19 frontline. However, the company continues to refuse to engage in meaningful talks over the 2020 pay award and other issues (...).*

*Our members were very reluctant to take industrial action during a national crisis, but felt strongly that the bosses were using coronavirus as an excuse to drive down pay and employment conditions, which is totally unacceptable."*

### **Birmingham Heartlands Hospital porters strike over imposed new rota**

Hospital porters (UNISON members) at Birmingham Heartlands Hospitals have been taking strike action since 1 January over the proposed imposition of a new rota, which would result in them working a rotating 8-hour shifts pattern. The proposed rota impacts on the porters' health and wellbeing, their caring responsibilities and their work/life balance, and for many would result in a significant cut in wages. The next three strike dates are 1-3 February.

### **Hackney education disputes lead to strike action**

Unite announced on 26 January that two separate industrial disputes affecting schools in Hackney (east London) will lead to three days of strike action, on 10-13 February. Ten teaching support staff at the Colvestone primary school and the Thomas Fairchild Community School, part of the Hackney-based Soaring Skies Federation which educates more than 600 children, will strike over potentially more than 18 jobs being at risk out of around 30 teaching support staff.

Meanwhile, 32 drivers and passenger assistants who take disabled children to and from school voted unanimously to strike over the failure of their

employer, Hackney Council, to make a one-off £500 Covid-19 payment and other health & safety issues.

Unite regional officer Onay Kasab said: *"The failure of both sets of employers to engage in constructive talks with Unite has left our members with no option but to reluctantly take strike action over three days in February – hopefully, the dovetailing of these two disputes will concentrate minds.*

*Our door for meaningful talks remains open 24/7, however, we cannot stand by while jobs, pay and employment conditions are cut – and our members should not pay the price for the Covid-19 pandemic."*

Unite is liaising with the other unions concerned about the plans in the Soaring Skies Federation dispute: GMB, NEU and UNISON.

### **Heathrow Airport braced for fresh strikes in bitter "fire and rehire" dispute**

Unite members at Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) will undertake renewed strike action in February in the increasingly bitter dispute over the company's decision to fire and rehire its entire workforce, which is forcing many workers into poverty.

The dispute is a result of HAL firing and rehiring its entire 4,000-strong workforce on vastly inferior contracts, resulting in workers facing pay-cuts of up to 25 per cent (£8,000 per annum).

The workforce took four days of strike action last December, and have now announced that they will take strike action on 5 February.

Different groups of workers will be striking at different times on this date. Unite members recorded an 84 per cent vote in favour of strike action, and the targeted action will involve firefighters, engineers, campus security, baggage operations, central terminal operations, and landside and airside operations.

Unite regional co-ordinating officer Wayne King said: *"HAL needs to understand that this dispute is not going away. Our members – who are being forced to move home, downsize their properties or give up their cars because of the cuts imposed on them by Heathrow Airport – are determined to keep fighting.*

*Our members have worked throughout the pandemic. Even now, as infection rates continue to climb, they are going into work, despite putting themselves and their families at risk of infection. That any employer can believe it is OK to permanently cut the pay of key workers at this time is unimaginable.*

*The cuts imposed by HAL are all about greed and not need. If this was genuinely about making savings because of the pandemic, these pay-cuts would have been temporary and not permanent. The management at the airport are guilty of using the Covid-19 pandemic to force through long-held plans to cut workers' pay."*

# INTERNATIONAL



The following international appeal was launched in mid-January with 278 initial signatories from 31 countries, including 11 signatories from Britain. We fully endorse this appeal and invite our readers to add their signature (contact details below) and circulate it as widely as possible for further endorsement.

*Labour Internationalist*

## **“Our proposal is to hold an International Conference of Working Women”**

All around the world, women are mobilising more and more in the fight for true equal rights between women and men.

Subjected to double oppression and double exploitation in every domain, as working women but also as mothers and as women, women are standing up against all forms of oppression, discrimination and violence, and against patriarchal domination.

We, engaged as we are in those struggles and mobilisations in our respective countries, know that the particular demands of women are part of the more general struggle of the working class for its emancipation.

However, and this is not contradictory, women have specific demands: equal pay, professional equality, legal equality, the setting up of structures for childcare, the right of women to self-determination, the right to choose regarding reproductive rights, and an end to the harassment and acts of violence they are subjected to as women.

This is why we propose that an international meeting be held before the workers' conference called by the IWC\*, involving working women engaged in the struggle to defend their existing rights, to win new rights and to win back the rights that have been lost.

In 1910, the Second International Conference of Socialist Women, held in Copenhagen, decided to organise the first annual International Women's Day on 19 March 1911, to commemorate the Revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune. And on 8 March 1917, Russian women marked International Women's Day by demonstrating in St. Petersburg to demand bread, peace and freedom. From 1920 onwards, International Women's Day has been celebrated on 8 March.

