

TORIES WRECK NHS

KICK THEM OUT!



PAUL MATTHEWSON

But Labour won't deliver pay and funding we need

GARETH BROMHALL

AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKER, AND SWANSEA AND WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY

For years our NHS has been crumbling; decades of underfunding and privatisation have meant that its infrastructure is at breaking point.

The discovery of RAAC concrete in NHS buildings has closed wards and buildings, and added to the workload of already overstretched and under-resourced maintenance departments.

Meanwhile, Rishi Sunak and his front bench are floundering, scrambling to appeal to their shrinking base as their party languishes in the polls.

The recent scrapping of green measures and pushing back of deadlines, rumoured changes to inheritance tax, and the conscious stoking up of 'culture-war' issues is indicative of a Tory party in crisis, flailing wildly trying to minimise the level of their defeat at the next election.

Waiting lists continue to build, ambulance queues grow outside A&Es, and recent reports show the sheer scale of staff turnover, as more and more are forced out of the health service due to low pay, poor conditions and high workload.

Strike action by nurses, ambulance service staff, doctors and other NHS staff across the UK over the past year has shown the power that NHS staff have, and the mass support that is behind us.

The Tories threat of using the minimum service levels legislation, with the prospect of doctors and nurses being dismissed for exercising their right to strike, could unleash a huge backlash from the working class.

Public support for the NHS and its staff, coupled with an attack on our democratic rights, could trigger levels of industrial action and civil disobedience not seen in generations, especially if the union leaders give a fighting lead.

And the Tories have no answer to the crisis of their own creation; they are desperately attempting to save face and shore-up what support they have left. But this is against a Labour Party which, although likely to win at the next election, does not have the answers to this crisis either.

Starmer and his 'red Tory' cronies are using this time to appeal to a section of their supporters. But not the unions or working-class communities decimated by decades of austerity and privatisation. Instead it is the City of London and big business the Labour leaders appear more interested in courting.

What's needed to defend our NHS and many of the other victories of the working class is a new workers' party, instigated by the trade unions and bringing together socialist groups and community campaigners, with a socialist programme that puts at its core fully funding the NHS and kicking big business out of our health service.

DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?

The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

Send us reports of your workplace and community campaigns, short letters on working-class issues, or ideas for other articles.

CONTACT US

editors@socialistparty.org.uk
020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

DEADLINES

Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.

The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

SUBSCRIBE

to the Socialist for weekly working-class news, analysis and fighting strategy socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

- Paper subscription £4.50 a month, or £6.50 including Socialism Today
- E-subscription £2.50 a month, or £4 including Socialism Today

SOCIALISM TODAY

our monthly Marxist magazine socialismtoday.org

- Paper sub £3 a month, e-sub £2.50

SOCIALISM: THE PODCAST

on all major podcast platforms

FOLLOW US

facebook.com/CWISocialistParty
Instagram @SocialistPartyCWI
YouTube - Socialist Party
Twitter @Socialist_Party

SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International

socialistparty.org.uk
socialistworld.net

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Socialist Books: our publishing house socialistbooks.co.uk
Left Books: Marxist classics bookshop leftbooks.co.uk

OUR NEWSPAPER TEAM

Editor of the Socialist: Josh Asker
Editorial staff: Scott Jones, Ian Pattison, Paula Mitchell, Mark Best
Circulation manager: Chris Newby

ISSN 1366-9621
Published by Socialist Publications, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office
Printed by trade union labour at Reach Printing Services

Militant issue 1: October 1964
The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Birmingham lobby to save council jobs and services

Against the cuts and unelected commissioners



Birmingham council lobby on 25 September PHOTO: BRUM SP

CLIVE WALDER

BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

On Monday 25 September, 'Not For Sale' signs were displayed on the public notice board outside Birmingham Council House. This was the main slogan of Unison, Unite and GMB members as they lobbied an emergency meeting of Birmingham City Council. This meeting was held to approve an immediate freeze on all 'non-essential' spending in the wake of the council declaring 'effective bankruptcy' with a Section 114 notice.

The lobby was bigger and more militant than the previous week's demo. Speakers blamed council incompetence, not women workers wanting equal pay, for the financial problems.

Full details of the cuts, increased charges and potential tax hikes have yet to be announced. On top of the £87 million shortfall for the current financial year, the document voted on by councillors states: "There will need to be an extended period of rigorous spending control and tight financial constraint" - code for ongoing and increased austerity!

In addition, the council agreed to review assets, including public buildings, that could be sold off to help cover the £760 million equal pay bill resulting from chronic underpayment of women workers. The council is negotiating an 'exceptional financial support' loan from central government, most likely with strings attached.

Council workers are not going to

let the most vulnerable people in the city pay for financial incompetence, councillors refusing to fight for the resources needed for the city, or a 'rescue package' devised by unelected commissioners.

Union officials vowed to fight every cut, building closure and redundancy. They deserve full support in this. The council will hold a meeting to approve the detail of cuts and sell-offs in late October - this should be met with a mass demonstration!

With austerity measures clearly on the horizon, unions can fight for their members' jobs and the services people rely on. Clay Cross council saw off commissioners in the 1970s by not co-operating with them (see 'Clay Cross: When Labour councillors fought the Tory government' on www.socialistparty.org.uk) and Liverpool council in the 1980s prepared their struggle so well that the government didn't even suggest bringing in commissioners (see 'Council 'bankruptcy' crisis: Take the Liverpool road, make no cuts' on www.socialistparty.org.uk).

Birmingham needs to follow in these traditions, with councillors prepared to stand up for residents, to refuse to implement the cuts and launch a mass campaign of unions, workers and residents to demand the resources from the Tory government. Socialist Party members, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, have stood in council elections on this programme and welcome workers, community campaigners, students and more to stand with us.



Socialist Party members in Birmingham campaigning against austerity PHOTO: BRUM SP

Birmingham District of the National Education Union (NEU), representing teachers and teaching assistants across Birmingham schools, discussed how they can defend working conditions and public services in light of the council declaring effective bankruptcy. The motion below was passed overwhelmingly:

Birmingham NEU notes that:

- Birmingham City Council says it is "effectively bankrupt" and has issued a Section 114 notice halting all 'non-essential' expenditure
- There have been sharp cuts to council funding from Westminster since the austerity drive in 2010, with total council funding across England cut in real terms by more than 50% over the decade to 2020. The Local Government Association estimates English councils face a funding gap of almost £3 billion over the next two years just to keep services standing still
- Birmingham council has had its funding from government cut by £1 billion since 2010
- Birmingham council still had £668.4 million in reserves as of March this year, and extensive borrowing powers that could be used to buy time while fighting for the funding our city needs

Birmingham NEU believes that:

- There should be no attempts to make our members and other workers in Birmingham pay for this crisis
- There should be no attempts to divide the council's workforce, by 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. All should get equal pay for equal work, and a decent pay rise
- We need a mass campaign involving unions and community organisations to fight back against cuts to frontline services, to pay all workers fairly, and to stop our city being run by unelected commissioners

Birmingham NEU agrees

- To call on Birmingham Labour council to refuse to make cuts to services, and instead to use its reserves and borrowing powers, and mount a campaign with the trade unions and community for the funding necessary
- To demand that Keir Starmer immediately pledges that an incoming Labour government will underwrite any borrowing necessary by Birmingham City Council so that there are no further cuts to jobs and services
- To continue working with Birmingham Trades Union Council and sister trade unions to oppose any cuts to jobs and services

This motion shows the fighting approach by council unions needed to stop our public services and working-class communities paying the price for Blairite and Tory austerity with further cuts and privatisation.

We invite everyone who wants to discuss what this would look like to come to our public meeting, featuring socialist former MP Dave Nellist and local trade union activists:

7:30pm, Monday 2 October Top floor, The Wellington, Bennetts Hill, Birmingham City Centre, B2 5SN

Tory net-zero ruin

ONLY SOCIALIST CHANGE CAN STOP CLIMATE CATASTROPHE



WHAT WE THINK

Tory home secretary Suella Braverman says: "We're not going to save the planet by bankrupting the British people."

She spoke to Sky News after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's plans for substantial climate policy U-turns were leaked 72 hours early, provoking a barrage of criticism from different wings of the Tory Party and a whole range of capitalist bosses.

The same Tories that have overseen the steepest fall in living standards for a generation, and over a decade of economic stagnation, now expect people to believe that they are interested in ordinary people's bank balances!

In fact, the Tories are overseeing an unfolding local authority 'bankruptcy' crisis, with commissioners sent in to oversee Europe's biggest local authority, Birmingham City Council (see left).

Sunak has put back the date at which no more new petrol or diesel cars can be brought, from 2030 to 2035. Landlords will no longer be obliged to make their properties more energy efficient - hardly looking after the finances of tenants who have paid record heating bills last winter! And the date by which no new household gas boilers can be installed has also been put back to 2035. "We'll never force anyone to rip out their existing boiler and replace it with a heat pump", Sunak said. But that was never being proposed anyway! Other imaginary policies to be 'scrapped' included a meat tax and a Westminster-imposed seven-bin recycling policy.

Tory plans to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 were already woefully inadequate. Lord Deben, outgoing chair of the government's own Climate Change Committee, said before the U-turn that the government plans "will not fulfil the commitments."

And net zero by 2050 itself is not enough to avoid climate catastrophe. The consequences of extreme weather events are already destroying the lives of millions of working-class and poor people every year.

Electoral meltdown
Facing electoral disaster, with the clock ticking towards the December 2024 deadline to call the next general election, the Tories have been dipping further in the polls. Narrowly holding onto the Uxbridge and



PHOTOS: SIMON WALKER/NO 10 DOWNING STREET/CC AND RYAN ALDRID

**“““
The capitalists will ruthlessly look after their profit interests, ultimately attempting to make the working class pay for any climate measures introduced**

South Ruislip constituency in a June by-election, in which the Tories lost 11,000 votes since 2019, is deemed enough to attempt a populist appeal against climate measures.

