



# STRIKE FEVER

## Philadelphia rally supports SAG-AFTRA strike

By Joe Piette and Betsey Piette  
 Philadelphia

Dozens of members of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) held a rally at Love Park in Philadelphia July 20. They were joined by an equal number of Philadelphia area unionists, including members of the Writers Guild (WGA) — who are also on strike, Teamsters Local 623 representing workers at UPS, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and others in a strong show of solidarity.

The highlights of the rally were the energetic talks by actors Sheryl Lee Ralph and Lisa Ann Walter from the popular TV show “Abbott Elementary,” set in Philadelphia.

Walter said: “When the world sees people on television and movies, they figure they’ve got it made; they’re all millionaires; they have several yachts. As the years have gone on, the business has paid those of us who are not the \$20 million actors less and less and less until it is just about basic wage.”

She spoke of problems she faced trying to raise four children in Los Angeles earlier in her career when her income was barely above minimum wage.

“This is not about your favorite stars on TV or in motion pictures,” Ralph told the crowd. “Eighty percent of our union is made up of plain old ordinary people trying to make a living.” Stressing the importance of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA striking at the same time, she said: “For the first time since the 1960s, both unions said enough is enough, and we demand more.”

Veteran actor David Morse and local elected officials and labor leaders spoke at the rally. Morse, whose work

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Sheryl Lee Ralph, star of ‘Abbott Elementary,’ addressing Philadelphia rally, July 22, 2023.

WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

## Thousands in Atlanta back strikes

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
 Atlanta

Mass rallies and militant worker solidarity are becoming an almost everyday occurrence in Atlanta. On July 18, a rally in support of striking members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Actors (SAG-AFTRA) brought out a crowd of over 1,000 people.

The main hall of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 479 was filled to standing room only and five additional watch rooms with TV monitors were filled to capacity.

SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher and National Executive Director Duncan Crabtree-Ireland provided an update on the unsatisfactory negotiations with executives of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) over Zoom. Other labor activists, including members of Starbucks Workers United, were among those in the loud crowd determined to win the strike demands.

Around 180 workers at Republic Services-Waste Management, who collect the garbage from hospitals, industrial sites and other businesses, held a rally on July 21 outside the facility’s Bankhead site. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, their job is one of the most dangerous and deadly. Yet, despite the very necessary work they do, their grievances about low pay, long

hours, safety issues and more get little attention from Republic bosses. These Teamsters union members have voted to strike when their contract expires on July 31 if their demands are not met. The rally numbers were bolstered by other union and community supporters.

As the current United Parcel Service (UPS) contract with the Teamsters union approaches its end date of July 31, “practice” pickets have been occurring across the country, including in Atlanta and all over Georgia, at various UPS facilities. Other union members and labor allies have joined these actions to make clear to UPS that the community has the workers’ backs.

That solidarity and support was also evident at a huge rally held July 22 in the new Teamsters Local 728 hall. National Teamsters President Sean O’Brien was the featured speaker. The crowd roared in approval as he made clear the union’s determination to see the billions of dollars in profits—that the corporation raked in off the hard work of 340,000 Teamsters—go to higher wages, improved benefits, and the upgrading of tens of thousands of part-time workers into full-time status.

For months, O’Brien has stated, without equivocation, that if a satisfactory contract is not reached by midnight July 31, all 340,000 UPS Teamsters will go on strike.

Although negotiations had broken off, it is reported that talks will resume on July 25.

The clock is ticking down!

*Dianne Mathiowetz is a retired auto worker who worked 30 years on General Motors assembly lines, a United Auto Workers Local 10 member and producer and co-host of The Labor Forum on WRFG 89.3 FM.*



Support for UPS Teamsters, Atlanta, July 22, 2023. PHOTO: TEAMSTERS



Solidarity with SAG-AFTRA strikers, Atlanta, July 18, 2023. PHOTO: SAG-AFTRA

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# Stop Congressional support for Israeli apartheid!

In 1972, Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-California) introduced a bill on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus (founded in 1971), calling on Congress to pressure South Africa to end apartheid and other racist practices. CBC members would introduce at least 15 more such bills until the U.S. Congress finally passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986.

Congress wasn't any more liberal in 1986 than in 1972, but a broad anti-apartheid movement had developed in the interim. Over 5,000 people were arrested for protesting in front of the South African Embassy in the U.S. Spearheaded by Black activists, the movement to divest, or cease operations in South Africa, forced universities and businesses to withdraw investment dollars.