We propose that on the occasion of the initiatives taken in each country to celebrate on 8 March 2021 (public meetings, demonstrations, rallies, etc.), the proposal to hold an international meeting of working women be put to the participants and discussed, and that delegations of working women begin to be formed and mandated to attend it.

**Rubina Jamil, General Secretary of the All-Pakistan Trade Union Federation (APTUF), Pakistan**  
**Christel Keiser, National Secretary of the Democratic Independent Workers Party (POID), France**

\* The International Workers Committee Against War and Exploitation, For A Workers' International (IWC) was set up at the end of November 2016 in Mumbai (India) at an international conference that brought together 350 delegates, workers, trade union and political activists from some 40 countries. Website: [coi-iwc.org](http://coi-iwc.org)

### **Initial endorsers in Britain (all personal capacity)**

**Sarah Woolley**, General Secretary, BFAWU; **Jane Doolan**, UNISON NEC, Secretary, Islington UNISON; **Cllr Jane Gebbie**, Bridgend, UNISON; **Cllr Mouna Hamitouche**, Islington; **Fiona Monkman**, Chair, Islington UNISON; **Margaret Kristin Taylor**, Treasurer, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Trades Council; **Doreen McNally**, member, Unite Community Branch, Liverpool; **Sophie Dodd**, member, Liverpool Wavertree CLP; **Sussan Rassoulie Khataie**, Branch Committee member, Islington UNISON; **Ann Green**, British Pensioner Magazine; **Diana Leach**, member, Brighton & Hove UNISON; **Pauline Bradley**, member, Unite Community Branch, Glasgow.

To endorse the appeal for the IWC's International Conference of Working Women, please email [owcmumbai2016@gmail.com](mailto:owcmumbai2016@gmail.com), stating your name and organisation in the form they should appear publicly, and indicating whether you are signing in a personal capacity or on behalf of your organisation

## UNITED STATES

### Statement by Labor and Community for an Independent Party regarding the events in Washington on 6 January 2021

Labor and Community for an Independent Party (LCIP) condemns the 6 January 2021 actions of right-wing, confederate-flag-waving protestors who demonstrated and violently entered the Capitol as a response to POTUS Donald Trump's call to "take back the country." While the US Congress met to certify the Electoral College votes in the recent presidential election, the protestors stormed the Capitol, broke windows, and forcibly entered the building in an effort to occupy the Capitol. Never before in US history, until today – not even during the Civil War – has the confederate flag, a symbol of White Supremacy, racism, and slavery, been paraded through the US Capitol as it was today.



Photo credit: Evan Vucci | AP

The actions of these protestors were an attempted coup encouraged by POTUS and enabled by some Capitol police, who, in extreme contrast to how peaceful Black, immigrant, labour and other progressive protestors are usually treated, allowed these armed and violent protestors to enter the Capitol grounds. If they had been people of colour, they would not have been allowed to breach the barriers; they would have been shot on the spot.

However, irrespective of what the Democratic Party pundits are saying, today's events are a crisis within the capitalist ruling class and the US two-party system – not a crisis of democracy. The Electoral College is one of the most undemocratic institutions in this country, a holdover of the deals struck at the Continental Congress in the early days of the Republic.

Without in any way supporting the Electoral College or the two-party system, LCIP denounces those who stormed the Capitol today and tried to subvert the basic right to vote.

The right-wing riots in Washington, D.C. took place at a time when the US Congress was meeting to certify the votes of the Electoral College, a standard process in US presidential elections. However, in 2016, Donald Trump lost the election to his opponent by more than 3 million popular votes, and his opponent, Hillary Clinton, also won the popular vote 48 per cent to 46 per cent. Clearly, the popular (mass) vote favoured Donald Trump's opponent, but Donald Trump received 307 electoral votes and Hillary Clinton received 227 electoral votes – and the electoral vote determines the winner in US presidential elections. In 2016, Congress met, as usual and without interruption, to certify the Electoral College votes. In a supposedly "democratic" election in 2016, we had the Electoral College, yet again, deciding the presidency and not the masses of US voters!

LCIP calls for the building of an independent working-class party rooted in the trade unions and oppressed communities. It has taken a clear stand against voter suppression in the US and against all attempts to "find" votes or rig elections! LCIP supports the calls by trade unions and other working-class organisations nationwide to organise peaceful mass actions, including strikes, to defend the hard-won right to vote in opposition to continued attempts to disavow the popular votes cast in the recent presidential elections. Consistent with this stance, LCIP calls for peaceful mass protests everywhere in opposition to any attempted coup and to protect the votes cast by the masses of US voters, counted multiple times, and certified by each state's election commission.

Independent, mass working-class action is needed now more than ever in order to push back against new outbreaks of reactionary violence against the right to vote. All those responsible for today's fascist aggression must be held accountable, and this includes Donald Trump.

10:35 p.m. PST  
6 January 2021

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