In that election, anger at London Labour mayor Sadiq Khan's extension of the capital's punitive Ultra-Low Emission Zone hit Labour's vote. Khan, chair of Transport for London, is also overseeing 600 job cuts on London Underground, which RMT station staff will strike against on 4 and 6 October.

As on almost every other issue, on net-zero policy, not all Tories agree. In fact the Conservative Environment Network has around 100 MPs as members, the climate sceptical Net-Zero Scrutiny Group only around 20. "The WhatsApp groups are a bloodbath", one Tory MP said after the leak. Not for the first time and not for the last, as the world's most successful capitalist party tears itself apart.

Some industry bosses have slammed the announcements, especially in the energy and car manufacturing industries, concerned with the uncertainty it puts on their investments.

The Tories' biggest donor ahead of the 2019 election, billionaire John Cauldwell, has said he will not be donating again and failed to rule out backing Labour instead.

Capitalist climate chaos

Facing an increasingly unstable global economic climate, the capitalist class is split on how to deal with climate change, as it is on any number of issues. Car manufacturer Ford, which has invested £430 million in upgrading its UK plants to produce electric cars, criticised the plans. Other manufacturers such as Toyota and Jaguar Land Rover welcomed the move.

The upheaval of a transition to green industry has competing capitalists clambering to defend their existing profit-making operations and to try to make sure that it is them who get the upper hand in the battle for future market dominance and profits. So too, capitalist nation states compete to look after the dominant interests of their own capitalist classes.

Despite obscene profits for energy bosses - both fossil fuel and renewables - the industry is awash with state subsidies. £80 billion has subsidised UK fossil fuel industries since 2015, and £60 billion renewables.

That includes the energy price cap, brought in to avoid the capitalist class having to face up to working-class anger over even more eye-watering bills, but effectively acting to safeguard huge profits for the likes of BP and Shell. The £500 million of public funding given to private Tata Steel, to convert the furnaces at Port Talbot to 'electric arc furnaces' and in doing so destroying hundreds of jobs, is another example.

The capitalists will ruthlessly look after their profit interests, ultimately attempting to make the working class pay for any climate measures introduced.

Starmer's Labour

Labour, overwhelmingly the most likely party to lead government after the general election, has already postponed its pledge for £28 billion of green investment - citing fiscal constraints, and a desire not to frighten 'the markets' like Liz Truss.

The £28 billion could go the same way of other ditched pledges such as scrapping the two-child benefit cap, the pledge to abolish tuition fees, and others.

"I will introduce a new set of fiscal rules. These rules will apply to every decision taken by a Labour government. We will not borrow to fund day-to-day spending and we will reduce national debt as a share of the economy," Labour's shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves has promised the capitalists in the Financial Times.

Without that same illusive 'growth' Liz Truss was looking for, that means austerity. And growth of any substance is not on the cards. Over half of businesses polled in August and September reported a contraction in activity. A recession is likely.

Wholeheartedly committed to maintaining the capitalist order, and completely unprepared to seriously hit the bosses' profits, Labour will continue to oversee attacks on workers' living standards, and therefore at some stage face organised working-class anger. Strikes on the scale we have seen in the last year will be on the agenda under a Labour-led government.

Movements of workers and trade unions will be compelled to find organised political expressions too. The preparations for that can be made ahead of the general election by preparing a workers' list of trade union-backed candidates which could include Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott and Emma Dent Coad, alongside other trade unionists and socialists.

Such a stand could campaign for a massive programme of home insulation and heat pump upgrades - at no cost to homeowners and tenants; an expansion of high-quality, reliable, comprehensive public transport made freely available to all; and a massive investment into renewable energy production and use. Those measures could be planned with the democratic oversight of ordinary people, and paid for by just a fraction of the wealth currently hoarded by the super-rich.

The enormous level of investment, global collaboration and planning needed to properly address climate change is not possible on the basis of profit-fuelled capitalism.

Only by taking the commanding heights of the economy, including the energy industry, the car industry and the banks, into democratic public ownership with no compensation to the fat-cat bosses, can society and production be planned for need and not profit.

In public hands, and under the democratic control and management of the working class, investment can be directed to developing green technology and improving working-class people's living standards. And on that basis, collaboration internationally to meet the needs of people and the planet - the beginnings of a socialist transformation of society internationally.

Do you agree?
JOIN THE SOCIALISTS
socialistparty.org.uk/join



One of the many protests against cuts to Southampton's services over the years. PHOTO: PAUL MATSSON

Stop Southampton Labour closing Holcroft House care home

SUE ATKINS
SOUTHAMPTON EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

Southampton Labour council planned to close the last two remaining care homes for the elderly that it ran – Glen Lee and Holcroft House – four years ago. It claimed they were “uneconomic” to run.

A campaign led by the local authority trade unions pushed the council back to saving Holcroft House, and committing to “developing the vision of [it] as a centre of excellence for dementia care in Southampton, providing a greater range of support to communities, alongside permanent and short-term respite care.”

These have proved to be empty promises. The ‘vision’ for Holcroft House is only 18 residents in a 34-bed home, and no new placements have been allowed for the past 18 months.

The council is now moving to finish the job and close this home too!

The council uses a fire-safety report to argue for closure. And it claims that closure is in the best interests of the residents as building work would be too disruptive and stressful for them.

But the report also says that fire safety at the home is currently “adequate”, and lists improvements that could be made over time.

80% opposed closure in an online consultation. But apparently the Labour council knows best.

It is well known that moving people with dementia to a new care home, perhaps out of the city, with staff who they do not know, will be detrimental to their wellbeing, and can lead to premature death.

The council claims that 52 staff at Holcroft, organised in Unite the Union, are to be redeployed within the council. But where?

There is no residential or social care provided by the council. It has all been privatised.

gathered 1,600 signatures in just nine days.

The staff accuse the council of lying over the physical state of the home. They say that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) would have closed them down if there were problems. A recent CQC report said that Holcroft is ‘good’ in all areas.

But all this is to be thrown away, as the council becomes entirely reliant on private providers, with no control over costs and service provision.

The decision can be ‘called in’ at the next ‘scrutiny committee’ meeting, enabling the council’s decision to be challenged. This would be done by Tories on this committee. As it’s Labour making the cuts, the Tories are hypocritically posing as champions of Holcroft House.

It is not too late for the staff unions to develop a plan to push the council back, emulating the successful campaigns that saved Oaklands swimming pool, Kentish Road respite service and St. Mary’s Leisure Centre (see socialistparty.org.uk).

Southampton, like many other councils, is at risk of a Section 114 notice – where the council says it does not have the resources to finance its ongoing commitments.

So a decade of Southampton Labour carrying out Tory austerity, and decimating jobs and services, has brought the council to the edge of bankruptcy. Rather than avoiding Section 114, they have been inexorably sliding towards it. Further cuts of £30 million are planned this financial year, on top of the 1,000 jobs and £1 billion lost funding since 2012.

A Labour councillor recently remarked how different things would be if the city still had those resources.

What he didn’t say was that this could only be achieved by the council using its reserves and borrowing powers to protect all jobs and services – while leading a campaign throughout our trade unions and communities to demand the return of the stolen millions, and demand that an incoming Labour government fully fund much-needed local services.

Hackney by-election: residents and workers need a fighting, socialist mayor

The Socialist carries below edited excerpts from a statement by Hackney and Islington Socialist Party

Philip Glanville, directly elected mayor of Hackney since 2016, has resigned in disgrace. Questions emerged about when he and the Labour Party became aware that former Labour councillor Tom Dewey was raided and arrested on child pornography charges, and when he broke off contact.

When Tom Dewey resigned as a councillor the electorate received no explanation. Left-wing activists in Labour state they didn’t either, causing serious safeguarding concerns. They state that after Hackney North Constituency Labour Party (CLP) officers raised these concerns, London Labour staff replaced them with unelected, right-wing appointees!

Labour suspended Glanville’s party membership pending investigation, and he has now resigned from office. He leaves behind him a dysfunctional Labour council responsible for years of passing on Tory austerity attacks.

If he had not resigned as mayor there would have been no democratic route to remove him before 2026. The Socialist Party stands for the democratic right to recall elected officials at any time.

Unison strike against Hackney library cuts



It is right that Glanville has resigned – but the whole local administration, and its politics, are rotten. There can be no trust in the Labour Party machine, or any of the pro-austerity capitalist establishment, to investigate their own misdeeds. Hackney Socialist Party calls for an independent workers’ inquiry led by the local trade union movement.

Failure to challenge austerity
The Labour mayor and administration have failed to challenge Tory austerity for over a decade, slashing over £200 million of jobs and services in real terms, attacking residents and workers to balance its books. They have done nothing to resolve a housing crisis that continues to push the working class out of the borough. No wonder they shy away from openness and accountability to their electorate and workforce.

We need a socialist mayor with a fighting, anti-austerity programme.

The council could refuse to implement Tory cuts, instead mobilising a mass campaign of local workers and residents to win back the funding our borough needs. Hackney holds £345 million in ‘usable’ reserves. It could start rebuilding those council homes,

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?
editors@socialistparty.org.uk

jobs and services tomorrow and send the bill to Westminster.

The working class needs political representation
On top of years of cuts and the Glanville scandal, right-wing Labour’s anti-democratic moves against Hackney North CLP have prepared the ground for ousting Diane Abbott, one of a handful of remaining left MPs. The moves are part of Keir Starmer’s purging from the Labour Party of Jeremy Corbyn’s anti-austerity programme.