However, the real game changer was the growing success of the armed wing of the African National Congress — uMkhonto we Sizwe.

During her heroic address to Congress, prior to a July 18 vote to support Israel and deny it is an apartheid and racist state, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan) told Congress, "Don't forget, apartheid South Africa once had bipartisan support in Congress too."

Tlaib is the first Palestinian American woman elected to Congress. During the debate on the pro-Israel resolution, Tlaib delivered a scathing indictment of Israel's genocidal policies impacting Palestinians. She quoted from current Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who recently said about Palestinians: "Beat them up not once, but repeatedly. Beat them up until it's unbearable." And he said that Israel must: "Crush Palestinian hopes for a fully sovereign state."

Tlaib and nine other colleagues boycotted Israeli President Isaac Herzog's address to a joint session of Congress. A press release from Tlaib and Rep. Cori Bush (D-Missouri), who also voted against the resolution, read in part: "It's contradictory to claim to support human rights when you're arming the oppressors with billions of dollars of bullets and bombs. It is hypocritical to claim to be deeply concerned about attacks on Palestinian families, and then smile for a photo op with the president of the government enabling these human rights abuses and

maintaining the status quo.

"The facts are clear, and the international consensus is resounding — Israel is an apartheid state. To assert otherwise in the face of the colossal body of evidence and the consensus of the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'Tselem — the largest human rights organization in Israel — and countless others is to deny this reality." (tinyurl.com/mrxn7r4n)

The lopsided congressional vote came as no surprise. Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign aid — \$150 billion between 1999 and 2022. The U.S. is Israel's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade at \$50 billion by 2023. Much like their relationship with apartheid South Africa, U.S. corporate investments in Israel are the deciding factor behind any congressional vote.

But as with South Africa, the progressive anti-Israel movement, including the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign, is growing. And the militancy of Palestinian resistance is also on the rise in what many now call the third Intifada.

Massive 'pro-democracy' demonstrations by Israelis are taking place right now. But none openly oppose the oppression of Palestinians — essentially exposing the apartheid nature of Israel.

Workers World fully asserts that the apartheid state of Israel has NO right to exist. Founded with the brutal, forced removal of hundreds of thousands of indigenous Palestinians, Israel should never have been recognized as a state. Palestinians were never given a say on Israeli "statehood" imposed on them by the United Nations-brokered cease-fire in 1949.

Without the billions of dollars in backing from the U.S. in weapons and trade, Israel could not exist today. We demand, "Stop U.S. money and weapons to Israel!" □



Representative Rashida Tlaib, (D-Michigan)

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Workers World  
121 W. 27th St., Suite 404  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: [wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)  
Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)



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Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette  
Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes  
*Tear Down the Walls!* Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly  
Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder  
Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, Steve Gillis and K. James  
Contributing Editors: G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Otis Grotewohl, Gloria Rubac  
Mundo Obrero: Deborah Rodriguez, Carlos Vargas  
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## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

**National Office**  
121 W. 27th St., Suite 404  
New York, NY 10001  
212.627.2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
PO Box 18123  
Atlanta, GA 30316  
404.627.0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Bay Area**  
P.O. Box 22947  
Oakland, CA 94609  
510.394.2207  
[bayarea@workers.org](mailto:bayarea@workers.org)

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617.522.6626  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
335 Richmond Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14222  
716.883.2534  
[buffalo@workers.org](mailto:buffalo@workers.org)

**Central Gulf Coast**  
(Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)  
[centralgulfc coast@workers.org](mailto:centralgulfc coast@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Durham, N.C.**  
919.322.9970  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Minnesota**  
[minnesota@workers.org](mailto:minnesota@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610.931.2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Portland, Ore.**  
[portland@workers.org](mailto:portland@workers.org)

**Salt Lake City**  
801.750.0248  
[slc@workers.org](mailto:slc@workers.org)

**San Antonio**  
[sanantonio@workers.org](mailto:sanantonio@workers.org)

**Seattle**  
[seattle@workers.org](mailto:seattle@workers.org)

**West Virginia**  
[WestVirginia@workers.org](mailto:WestVirginia@workers.org)

# Starbucks Workers United tour hits Philly

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Starbucks workers and organizers plus other area workers and union leaders rallied at Philadelphia City Hall on July 22. The rally was a planned stopping-off point for the 13-city "The Union Is Calling" bus tour, which includes Minneapolis-St. Paul; Atlanta; Chicago; Knoxville, Tennessee; Louisville, Kentucky; Pittsburgh; Philadelphia; Buffalo, New York; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Eugene and Portland, Oregon; and Seattle.

Over 335 Starbucks stores in 38 states and the District of Columbia have successfully unionized into Starbucks Workers United. But for over a year, Starbucks has racked up hundreds of federal labor violations while refusing to negotiate in good faith with the union.

Organizers demanded Philadelphia city officials remove a non-union Starbucks store from city-owned property on the other side of City Hall from the rally.

Starbucks workers used rainbow placards and fans to point out that workers' rights are queer and trans rights.

Speakers, including Starbucks Workers United President Lynne Fox and Danny Bauder, President of Philadelphia Council, AFL-CIO, also described Starbucks' hypocritical treatment of workers and the company's illegal union-busting campaign.

The union's nine "core demands" include the right to organize; a strong foundation of rights (seniority rights, grievance procedures and just cause employment); worker safety; fair wages; health care; no schedule reductions; consistent schedules; expanded leave of absence and personal time-off; and immediate access to the withheld benefits corporate officials have only been granting to non-union employees.

Protesting illegal union busting, workers at five Philadelphia locations went on strike July 23. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Starbucks Workers United President Lynne Fox addresses rally in Philadelphia, July 22, 2023.

# Boston Medical Center interns and residents organize for contract

By Madeline Stump  
Boston

Hundreds gathered near Boston Medical Center's (BMC) entrance, July 20, to support the residents and fellows of the Committee of Interns and Residents of Service Employees International Union (CIR/SEIU). Many BMC doctoral residents and fellows joined the rally. The crowd included BMC patients, representatives from 1199SEIU, the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Boston Teachers Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, and Boston City Councilors Ed Flynn, Liz Breadon and Ruthzee Louijeune.

During the rally, union members spoke of the importance of negotiating for competitive wages, substantially reduced-cost or free parking, and a living expenses stipend, among other benefit improvements, as demands for their new contract. For context, according to the BMC's website, a first-year resident's salary at BMC is currently just under \$67,000, making



BMC residents and interns rally, Boston, July 23, 2023.

PHOTO: MADELINE STUMP

them among the lowest-paid residents in the Boston area.

This non-competitive salary means that many of them are paying tremendous

portions of their monthly paychecks for rent alone. This has led some residents to work additional jobs on top of their 80-hour workweeks as residents;

routinely access food stamps; take out loans; and pursue other means in order to meet their basic needs while living in one of the most expensive cities in the U.S.

Speakers noted throughout that in negotiating a stronger and more fair contract, two of their main goals are to create more livable conditions for current residents and fellows, and to provide for the possibility of Boston Medical Center to both attract and retain doctors who more fully represent the communities which make up BMC's patients.

BMC is New England's largest safety-net hospital. This means the medical facility is designed to provide care to patients regardless of access to health insurance or ability to pay for their medical care. Consequently, patient loads at safety-net hospitals tend to include greater-than-average proportions of people from marginalized backgrounds.

To keep tabs on future progress made by the CIR/SEIU union at BMC, follow them on Instagram @cir\_bmc. □

# Philadelphia supports SAG-AFTRA strike

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includes "The Green Mile," Philadelphia-shot "12 Monkeys," and "Hack," about a Philadelphia taxi driver, told the crowd: "The studios want to make us poorer and themselves richer. There was always an

excuse as to why they couldn't make our lives better. AI is the excuse now."

Nicole Izanec, president of SAG-AFTRA Philadelphia, noted that most members of the local union are, "working to be middle class; the ones who are middle class are working to keep it."

She addressed a key strike issue: health insurance. "Qualifying for health care every year isn't a given by any means. Union members must make at least \$26,470 from their acting work in a given year to be eligible for coverage."

Some 11,000 members of the Writers

Guild have been on strike since May 2 against television and film studio giants like Netflix, Amazon, Sony, Disney, Fox and others. They were joined on July 13 by 160,000 actors in SAG-AFTRA. This united strike has effectively shut down studios in Hollywood, New York City and



Participants at the SAG-AFTRA rally in Philadelphia, July 22, 2023, where a popular chant was 'Philly is a union town!'



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE



Protesta en Atenas tras la muerte de cientos de migrantes en un naufragio, 15 de junio de 2023.

## Tras el asalto del alto tribunal a los derechos civiles

“Igualdad ante la ley”.