The workers’ movement needs a new, mass political vehicle to give the working class a voice. A step towards this would be a fighting, anti-austerity mayoral candidate from the workers’ movement.

Hackney Socialist Party members have led or supported strikes of workers over jobs and pay in libraries, schools, housing maintenance, refuse collection, SEND transport, and more. We have been part of community campaigns against service closures and rip-off property developments. The Socialist Party stands alongside other working-class fighters in an electoral alliance, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

Hackney Socialist Party invites all local trade unionists, socialists and community campaigners to discuss with us a fighting platform and standing such a candidate.

US-wide car worker strike goes up a gear as dispute escalates

Striking car workers in the US are escalating their action with walk-outs now taking place at 38 General Motors and Stellantis sites. Talks are continuing with Ford.

The members of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) are striking over pay and benefits. The strike started on 15 September with 13,000 workers at the ‘Big Three’ car manufacturers walking out. The escalation will bring out a further 5,600 workers across 20 states.

The UAW has 140,000 members and is fighting for a 36% pay rise over four years of a new contract; car company bosses have only offered 20%. The same companies have made \$250 billion in profits in the last ten years and are refusing to budge on other demands including a 32-hour working week.

Members of the Independent Socialist Group (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US) have visited picket lines in solidarity, with

workers saying: “We’ve been getting the short end of the stick for decades while the company makes money hand over fist.”

• Read more at socialistparty.org.uk, search ‘Car workers strike in US-wide dispute

Get all the latest union news
nationalshop stewardsnetwork
NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net

We demand decent housing that we can actually afford

SAMANTHA ERIN
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

The big picture

Rental prices are far too high, the conditions of properties do not match the premium that landlords are charging, and things are getting worse. Rents and mortgage repayments have skyrocketed, way beyond an affordable rate.

The average UK rent is £1,190 a month. And the average in London is a staggering £2,500. Compounding this problem is the biggest increase in energy costs since 1988.

Council tenants are also treated with no dignity. A special investigation by the Housing Ombudsman found a “culture of apathy” at Labour Haringey council, in north London, that has led to a “lack of ownership, accountability and intrinsic motivation when handling complaints”.

And it’s not just in London. In February, tenant satisfaction with Sheffield council’s repair service dropped as low as 26%.

Unsurprisingly, housing associations are providing a worsening service as they’re increasingly run like businesses for profit. In our borough, Tower Hamlets Community Housing has been downgraded to the lowest status by the regulator after breaching economic standards.

What we hear locally

I’ve been working with other Socialist Party members in my branch to campaign for decent and affordable housing. We’ve organised campaign stalls and a public meeting on housing. We also supporting a local campaign to oppose the transfer of one fat-cat housing association to an even worse corporate association.

This has all attracted so much interest from people across Tower Hamlets. Residents want to talk to

us on the doorstep about their anger at things like lack of repairs and maladministration.

We meet a broad range of people, from students to single mothers, to local supermarket staff.

A taxi driver told us that he has been requesting a permanent parking space for his vehicle for years now. Instead of listening to his concerns, he’s forced to pay to park in different spots across the borough every single day.

The common thread across all the things we’ve heard on the streets, on doorsteps and in meetings is that profiteering is more rife than ever in the housing sector. People’s rents are increasing, and so is everything else, including the cost of food, bills, parking and council tax.

What we need to change

- A mass programme building council homes. Take over empty properties
- Democratically decided rent control to cap rents
- Independent, democratic tenant and resident associations, with genuine accountability and control
- Sell-back option and ‘portable discounts’ for current leaseholders and shared-ownerships to escape the trap. End any future leasehold and shared-ownership – we need council housing and cheap mortgages instead
- End the commercialisation of housing associations. Take them into democratic public ownership. This could include the option to return to council ownership, with independent tenant democratic control, or coops
- Nationalise large building companies, land, and banks
- A democratic socialist society could plan and provide decent homes, jobs and services for all



Only socialist planning can fix the housing crisis

AARON SMITH
ENFIELD AND LEE VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

The housing crisis has affected me my whole life. Me and Mum lost our house in Edmonton, North London in 2009 when I was 14. This was during the credit crunch. My parents bought the house for £39,000 in 1992, solely on my dad’s income. That modest two-bedroom house backing out onto the Meridian Water development is worth well over £400,000 today! Meridian Water’s new apartments will not be for social rent and are just as unaffordable. If they were council-owned it could wipe out Enfield’s council house waiting list which has 4,000+ families on it currently.

We ended up in temporary accommodation for eight uncertain years; it took a large toll on our mental health. Today the crisis is far worse, with councils putting families and

vulnerable people in hotels without suitable facilities for months at a time before uprooting them to towns hundreds of miles away; or homelessness if they refuse to move.

Housing is very insecure, and I have seen large and unaffordable increases in rent as a student, often in mouldy, cold and poorly maintained accommodation. Where I live now is mouldy and has poor ventilation, the council has shown no interest in fixing it. The poor standard of housing is causing a major health crisis and the lack of planning, maintenance and poor infrastructure increases inequality.

Housing can’t be seen in a vacuum, it needs to be connected by transport, services and anything people need on a daily basis. This week, my aunt lost her privately rented accommodation as the landlord decided to sell up, showing the lack of rights tenants have. She, like many in this situation,

is forced to sofa surf or face homelessness. There’s no quick solution to the housing crisis, but councils should repossess empty homes, cap rents and start a mass council house-building programme. There are 35,000 vacant homes in London alone but most are owned by the super-rich as investments. We need houses that are affordable and sustainable, as well as accessible, and with fully funded public services to improve people’s health and quality of life.

London Socialist Party meeting:
Fight to end the housing crisis! Socialist planning to provide homes for all
Wednesday 18 October, 7pm
34 Great Smith St, London
SW1P 3BU



#ToryCutsKill banner on protest against cuts to PIP in 2017 PHOTO: LONDON SP

Benefits system not fit for purpose

We stand at a crossroads. All around us is a murky fog of capitalist lies and broken promises. On our campaign stalls, every week we meet more and more people looking for a way out of this mess that thirteen years of Tory rule has brought us to. The way forward cannot be found within this broken capitalist system.

Speaking for myself, I am long-term unemployed and the benefits system is not fit for purpose. People are sanctioned for being five minutes late for a jobcentre appointment. The PIP disability assessment scheme is grossly unfair with many applicants being denied, as I was recently. I took someone with me to my recent review assessment, and the report and decision bore little resemblance to the meeting we attended. I have heard many other horror stories about the process.

Living with hidden disabilities is hard enough, but the cost-of-living crisis has multiplied the cost of many basic items, some almost overnight. The removal of the Universal Credit uplift during the pandemic should never have happened. This trainwreck of a government lurches from one crisis to another, always at the expense of ordinary people.

While I am capable of working, provided reasonable adjustments are made, many people actually aren’t and the welfare system should be a safety net. Yet capitalists are chipping away at our rights. As far as I am concerned there is enough money for everyone not to have to struggle. Unfortunately it’s in the hands of the idle, rich exploitative class.

I am in the fight to the bitter bloody end. Who’s with me?
READING SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER



There is enough money for everyone not to have to struggle but it's in the hands of the idle, rich exploitative class

UNIVERSITIES

University of Plymouth UCU members steadfast

DAN FELMLEE
UCU MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Over the summer, the lack of sunshine was matched by the lack of clarity in the strategy of the University and College Union (UCU) leadership in the 'four fights' of equity, pay, casualisation, and work-life balance.

National strikes were meant to occur the week that students returned, but the union's Higher Education Committee announced that individual branches could opt out if they wanted.

The marking and assessment boycott (MAB) had been a powerful tool, but also lacked the feeling of solidarity of other actions. The repercussions enforced by university managements were uneven and grossly unfair. I spoke with someone who had ten posters to score; if she refused, she would lose half her salary for the month, for perhaps two hours of work not carried out.

So it was important that we all came together against the bosses in the national strike. The directive to 'strike if you want to' was like taking a soft-serve ice cream to a gunfight.

At University of Plymouth, an online poll showed the majority

supported a strike on 25 September. We had more than 100 on the picket, similar to previous strikes. The mood was largely positive.

The picket was advertised as particularly welcoming, and several students supported us. One told us that, during the strikes last year, "I was angry to miss out on a significant chunk of my course, but I know it's the administration to blame, not the lecturers."

The action showed that, despite the national leadership wobbling, where there is a well-organised local branch with bold leaders, this is where the vitality of the union lies.



Socialist Students supporting Plymouth UCU

UCU strikes and rebalot: A serious fighting lead needed

BEA GARDNER
UCU MEMBER

University and College Union (UCU) members at 42 universities took strike action between 25 and 29 September in the ongoing national dispute over pay and conditions.

In the days leading up to the strikes, just under a hundred branches that had been set to walk out decided to withdraw from the action. This followed the decision by the union's Higher Education Committee to offer an "opt-out" to branches, as we reported in the previous edition of the Socialist ('UCU university strikes: We need a serious strategy to win' at socialistparty.org.uk). As we

predicted, this decision has resulted in the national character of the strike action collapsing.

This does not mean the dispute is over. Members are currently being balloted, posing the concrete possibility of renewing the strike mandate into the spring term.

It is clear from branch meeting reports and the picket lines that many members remain willing to fight. Some branches used the threat of action to push the employers back on the punitive pay deductions taken for participation in the summer marking and assessment boycott.

However, in response to the delays, retreats and general mishandling of the dispute, there is also a lack of

trust and confidence in the current leadership. Some in the union, especially those organised in the 'UCU Commons' grouping, are seeking to feed off this mood to bring about an end to the disputes.