Estas palabras están inscritas sobre la entrada principal del edificio del Tribunal Supremo. Son un engaño y una mentira. Tres decisiones de los días 29 y 30 de junio deberían haber hecho añicos cualquier ilusión persistente de que el Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos existe para defender la justicia o la igualdad.

En primer lugar, el 29 de junio, el TSE votó 6-3 para erradicar lo que queda de la discriminación positiva en las admisiones a colegios y universidades. El tribunal prohibió hace tiempo las “cuotas” que obligaban a que un determinado número o porcentaje de los nuevos estudiantes fueran personas de color. Ahora se prohíben incluso las “políticas de admisión basadas en la raza”.

Un día después, el tribunal complicó aún más el acceso de los jóvenes negros, marrones y de todas las clases trabajadoras a la educación superior al anular el programa de perdón de deudas de préstamos estudiantiles del presidente Joe Biden. El plan, instituido el año pasado, aliviaba a millones de antiguos estudiantes agobiados por las deudas, condonando hasta 20.000 dólares en pagos de préstamos.

La decisión afecta a la clase trabajadora de todas las edades. El Detroit Free

Press del 2 de julio informa de que unas 864.000 personas de todas las edades solicitaron la cancelación de sus préstamos sólo en Michigan. Entre ellas se encuentran una maestra de 51 años, Lisa Mitchell, y su hija Briana, una estudiante de posgrado de 30 años con 70.000 dólares de deuda estudiantil ya acumulada.

Briana Mitchell explica: “Los costes de la vida ahora mismo son astronómicos, y creo que el alivio de no tener que pagar durante los últimos tres años me ha permitido invertir en mi vida de forma diferente a antes, especialmente siendo una mujer negra. Las mujeres negras, estadísticamente, ganan menos que sus homólogos blancos y masculinos”.

Las mujeres negras son las que más deben por sus estudios: “De media, las mujeres se gradúan con una deuda estudiantil de casi 22.000 dólares, mientras que la cifra para los hombres es de 18.880 dólares”, según un artículo de Politico del 9 de junio. Pero “las mujeres negras se gradúan con una deuda media de 37.558 dólares”.

Esta disparidad aumentará como resultado de ambas sentencias del SCOTUS. Las ramificaciones son muchas. Por ejemplo, si menos mujeres negras pueden graduarse de la escuela de medicina, entonces menos

mujeres negras están proporcionando atención médica a sus comunidades, lo que puede traducirse en una tasa aún mayor de mortalidad materna negra.

**Pero esperen — hay más**

No contento con dictar sentencias racistas dos días seguidos, el Tribunal Supremo aprovechó la oportunidad antes de su receso de verano para atacar a la comunidad LGBTQIA2S+. El tribunal falló a favor de una evangélica intolerante, concediéndole el derecho legal a negarse a diseñar una página web de bodas para parejas del mismo sexo.

El caso se basaba en un escenario ficticio. La diseñadora web de Colorado Lorie Smith afirmó que “Stewart” (sin apellido) se puso en contacto con ella en 2016 para construir un sitio web para su próximo matrimonio con “Mike”. Sin embargo, cuando un reportero de The New Republic se puso en contacto con Stewart, utilizando la información de contacto proporcionada al tribunal, Stewart no sabía nada del caso. No se identifica como gay y, como diseñador profesional de páginas web, no tendría ningún motivo para contratar a Smith.

No obstante, el Tribunal Supremo dictaminó que la ley antidiscriminación de

Colorado no podía impedir a Smith ejercer su llamado “derecho a la libertad de expresión” para practicar la discriminación si se le presentaba la oportunidad. Esta sentencia tiene consecuencias potencialmente ominosas, ya que implica que la Primera Enmienda podría utilizarse ahora para legitimar cualquier forma de discriminación.

**SCOTUS: pilar de la supremacía blanca**

Desde la creación del SCOTUS por hombres blancos ricos en 1789 hasta 1967, cuando Thurgood Marshall se convirtió en el primer juez negro, sólo hombres blancos formaron parte del tribunal. En 1981 se nombró a la primera mujer.

John Marshall, el cuarto presidente del Tribunal, fue durante toda su carrera un esclavista y un defensor del atroz sistema de esclavitud. El quinto juez designado, Roger Taney, fue el autor de la infame decisión Dred Scott, que declaró que “los derechos e inmunidades especiales garantizados a los ciudadanos no se aplican” a los afroamericanos.

Los días 29 y 30 de junio, esta institución antidemocrática no elegida continuó su tradición de defender la propiedad privada y la supremacía blanca.