We need to achieve the 50% turnout threshold and renew our strike mandate to keep the fight on. Achieving this will require a campaign that builds members' confidence in a fighting strategy. We call for a serious timetable of escalating action that is properly prepared for, including through increased strike funds.

Fighting leadership needed

The fact that we are entering the nomination period for the National Executive Committee, with a general secretary election following in 2024, is significant. Members have the possibility of replacing the current leadership with a fighting leadership that offers a serious lead and backs members in action.

There is also a general election looming. The union leadership should demand an incoming Starmer-led Labour government delivers full funding to adult education. The best way for our union to fight for that is both industrially and politically - including supporting UCU members to stand in the general election as part of a workers' list of candidates that do stand on that programme.



LEICESTER SP

Birmingham uni staff fight the race to the bottom

CLIVE WALDER
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Support staff at the University of Birmingham, members of Unison, took two days of strike action on 21 and 22 September to highlight during freshers week how important they are to the smooth running of the university. This is in continuance of their campaign against changes to terms and conditions, and attempts by the university to undermine collective bargaining.

Strikers told us that the university wants to remove enhanced pay for working anti-social hours, which would cause a permanent reduction in income for workers who regularly work them, potentially costing several thousands of pounds over the

course of a working life. The workers are being offered a one-off payment of £700 as compensation!

The university is also trying to get workers to sign individual contracts to agree to the changes instead of negotiating collectively with the union. Workers won't know what their colleagues will be earning, making it easier for the employer to divide and rule.

I spoke to Lawrence, an estates worker, who said: "This isn't the employer I started working for 15 years ago". The attitude of the pickets is determined, and more strikes are planned for 27-29 September.

Workers are fighting to prevent a race to the bottom in terms and conditions at one of Britain's wealthiest universities.

Teachers win in Swansea

ALEC THRIVES
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY

Members of the teachers' union NASUWT in Swansea have won an important victory over Swansea Council, following strike action to defend a sacked member.

General Secretary Patrick Roach commented: "NASUWT members in Swansea came together to send Swansea Council a simple message: we will not tolerate unsafe or insecure working conditions. Members should be proud that their action has

forced Swansea Council to retreat from their proposed breach of existing collective agreements and teachers' working practices."

As reported previously in the Socialist, Swansea Socialist Party members and Swansea Trades Council have fully backed the NASUWT action, which was recognised and appreciated by their local, Welsh and national officials.



Court workers on strike

ELAINE BRUNSKILL
NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST PARTY

Security officers in courts across England and Wales, employed by penny-pinching privateers OCS, are taking strike action. On the picket line at Newcastle's Civic, Family and Tribunals Court, there was a lot of anger. As the PCS union points out, the pay rise on offer is only 3p an hour!

There was also anger that, despite a High Court ruling that banned companies from using agency staff to cover striking workers, OCS are now using agency workers as casual staff in an attempt to plug the gap.

Strikers told us the agency staff have only had minimal training. This is particularly worrying as strikers told us that they have to confiscate between 500 to 800 knives a year. Doing this needs proper training, including in search techniques.

This lack of training, alongside agency staff being put under a lot of pressure on strike days, opening up early, locking up late, and not having adequate staffing levels, has resulted in some of the agency workers joining PCS!

PCS: Nominate Marion Lloyd for PCS general secretary and John Moloney for AGS

Nominations for these crucial PCS union elections close on 16 October.

Are you angry at the running down of the national pay campaign, leaving it to different sections to fight alone? If you want change, if you want a fighting, democratic union leadership with a serious national strategy, please nominate Marion Lloyd of the PCS Broad Left Network for general secretary. Socialist Party member Marion is standing on a joint ticket with John Moloney of the Independent Left, who is seeking re-election as assistant general secretary.

NHS STRIKES

Join the doctors' march on the Tory party conference
Tuesday 3 October, 1-3pm, St Peter's Square, Manchester

Doctors

On 20 September, junior and consultant doctors struck together for the first time. Juniors also struck on 21 and 22 September, and consultants on 19 September. They will strike together again on 2, 3 and 4 October.

Katie Simpson reports that Northampton Hospital's junior doctors gathered on the picket line demanding better pay and conditions. One junior doctor stated: "We're all extremely dedicated to patient care. We don't want to strike but we're short staffed, people are leaving and soon we won't have an NHS to fight for."

Elaine Brunskill reports that there was a mood of militancy on the picket line at the Royal Victoria Infirmary Hospital in Newcastle. Seeing our Socialist papers, one of the junior doctors commented that she was a socialist.

She spoke about wanting to get rid of the Tories, but had no faith in Starmer's Labour. She also mentioned that, in past strikes, Labour MPs had visited their picket lines, but more recently they'd had no support from any local Labour MPs. Alongside striking for fair pay, these doctors are fighting for a vastly improved, fully funded NHS.

Midwifery support workers have also been on strike in Bristol, members of the GMB. Roger Thomas reported a superb mood and tremendous support from the public.



RVI ELAINE BRUNSKILL

Barts: 'Don't let them divide us'

Domestic, porters, caterers, security staff and ward hosts have taken over a week of strike action at Barts Health Trust in East London. Unite coordinated that action with workers striking at three other health trusts on one of the days, with striking refuse workers, and with doctors' strikes.

Unless there is progress, the workers will be out again with the doctors on 2, 3 and 4 October. The strike is over the national pay offer but also local pay issues, including the with-sarries so we can train the new staff we desperately need! Most patients need scans and X-rays. The Tories talk about cutting waiting lists - not without more radiographers they won't!

Big noisy picket lines have been supplemented with daily rallies at each of the hospital sites.

UNITE BRANCH SECRETARY AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER LEN HOCKEY, SPEAKING AT ONE OF THE WHITECHAPEL RALLIES

"Doctors have had a 35% real-terms reduction in pay. Our members have, over the same period, lost up to a fifth of their income. We've seen degradation and running down of the health service, which binds together the question of health workers' pay with the quality of care delivered.

"Never let them divide us. It's a shame that more MPs aren't standing with us today, and instead are seeking to drive a wedge between the workers in the health service and the patients we serve. Our families depend on the health service. The truth is that well-organised hospitals with lots of union reps is the surest guarantee of quality of care for patients.

"My branch has got a record, time and again, of beating the profiteers. We never reconciled to working for private contractors, and so we seized the opportunity last year when Serco were going, in no small part due to the opposition they got from us as a union.

We said, when they go there's only one option: bring us back in-house. And we succeeded, through the picket line, in winning that.

"Racism is inherent in the decision to outsource. And now we're seeing our brothers and sisters denied the lump-sum payment, and that racism being perpetrated this time to direct employees.

"We have been told in negotiations in the last 24 hours, 'Our hands are tied'. That we will never accept. It's a choice you make. Whose lump sum? Our lump sum!"



PAULA MITCHELL

Rail: Aslef strike and RMT rebalot Vote 'yes' and intensify the fight

A MIDLANDS RMT MEMBER

The rebalot of members in order to continue our dispute has now opened.

Rail union RMT has now officially been in dispute with the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), collectively represented by the Rail Delivery Group, since June 2022.

The post-pandemic change to rail-usage patterns, and a temporary drop in passenger numbers, provided the rail bosses with the excuse and the opportunity to take on the powerful railway trade unions and drive through detrimental changes to our jobs, terms and conditions.

But so far we have fought back. And although the Tories' anti-union laws require us to ballot our members every six months, we have so far returned rock solid 'yes' votes and smashed the 50% turnout threshold every time.

Since we began our battle, the employers have rowed back and dropped a few of their demands, and have upped the pay offer a bit. But what we are left with is still a real-terms pay cut, which is to be paid

for by selling off our hard-won terms and conditions.

So it is clear that the campaign so far has had an effect, but we are still not there yet. If we are to win an acceptable pay rise and protect precious jobs and conditions, we must once again deliver a strong 'yes' vote.

We must then reinvigorate our campaign among the union membership and reps, to ensure that we are prepared to intensify our fightback.

We must also urgently seek joint meetings of our National Executive Committee with the executive of Aslef, whose members are striking on 30 September and 4 October, and other rail unions, in order to coordinate our strike action for maximum effect and name fresh strike dates. We should also seek to coordinate with unions across all sectors who are fighting for their members.

We cannot wait for Starmer's Labour to save us from Tory cuts - Labour won't commit to taking the £2 billion of railway cuts off the table. This is a once-in-a-generation dispute which we cannot afford to lose.

RAIL AND TUBE

London tube strike against wholesale attacks

GARY HARBORD
RMT LU TRAIN GRADES SECRETARY, PERSONAL CAPACITY

London Underground station staff in the RMT union are taking two days of strike action on 4 and 6 October against job losses and attacks to our terms and conditions.

The proposals, pushed through by the Tory government and signed off by Labour London mayor Sadiq Khan, will see a wholesale attack on our station members. If allowed to go unchallenged, station grades members would be facing pay cuts, extreme rosters, displacements, the downgrading of jobs, and 600 job losses across the grade.

Already we are have seen unprecedented station closures, with a four-fold increase in the last 12 months. If these proposals were implemented, the whole underground system would become more unsafe, with

fatigue and stress levels increasing and passengers put at risk.

The RMT will not stand by and allow our members to bear the brunt of these Tory attacks. The last time station staff took strike action, central London was shut down and a skeleton service could only be run in out-lying areas. It is likely to be the same this time around.

Ultimately, this dispute, and the wider dispute with London Underground, will only be won by all grades taking action together in defiance of a properly financed, safely run railway.

Fleet, engineering, trains, revenue and stations all face a ripping up of our agreements and job losses. We will use our collective strength to protect our members and protect the travelling public of London.

The RMT will work with any other rail union that wants to join that battle.



CAMDEN SOCIALIST PARTY

BLACK WORKERS CHARTER 2023: A PROGRAMME FOR FIGHTING RACISM

Below we print the Socialist Party's Black Workers Charter, a programme for fighting racism, originally produced by the Black and Asian group of the Socialist Party in 2021 and now updated for 2023.



Black Workers Charter

Racism exists in all aspects of the lives of Black and Asian people in the UK. There are numerous statistics to back that claim. It is an issue that needs to be addressed. There have been many movements and uprisings that show the anger that exists in society and the need to smash racism.

There have been many previous waves of anti-racist struggle, including the tremendous civil rights movement of the 1950s, 60s and early 70s, which impacted the lives of Black people worldwide.

Such powerful movements led to legal improvements, such as the Race Relations Act 1968 in Britain. This was meant to stop wage inequality, and other racist discrimination. But racism still exists and affects our lives.

The global Black Lives Matter movement of 2020 was the most recent ground-shaking anti-racist movement. Since then we have also seen local and regional protests.

Race and class inequality

The Black and Asian populations in Britain have been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis of 2007-08. And figures already suggest that Black, Asian and alternative ethnic groups are being hit harder by the current economic crisis. Whether it is unemployment, low wages, lack of housing, or poverty, Black people have been to the forefront in suffering attacks on their jobs and living conditions, as well as discrimination at the hands of the police and legal system.

Covid-19 has further exposed the class and race inequality that exists within capitalism. The disproportionate effects of the pandemic on Black, Asian and alternative ethnicity people are not accidental.

Discrimination in numbers

- Black people are nine times more likely to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales than white people
- The prosecution and sentencing rate for Black people is three times higher than white people
- Unemployment rates were significantly higher for ethnic minorities at 12.9% compared with 6.3% for white people
- On average, Black workers who leave school with A-levels typically get paid 14.3% less than their white peers, and those with degrees earn 23.1% less than white workers
- Black African women were seven times as likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act than white British women
- 45% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) children are living in poverty, compared with 26% of children in white British families
- A third of all working-age people from a black African background are key workers. In the NHS, for example, around 40% of doctors and 20% of nurses are from a BAME background
- BAME families are between two and three times more likely to be in persistent poverty than white families

Can't have capitalism without racism

Racism and the injustice of discrimination taking place in all aspects of our lives need to be opposed. This means fighting for all the reforms and changes needed to improve the conditions facing Black, Asian and alternative ethnicity.

To fight for a society free from racism means challenging the very core of the system that we live in. Key leaders of the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Huey P Newton, all travelled along the road towards believing that Black liberation and defeating racism could not be achieved under capitalism.

They all drew the conclusion of Malcolm X that "you can't have capitalism without racism". The Socialist Party agrees.

Who owns wealth?

Capitalism offers no hope of a decent future for the 99%. It is an unequal, oppressive, and discriminatory system, that divides us based on race, gender, sexuality, etc. It survives by keeping us divided.

Black and Asian workers, women and young people are disproportionately concentrated in low-paid jobs and are exploited further by the capitalist system. We need to build a mass movement that unites the working class around a common programme.

Globally, eight people own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity - the greatest polarisation between rich and poor in human history. The richest 1% have pocketed £21 trillion in new wealth since 2020.

Today, a tiny group of people, in Britain and worldwide, own and control industry, science and technology, and harness them to make vast fortunes. While the majority of us have faced endless austerity and the biggest fall in real wages since 1950s, FTSE 100 chief executives are paid £3.4 million on average, which works out at 103 times the £33,000 average salary for full-time UK workers, according to Office for National Statistics figures.

Working class

But, we all know who runs society, it's the essential and key workers.

It is not the CEOs, but the workers in transport, healthcare, schools, retail, hospitality, etc. It is the vast majority of us.

The high inflation and cost-of-living crisis have seen a rapid decrease in the living standards of workers. In Britain, around £130 billion a year since 1980 has been transferred out of our pockets, and our wages in kind - public services - into the pockets of the elite.

But we are fighting back! Britain has seen the highest level of strike action in 40 years. Between June and December 2022, nearly 2.5 million days were lost, with 843,000 being lost in December alone.

Whole unions who have never been involved in action before have gone on strike. It is not an accident that more and more workers are joining a trade union and organising collectively for a pay rise and better terms and conditions.

As socialists, we say that it is the working class that is the force in society that can get rid of capitalism. Class exploitation unites workers of all backgrounds.

Together we have the power to fundamentally change this rotten system. We, as the working class, have enormous potential power through our ability to withdraw our labour and stop the flow of profits to the bosses.

Working-class political representation

We also say that the working class needs its own political representation, otherwise, it's like fighting with one hand tied behind our backs. We want to get rid of this rotten racist Tory government, but the Labour Party is not offering a real alternative for us. The Labour Party under Sir Keir Starmer is a party of big business and corporations. The Socialist Party is pioneering the task of building a new mass workers' party.

We are part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and standing in elections on a 100% anti-austerity programme.

It is essential to link the fight against racism, and other forms of oppression, to the fight against class exploitation and capitalism.

It is only through this - socialist change - that we can fundamentally change society to one free of all exploitation, oppression and discrimination.

Culture Wars

Globally we have seen the rise of the far right and a rightward shift by capitalist politicians. Trump, Bolsonaro, Modi and others have all appeared with racist campaigns to point the blame at us during this period of crisis.

In the UK, both Leave and Remain campaigns used racist rhetoric during the Brexit referendum, and attacks on migrants followed. Priti Patel whipped up fear of migrants in a desperate attempt to ensure people don't recognise the capitalist system as the root cause of their problems. But she wasn't the only one; other right-wing politicians also used racist language and rhetoric.

These 'culture wars' have had awful consequences. The racist propaganda and policies have emboldened the far right and led to violent racist attacks, but despite this we saw many working-class communities have fought back.

Hundreds have been mobilised at short notice to block deportation vans and counter-demonstrate against the far right.

But we can't just oppose racism; we must also come armed with a programme that can win over those who are facing the poverty, unemployment and insecure housing that capitalist politicians blame on migrants.

Migrants

The migrant crisis is caused by colonialism, capitalism, inequality and ongoing climate change. The number of migrants attempting to reach more stable nations but dying will surely increase. No capitalist governments are willing or able to effectively address this issue, which only heightens the suffering.

Under the Tories, Britain is a safe haven for oligarchs and capitalist politicians fleeing with the loot they have stolen from the working class in their countries. Meanwhile the poor are left to drown.

We stand in opposition to all racist immigration laws and campaign for a genuine right to asylum.

Even when migrants are given 'safe routes' into the country, they find themselves struggling with the poverty, lack of housing and insecure jobs that are plaguing the working class here. They are usually based in the poorest areas, in overcrowded accommodation,

where public services are already overstretched. Starmer's Labour has made clear that it will continue with the racist immigration policies and austerity; they won't take the steps needed to resolve the issue and have even said they have "no choice" but to continue to force migrants onto barges.

The working class needs its own party that can fight for the jobs, homes and services for all. This will require taking the wealth off the super-rich and fighting for a socialist alternative.

As part of the Committee for a Workers' International, we fight for socialism across the world. We organise the working class across the world against the imperialist war, poverty and climate destruction that force people to flee.

Policing

The long list of cases of racist police brutality, sexism, homophobia, and rape scandals have exposed the rottenness of the policing system - with the Metropolitan Police in London the worst example, showing that it's not just a 'few bad apples'. These events aren't just a coincidence but a consequence of the role the police play in serving the capitalist class, and that role has been exposed by the 'spycops' undercover police revelations. Officers were instructed to spy on the Steven Lawrence justice campaign, trade unionists, the Socialist Party's predecessor, Militant, as well as other campaigns and groups - an officer even fathered children with an environmental activist that he spied on. The institution of the police represents and protects the status quo - capitalism.

This has strengthened calls to 'abolish the police', but we must also say what should take its place to ensure that working-class communities are safe from violence, theft, and other crime. We need a justice

system with democratic workers' control all the way through. The police must be accountable to locally elected committees composed of representatives from trade unions and community groups. They would direct all police officers in relation to operational matters as well as general policy, and be responsible for all appointments, promotions, disciplinary measures, and dismissals.

Inequality in housing

The tragedy of the Grenfell fire saw Black and Asian people disproportionately affected by continuous government neglect. Years of being ignored, sidelined and left behind saw working-class families killed.

Racial discrimination in the UK housing sector has a long history and deep roots. According to a recent study by the Human City Institute (HCI), the level of housing stress in Black, Asian, and alternative ethnicity communities are much higher than for white people. Homelessness has grown massively in these communities, from 18% to 36% in the last two decades - double the presence of ethnic minorities in the population. Black and Asian households are also far more likely to live in overcrowded, inadequate, or fuel-poor housing than white households.

A report by Inside Housing reveals that mixed white and Black-Caribbean people are 13% more likely to live in properties with damp problems than their white counterparts. Surveys found that 33% of private landlords were less likely to rent to someone that did not hold a British passport.

More than a quarter of Black, Asian and alternative ethnic working adults spend over a third of their income on housing compared to just over 1 in 10 white workers. These workers in the lowest-paid occupations are far more likely to face unaffordable housing costs than white workers in the same occupations or white workers on average.

Continued on page 10

Continued from pages 8-9

THE SOCIALIST PARTY DEMANDS

The Socialist Party has a proud record in fighting against racism and all oppression. The Black and Asian group of the Socialist Party is producing this Black Workers' Charter to aid the discussion about the demands needed to fight for the rights of Black and Asian people, and what programme is needed to end racial discrimination.

Help us to build a mass movement to smash racism. Appeal for support for the charter in your workplaces, youth organisations and amongst the wider working class.