¡Abolir el Tribunal Supremo! □

## COVID-19: An ongoing threat to health care workers

By Will Hodgkinson

Health care workers around the world continue to fight for basic health protections amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, the Scottish Healthcare Workers Coalition (SHWC) urged the government of Scotland to restore face mask mandates in health care settings. In May, following the lead of other bourgeois states like the Biden administration in the U.S.,

the Scottish government—under British authority—lifted these restrictions. This has endangered the lives of both health care workers and patients.

Despite the Scottish government’s claim that COVID-19 has entered “a calmer phase,” many medical groups, including the British Medical Association (BMA), denounced its decision as having no basis in science. Data show that COVID-19 continues to infect hundreds of people every week in Scotland as well as England, Wales and the north of Ireland. Medical workers, including all the members of the SHWC, remain at disproportionate risk of infection, with tens of thousands continuing to suffer from often disabling long COVID symptoms. (BBC July 17)

“With at least 4% of [National Health Service (NHS)] staff now living with chronic post-COVID complications, the Scottish government must follow the evidence and improve protections from the airborne spread [of the virus] in health care settings, not reduce them,” said Dr. Shaun Peter Qureshi, a member of the SHWC.

The plight of health care workers reveals



NHS doctors picketing for higher pay, London, July 20, 2023. PHOTO: VUK VALCIC

broader trends. An Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey found that around two million people in England, Scotland, and Wales have or are experiencing long COVID symptoms. According to a June 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study, almost one in five of the 40% of U.S. adults who reported having COVID-19 also have suffered from long COVID symptoms. (cdc.gov)

**Workers sacrificed for profit**

As Scotland’s disregard for workers’ health demonstrates, capitalist governments are intent on sacrificing workers, seniors, disabled people and other at-risk communities for the sake of ruling-class profits. But their attempts to “normalize” the pandemic cannot hide the fact that COVID-19 and the disabling conditions it is causing remain a global emergency.

Research presented in a recent Pfizer article shows that over 65 million people worldwide — 10% of those infected with COVID-19 — have reported long COVID symptoms. Astronomical as this number is, it is likely an underestimate, given the

flaws in pandemic tracking, testing, and diagnostics. (pfizer.com)

Many of those who have long COVID are unable to work and lack access to adequate health care resources. According to another ONS study, those experiencing long COVID are 40% more likely to be unemployed than those who reported no long COVID symptoms. (The Conversation, May 22)

This ongoing crisis, highlighted by the SHWC, demands an effective state response. Instead, Britain’s Conservative government continues to subject the single-payer NHS to devastating austerity measures.

For over a decade, the NHS has suffered from chronic underfunding and budget cuts that have resulted in long wait times and endemic delays for patients. This crisis has created a vicious cycle in which right-wing politicians use breakdowns in NHS care — caused by underfunding — as justification for further budget cuts to the NHS. By doing so, they hope ultimately to privatize health care in Britain altogether, providing a new source of extorted value for their bourgeois masters.

**Medical workers’ strikes hit low pay**

This past week, NHS consultants and junior doctors have gone on strike to protest their low pay, which, according to the BMA, has gone down by 35% in real wages since the 2008 recession. Starting July 13, junior doctors went on a five-day strike, with NHS consultants following them on July 20 and 21.

These strikes are the latest in a series

of workers’ actions to resist the neoliberal assault on the NHS. In June, NHS nurses went on strike, demanding higher wages and improved working conditions.

Despite these actions, Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs analyst and hedge-fund boss, has offered only a meager pay raise of 6% for consultants and 5% for nurses, medics and other medical workers. These proposed raises would come from the NHS’s already overstrained budget, and Sunak has refused to provide the Service with additional funding. To pressure Sunak’s government, the BMA has called for further walkouts in August.

That the government which presides over Wales, Scotland, England and the north of Ireland is attacking the NHS and doing away with basic medical safeguards during the ongoing pandemic reflects the priorities of the capitalist medical system, which turns disease and suffering into sources of profit.

As the dire situation NHS workers are fighting against illustrates, even the most sweeping social-democratic health care programs remain at constant risk of enclosure and privatization by the bourgeois state. Truly safe and effective medical care requires an entirely socialist health care system based on human need, not profit.

As a vital first step towards making such a future a reality, workers worldwide must act in solidarity with NHS employees in their struggle for higher pay and basic workplace protections, which would guarantee the health and well-being of both patients and health care workers. □