In workplaces

- We demand that the trade union movement fights against the racism which remains endemic in our workplaces
- Job security - no forced redundancies. Trade union action to fight any job losses and cuts in the workforce
- End the race pay gap. A Trades Union Congress (TUC) study found that Black workers with the same qualifications as other workers are more likely to be employed at lower rates of pay. For an equal rate of pay for the job

- Fair reporting systems, free from judgement. Any type of racial abuse, verbal or physical, needs to be reported and acted on by management immediately. All incidents must be recorded, and the log of incidents to be reviewed by elected shop stewards and the trade unions. Regular public data must be made available showing the number of staff experiencing grievances, or facing disciplinary by ethnicity
- All workforces to organise anti-racism training for all staff, and mandatory 'unconscious bias' training for managers - overseen by elected shop stewards and trade unions
- Ensure the election of equality officers in trade union branches
- Trade union oversight of recruitment and promotion processes
- Defend the right to protest. Scrap the anti-trade union laws and anti-democratic legislation

Democratic control of the police

- End stop and search. Democratic control of policing by trade unions and communities
- End police brutality. Demilitarisation of the police - stop the use of horses, tear gas and rubber bullets. Abolish the Territorial Support Group (TSG) and all similar paramilitary units
- Independent workers' and community inquiries into police violence
- Oppose privatisation and the selling of prisons. Instead they should be controlled democratically by workers and communities

In healthcare

- Reverse all privatisation. Scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and cancel all PFI debts
- Massive investment into our NHS - for a fully funded National Health Service and care system, free at the point of use
- Scrap prescription charges in England, and all dental and health charges
- Stop double-taxing migrants - no to the NHS surcharge
- More mental health support and refuge centres
- Nationalise the private healthcare sector, care homes, the medical supply industry, and

the pharmaceutical companies - integrate them into the NHS

On immigration

- End the hostile environment - end all racist immigration laws. For community and trade union oversight of border controls
- Justice for the Windrush generation - immediate compensation for all victims
- Grant all refugees and asylum seekers the right to work
- No deportations
- Close all detention centres - these are run by profit-driven companies that further exploit detainees and use them for cheap labour
- The right to asylum - including the right of families to be reunited

In schools

- Parent, teacher, and student democratic control of the curriculum
- Teach history and gains from the struggle. Include in the curriculum working-class struggle, black history, and trade unions' record and achievements in fighting racism
- Oppose 'Prevent' training and application
- Free school meals and travel

For young people

- Free education for all - scrap tuition fees, and write off all student debt
- A future for young people - establish safe youth centres and invest in their future
- End low pay - scrap zero-hour contracts and end the super-exploitation of the gig economy
- An immediate increase in the minimum wage to at least a real living wage of £15 an hour

In housing

- Grenfell never again - remove all unsafe cladding now. A community, trade union-led inquiry and action to make homes safe for all
- End all housing privatisation
- Build council homes with lifetime secure tenancies. Take over empty property for council housing
- Reverse the cuts to housing benefits - end eviction due to austerity cuts
- Rent controls that cap the levels of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions

In services and resources

- Oppose cuts and privatisation. Many reports reveal Black and Asian people are disproportionately impacted by cuts to jobs, healthcare and other vital services

- End enforced poverty - for the right to decent benefits, no to sanctions, and pensions for all
- No imprisonment for crimes of poverty. Safe communities for all. Mass investment in jobs and training
- More funding for youth services and vital services including social care, education, and the NHS

Fight for socialism

- Take the wealth off the 1%
- We can't control what we don't own. A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people
- A socialist foreign policy based on genuine democratic workers' cooperation, international solidarity, and peace. No to capitalism, imperialism, colonialism and war.
- No trust in capitalist politicians. Join the fight to build a mass democratic workers' party to represent our interests and fight for these demands
- Help us to build a mass movement to smash racism. Please appeal for support for the charter in your workplace, youth group, union, and among the wider working class



Trade unionist support for Chris Sermanni - Rutherglen and Hamilton West Scottish TUSC candidate



Chris is on the picket line supporting Unison members on strike at Cathkin High School, Cambuslang (see below left)

We, the undersigned, are pleased to offer our support to Chris Sermanni, the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate for the Rutherglen and Hamilton West by-election.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis has been devastating for workers and trade union members. The strike wave that we have seen is an appropriate response to falling wages, threats to jobs, and attacks on our conditions of work.

It is a step forward that this struggle can be represented by a trade union fighter like Chris who, as a Unison trade union convenor, has been to the forefront in the battle for pay rises and against cuts.

Workers and trade unionists need a political voice. Labour under Keir Starmer has removed all vestiges of Jeremy Corbyn's policies. The Scottish

and workers' candidate standing on socialist policies to support Chris Sermanni.

- Signed in a personal capacity
- Lyn-Marie O'Hara, Unison NEC
- Brian Smith, Unison Glasgow Branch Secretary
- Kath Stirling, Unison Glasgow Branch Chair
- Stephen McCann, Unison Glasgow Assistant Service Conditions Officer
- Tricia McLeish, Glasgow Unison Neighbourhoods and Sustainability Convenor
- Ingrid Bain, Unison Steward and one of the Glasgow equal pay strike leaders
- Mary McCusker, Unison Branch Chair University of the West of Scotland
- Jim McFarlane, Unison Branch Secretary Dundee City
- Ian Frampton - Aberdeen City Unison
- Gary Clark - CWU Branch Secretary Scotland No.2 branch
- Peter Knox, CWU rep, Glasgow AMAL
- John Carr - CWU Highland AMAL
- Joan Hartnel, CWU rep and Lead Union Learning Rep Scotland No.2 branch
- Wayne Scott - Unite Scotland Youth Committee
- Jim Halpenny - EIS joint secretary West Dunbartonshire
- *Scottish TUSC is a coalition of trade unionists, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners. Two branches of the CWU - Scotland No 2 branch and Highland AMAL are also affiliated to Scottish TUSC. To donate or find out more about the campaign visit www.tusc.org.uk*

National Party in power has been a conveyor belt for Tory cuts and offers no way forward for workers.

It is therefore positive that there is a candidate in the by-election who is advocating the need for the trade unions to build a new party for the working class.

As well as public ownership of the major sectors of the economy, a £15-an-hour minimum wage, an end to all anti-union laws and for the building of mass coordinated strike action by unions for pay rises that at least match inflation.

Chris's commitment to live on the average wage of a skilled worker, if elected, is a refreshing change from the usual career politicians more than happy to pocket the £80,000-plus wage for an MP.

We'd encourage all trade unionists who want to see a trade union

Unison schools strike in Scotland

SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND MEMBERS IN UNISON

More than 20,000 Unison members in Scottish schools and early years settings across Scotland are striking in record numbers in the face of another unacceptable below-inflation pay offer.

24 out of 32 local authority Unison branches voted overwhelmingly for strike action, and got over the 50% turnout threshold set by the Tory anti-trade union laws.

We are sick to death of years of pay restraint and cuts. The latest tweaking of the pay offer by COSLA and the Scottish government has added insult to injury.

Unison's decision to press ahead with action and refusing to accept the latest employer offer last week is very welcome, and it reflects the mood among our members in schools and early years.

Northern Ireland public sector strike

CARMEL GATES, GENERAL SECRETARY OF NIPSA, SAID:

"Despite the fact that it is still unclear if the [Northern Ireland] Assembly will return in the near future, it was felt by all that we have no choice but to take action. It is clear members are angry that additional awards made to workers in Britain have not been made here. Civil servants will be aware that their counterparts in England and Wales have been offered a compensatory payment of £1,500.

"It is entirely within the gift of the Secretary of State to resolve the pay issue for all public sector workers here by making more money available. Our action will be a clear signal to him that we are not prepared to accept the sanctions imposed on us by his punitive budget."

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) in Northern Ireland at universities and colleges have also taken strike action.

Get all the latest union news...

[nationalshop
stewardsnetwork](http://nationalshop.stewardsnetwork)

with the
NSSN bulletin
shopstewards.net

SOCIALISM
A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSING MARXISM! 2023

25 & 26 November
Institute of Education (IOE)
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
Discuss with hundreds of socialists, workers, and trade union activists how to organise and fight back!

JUST SOME OF THE TOPICS...

From Windrush to hostile environment: fighting racism

Marxist theory of the state: spycops scandal

Can Africa break the chains of imperialism?

Combating Tory divide and rule: defend the right to asylum

Middle East in flames

For more info and tickets: socialism.org.uk

Hosted by the Socialist Party socialistparty.org.uk

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE

Call of JCTU AIUTIC

Black Lives Matter

Workers' only against racism and austerity

Do managers treat you with disrespect?

TO UNION IS NOT A CRIME

Why should you attend Socialism 2023?

SAM BENNETT OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

I attended my first Socialism event ten years ago, in 2013. I was a student at Sheffield Hallam University, and I had only just joined the Socialist Party two months earlier. Even though I regularly went to branch meetings and demonstrations, I hadn't fully grasped all the Marxist ideas that the Socialist Party and its political programme was built on.

When I arrived at Socialism 2013, I was immediately awestruck by the number of people at the event, considering the modest size of the Socialist Party. I can't imagine the same proportion of Labour Party members attending their own events!

One thing I really wanted to understand was some of the jargon that sometimes comes with Marxist ideas, like dialectics and historical materialism. The discussions broke down complicated theories in a very clear way and allowed members of the audience to have their own input, including disagreements and questions.

I was incredibly inspired by speakers who came all the way to London from our sister parties in other countries. Some face violence and repression, but their resilience and courage made me question whether I could be doing more to fight for socialism here.

Last, but by no means least, is the rally when all attendees come together and listen to many riveting speeches from remarkable socialist and trade union leaders. I left Socialism energised and wanting to be more involved in the Socialist Party, and I stood as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in elections not a year later!

Capitalist crisis and a lack of a working-class alternative to the main political parties has only worsened in the last decade. Socialism 2023 will prepare all those who attend for the struggles ahead and galvanise a new cohort of fighting socialists worldwide.

An invitation to discuss campaigning for free education at the next general election

The Socialist Party is part of the electoral coalition TUSC – Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. It has sent the following to student groups ahead of the next general election:

Dear comrades,

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee is writing to invite your organisation to discuss how we can campaign for free education at the next general election – including the possibilities for organising trade unionists, socialists, and student and social movement candidates prepared to stand up to the establishment politicians at the ballot box.

The choice at the last two general elections, in 2017 and 2019, was clear. The Labour Party, with Jeremy Corbyn as the leader, was committed to the principle that education should be free. Labour's manifestos pledged to bring back Education Maintenance Allowances for 16-18 year olds, to abolish university tuition fees, and to reintroduce maintenance grants for higher education students. With the latest figures from the Student Loans Company showing that the average sum owed by graduating students now stands at just under £45,000, there can be no question how transformative the implementation of Labour's pledges would have been.

TUSC, co-founded in 2010 by the then general secretary of the RMT union, the late Bob Crow, did not contest the 2017 and 2019 elections and instead campaigned in support of a Jeremy Corbyn-led government with a socialist programme.

But the situation that we will be faced with at the next election is completely different. Sir Keir Starmer is purging both the personnel and policies from the period of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. He seeks

to reassure the ruling establishment that a government he led would not even begin to fight for the fundamental system change needed to meet the economic, social and environmental crises that we face. This includes confirming, in a Radio 4 Today programme interview on 2 May, that, among other pledges he was abandoning, he was "moving on" from the commitment to free education.

To meet this situation TUSC strongly hopes that, before the election, a new working-class political alternative will have been established by more authoritative forces than those currently involved in our coalition or any other currently existing party or alliance – the trade unions organising the workers' fightback, or potentially around Jeremy Corbyn himself standing independently of Labour.

However, recognising that the necessary steps for this might not be taken in time, we also believe that discussions should begin now about what to do in the general election. This should include, in our opinion, organising to put every individual Labour candidate under pressure to stand by the previous commitment to free education and, where they don't, discuss the possibility of organising a candidate to stand against them.

Join the discussion

The next general election must be held no later than December 2024 but, even if in the unlikely event it is not called before then, planning has to begin now. In particular we would like to discuss with you:

- Is your organisation prepared to consider standing candidates, or supporting candidates standing against establishment politicians, in the next general election?
- Would your organisation, and its local groups, be prepared to join

delegations to local Labour Party prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) to see where they stand on the previous manifesto pledges for free education? Every individual Labour candidate retains the ability to take their own personal policy stance, on this and other issues, so they should be asked to do so.

- TUSC is, as its says, a coalition – constituted to allow candidates on its lists from a wide range of organisations provided the candidate accepts a minimum core policy platform for the relevant election (beyond which they are free to run their election campaign in whatever way they wish, including presenting policies that go beyond the TUSC core policies and promoting their own organisations). The draft policy platform for the next general election is at tusc.org.uk, see 'TUSC draft GE platform for 2024'. Would your organisation allow its members to stand under the TUSC umbrella on the basis described, or would that be considered a breach of your membership rules?

- Free education is not the only issue that shows the need to campaign, as TUSC does, for a new mass working-class party with socialist policies. Would your organisation consider affiliating to TUSC and potentially joining the steering committee to play a fuller role in that fight?

We look forward to your response.

In solidarity,

Dave Nellist, TUSC National Chairperson, former Labour MP 1983-1992
Clive Heemskerck, TUSC National Election Agent

The invitation has been sent to: The Socialist Students steering committee; The Socialist Workers Student Societies (SWSS); Workers Liberty Students; The Marxist Student Federation; Student Socialist Alternative; The Young Communist League; Labour Students



PHOTO: JOSH ASKER

Young people fighting back in the South East

ALEX PHILIPS
SURREY SOCIALIST PARTY

Young workers today face the brutal combination of soaring inflation mixed with salaries that were already too low. Many jobs that young people take on are insecure, especially with the growing gig economy and increasing presence of zero-hour contracts where employers have no obligation to provide a minimum number of working hours. Those with the least savings are working the least secure jobs.

It's no more optimistic for students and graduates. The maximum student maintenance loan for 2023 is £13,022 per year. This is equivalent to a nine-to-five worker being paid £6.30 per hour, well below the minimum wage.

To keep up with the rising cost of living, many university students are having to turn to part-time work, massively undermining their ability to learn and tackle the challenges of higher education.

Even after graduating, there is little hope for young workers when they face companies increasingly unwilling to train them and invest in their skills. Under our free-market economy, the capitalists make more money gambling on the stock and property markets than investing in workers.

Despite this depressing situation, we do see glimmers of hope, and the seeds of change. Even a poll by the Institute of Economic Affairs, a right-wing think tank, found that "67% of young people say they would like to live in a socialist economic system".

Ideas like nationalisation of key industries, removing the private sector from the NHS, and building houses for people, not profit, are the mainstream amongst young people now.

We held a Youth Fight for Jobs conference for supporters in the south east of England in early September. We discussed how, having grown up in a neoliberal, austerity-dominated world, until recently, young people

had little chance to see workers' collective power.

In the last year however, many young workers have gone on strike for the first time. And many students have seen their teachers, lecturers, and other workers collectively walk out over pay and conditions.

Strikes can win concessions and improved wages for example, but this will only be temporary without socialist system change. By fighting for these concessions, the confidence of workers and young people of their collective power can grow.

Alongside this we heard testimonies from young people and their struggle to push the frontlines of our movement forward.

At the conference, we also heard from those who have been pushing the unions for bold, militant, change. It is important now that we seize on the frustration young people have, and give them a movement and organisation that will help workers and young people to unite together to push for the future we deserve.



Campaigning in Surrey

Freshers – cost of living, rising rents, hated Tories and useless Labour, failing capitalism

Students look for socialist fightback, because of everything!

● Northampton

Freshers had an influx of students angry about the cost-of-living crisis that the Tory government has put us in, and the ridiculously low quality of life that this has left for students. This led to a successful Socialist Students meet and greet.

We're supporting lecturers on strike, and campaigning against things like the extortionate price of student housing, owned by private landlords benefiting at our expense.

With our first meetings under way, students have an opportunity to have their voices heard. The Tories and Labour have no plans to scrap tuition fees, and plan to continue privatising education.

RUBY KENT



Northampton

● York

Many young people, sick of the dead end offered by capitalism and its representatives in all major parties, are now turning to socialist ideas to offer hope for the future. 80 people signed up to Socialist Students.

Many more have already started to draw socialist conclusions, and are keen to translate this into action. The importance placed by Socialist Students on campaigning and linking up with the wider workers' movement was extremely welcome to many of those looking to get involved.

Over the next few weeks, we will be holding discussions on Marxist theory, revolutionary history, current events in Britain and internationally, and the relevance of all these for the day-to-day issues faced by young people.

We hope to carry this enthusiasm forward, and reach out to even more people looking to join the socialist fightback.

ALI MANSFIELD

● Sheffield

Young people are fed up with this current government, and the capitalist system as a whole. We have been campaigning in the streets and on the campuses, talking with the youth and students about socialist ideas.

One of the key shifts in the mood compared to last year is the feelings towards Keir Starmer's Labour Party. Last year, the majority of students felt a complete sense of apathy towards him.

That sense of apathy has turned into disdain and anger. On countless occasions he has gone back on Jeremy Corbyn's pledges to better the lives of young people.

This mood was reflected in our very successful first Socialist Students meeting, attended by 50 people. The discussion focused largely on the need for a new mass workers' party, and how it can be achieved.

Many of the first-time attendees were keen to get involved with further action, indicating interest in helping out at campaign stalls, and coming to support striking workers on picket lines.

In Sheffield, Socialist Students is the only student organisation calling for a new workers' party. So it's important that we get out there and meet new people to build for this alternative, uniting students and workers to overthrow capitalism.

NOAH EDEN

● Birmingham

Many people shouted our slogans back at us in support, whilst walking to their lectures - particularly removing the Tories. Even though our stalls informing young people about Socialist Students were plagued with heavy rain, wind and security, we managed to get 32 new sign-ups.

We had in-depth conversations with passersby, who were either supportive or curious about our group. We even had conversations, and handed out material, to the workers on the Dominos and nightclub stalls.

Ten people attended our first meeting. And our discussion was very international.

The University of Birmingham has a high number of international students. And, unlike previous years, three-quarters of the new attendees at the meeting were international students.

Chinese students attending had



Liverpool
OISIN DUNCAN

first-hand experience of a repressive regime calling itself 'communist'. They provided a unique insight, and shared their experience of political organisation in their country.

A Canadian student at the meeting pointed out that students from both Britain and around the world have a great opportunity to learn from each other this university year. Through Socialist Students, we will foster greater international solidarity.

HARRIETT MCCORMICK

● Teesside

We don't have a Socialist Students group at Teesside University. In fact, it does not have any political student societies! So, we set up on the public highway which runs through the heart of the campus.

We sold the Socialist paper, Socialist Student magazine, met people interested in the Socialist Party and Socialist Students, raised fighting fund, and handed out a load of leaflets with details of our upcoming public meeting about climate change.

Among those interested was somebody moving back up to Newcastle, a student from India involved in

radical student politics there, and a person who had been a member of the NDP, a historically social-democratic party in Canada.

Hopefully, next, we can have an official Socialist Students society at the university.

ALAN DOCHERTY

● Worcester

A large sentiment from those we spoke to was that capitalism is failing everyone. So we can see that amongst the youth, socialist ideas are gaining traction.

It is encouraging to see that the potential for building Socialist Students is very promising. 14 people signed up. We've already had a public meeting, with a second planned.

CHLOÉ RAE LESLIE

● Liverpool

Socialist Students took our ideas to the freshers fair and a campaign stall outside, armed with leaflets and sweets.

We are excited to welcome students to join us in our fight. And I look forward to seeing new faces on

the picket lines, as the University and College Union (UCU) strikes start back up again (see page 6).

Getting new people to join Socialist Students has never been more important. Students are still faced with the cost-of-living crisis, crippling high rents, and Tory incompetence.

We are more determined than ever to fight against continuing cuts, uniting both students and staff.

We are very proud of our achievements last year. And are determined to reinstate the night bus (see socialistparty.org.uk), which we made progress with last year.

I also hope to see more and more Socialist Students members speak at rallies and events, bringing the student voice to the frontline. We're also building Socialist Students at Liverpool John Moores University, continuing our call for rent control and fair pay for university staff.

JESS EVANS

● Nottingham Trent

Students are excited about new experiences at university, and angry knowing how hard students will suffer during this crisis. In the first two hours of our stall, 28 students were interested in campaigning against the student cost-of-living crisis.

It's clear who they blame for this crisis. Students want the Tories out, but they don't trust Starmer and the Labour Party.

Students we spoke to know that the Tories and Labour are two sides of the same coin. And today's young people increasingly want to see socialist change in society.

SEAMUS SMYTH

● Newcastle

Students were talking of living in cold accommodation, which they can't afford to heat. Others were struggling to buy food and other essentials.

Our Socialist Students/Socialist Party pop-up stall was outside the university. As the cost-of-living crisis hits students, many are looking towards socialist ideas.

If capitalism can't afford to give young people decent living conditions, then we can't afford capitalism.

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

● Get involved, visit socialiststudents.org.uk

socialist students 

SOCIALIST STUDENT

The magazine of Socialist Students
It doesn't have to be like this - we need a socialist world
Available at socialiststudents.org.uk

and at freshers' fairs - £2





WHAT WE STAND FOR

Capitalism is an ailing, crisis-ridden system based on the exploitation of the majority of the world's population by a small, super-rich elite who own most of the wealth and the means of producing it. This way of organising society, in which the pursuit of profit comes before everything else, causes poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, wars and oppression across the globe.

The Socialist Party organises working-class people to fight against the attacks from this rotten system on our lives and livelihoods, and for a socialist alternative: a society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few.

Building fighting democratic trade unions in the workplaces and a new mass workers' party is a vital part of the struggle to change society along socialist lines.

Because capitalism is a world system, the struggle for socialism must also be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International which organises across the world. Our demands include:

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A £15-an-hour minimum wage for all, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.
- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.
- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.
- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.
- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.
- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.
- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public

ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.

- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.
- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.
- The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence – where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced – and unrecycled waste.
- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any loss of jobs, pay or conditions.
- A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.
- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.
- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and

all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.
- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
 - or call **020 8988 8777**
 - or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206**
- to find out more today!

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

socialistparty.org.uk/donate



ERIC SEGAL

● Far right blockade RNLi lifeboats that save migrants

ERIC SEGAL
SOUTH EAST KENT TRADES UNION COUNCIL
SECRETARY

South East Kent Trades Union Council mobilised a counter-protest to the far-right 'blockade' of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) station at Dover Docks. The far-right blockade was to draw attention to the significant role that the RNLI now has in saving the lives of people who seek asylum by crossing the Channel in small boats.

My trades union council is proud to support the joint trade union statement coordinated by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

"Anti-migrant politics are an attempt to divide working-class people against each other. In the past decade, the UK has suffered a crisis of living standards – with wages falling and public services left to rot.

"The people to blame for this are

● Liverpool: Fight for jobs, homes and services to cut across support for the right

NIVEN DAY
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

A protest against so-called '15-minute city' plans in Liverpool was held outside of the Town Hall on Wednesday 10 September. Among the protesters were a number of prominent right-wing conspiracy 'theorists'. Socialist Party members from Merseyside attended a counter-protest organised by Stand Up To Racism.

During the protests, Socialist Party members approached some of the anti-15 minute city protesters to discuss the issues that they had with the proposals. It was obvious that this was not a rally made up entirely of committed far-right activists, although there were definitely some blatantly far-right characters among them.

When conversing with them, we found that their issues stemmed primarily in the lack of help from the

politicians, billionaires and big corporations, not migrant workers or refugees forced to live in temporary accommodation. The anti-refugee campaign offers no solutions to the real problems faced by the deprived communities they are often targeting.

"The answer is solidarity, not scapegoating. As trade unionists, we know whose side we are on."

The trades union council worked together with the Socialist Party, trade unions, individuals and charities like Samphire to ensure that the local community organised a credible counter-protest. The anti-migrant protest of 30 included far-right supporters, and adopted the slogan 'Enough is enough – stop the boats' for their banner.

A party of the working class based on the trade unions, drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, would provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the far right and pro-big business parties - one that fights for decent jobs, homes and services for everyone, and defends the right to asylum.

Labour-run Liverpool City Council. Some even mentioned the work that the 47 Liverpool councillors did in the 1980s, building thousands of council homes and public amenities - not realising was conducted under the leadership of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor. Listening to the concerns raised about 15-minute cities and housing asylum seekers in hotels, we sought to open up a discussion about how best to fight for fully funded public services and council housing, for example.

The other groups at the Stand Up To Racism-organised rally had a different approach, it mostly amounting to chanting obscenities and accusations towards those on the opposite side of the street. This only escalated divisions, risking driving those in attendance further towards the far-right.

Most of those attending the anti-15-minute city demo were working-class people, angry at the state of things – a lack of housing, low pay and crumbling public services. Socialist Party members will continue to make the case that the fight against far-right and reactionary ideas has to include fighting for a socialist alternative to address these issues, like the 47 Liverpool councillors did to take on Thatcher.

Can't have a revolution on your own – donate to fund fightback

STEPH BOWIE
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

I'm used to a newspaper representing a 'rag'. Left on the train on the way to an interview for a job I wouldn't get, nothing made me want to pick it up. These people weren't talking about what I cared about.

I am used to publications littered

with advertisements. Content that no one wants to see. The whole thing stinks of the most foul smell – profit.

The Socialist, this newspaper in your hands, is not that rag. Through this newspaper, working-class people can share our discussions.

My Swindon Socialist Party branch just discussed the importance of having a physical publication to sell, for

the people, by the people.

It is no small feat to run a print publication that does not rely on the funding of capitalist advertisers.

We cover a good amount of our printing and postage fees with the sales and subscriptions of the Socialist. But with our intention to grow, more fighting fund is needed support the Socialist Party.

We don't take profit, and give it to shareholders. The Socialist Party has no shareholders!

All of our media comes from you. Our members and supporters write the body of the stories, articles and content.

And we also ask those who support what we say to donate what you can to, quite literally, fund the revolution.

We are the fighting fund. All of us who buy the paper and then donate more.

I know that when I donate, it isn't going to some privately contracted third party. It goes to our fighting fund.

It pays for the infrastructure of the Socialist Party. And a portion of everything you donate goes to expand the fight for socialism across the world, with the Committee for a Workers' International.

So donate what you can. Together we can fund the fight for socialist revolution.



Campaigning in Swindon PHOTO: SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Selling the Socialist



ABI HARRINGTON
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

When people came up to the Socialist Party campaign stall in Ealing, west London, on 23 September, I said: "The reason we ask for £1, is to help with the running of the newspaper. Unlike the dominant press, we don't have any right-wing funders".

This led to 51 individuals buying a copy of the Socialist, and another £20 raised for the Socialist Party fighting fund.

We also used the following slogans while campaigning: "Can't

afford the Tories", "Defend the NHS", "No time for the Tories", "No trust in Starmer, try the socialist alternative". I opted for the slogan: "Save our NHS by getting the Tories out". Often, if people did not stop when they passed the first one of us, they did by the third!

I think another factor in our success was that the three Socialist Party members on the campaign stall were of different ages and genders. This helps to relate to a wider audience, and reflects the variety of people within the Socialist Party, who are involved in the struggle for socialism.

Ealing, west London 'Save NHS by getting Tories out'

Don't let the Tories - or Labour - divide us!

LINDSEY MORGAN
BRISTOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members from across the South West will be at the UK Pride event in Weston-super-Mare putting forward our party's socialist programme to achieve LGBTQ+ liberation. Both the Tories and Labour are unleashing attacks on our lives and furthering divisions.

Tory home secretary Suella Braverman says: "We will not be able to sustain an asylum system if in effect simply being gay, or a woman, and fearful of discrimination in your country of origin is sufficient to qualify for protection". If Braverman gets her way, this will make it even easier for people to be deported to countries where being gay is effectively a death warrant.

Labour leader Keir Starmer says that self-ID for trans people is not the "right way forward". He has also

stated that a woman is "an adult female", repeating a well-known transphobic slogan - despite being happy to show his face at Pride events with a rainbow and a set of false promises.

We will be there arguing that we can't let the Tories divide us - or Labour either! Organising together to challenge these attacks is necessary.

Ultimately, we need to bring an end to capitalism, which relies on these divisions to survive. But we must also fight doggedly against every form of oppression at the same time. We need good-quality council housing so that people can live their lives away from abuse, and an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £15 an hour.

We will be having a meeting after Pride to discuss how we will organise and fight for our liberation through socialism. We hope to see Pride attendees there!



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

Workers fighting back – it's a great time to join the Socialist Party



Mila (right) PHOTO: COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

MILA HUGHES
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

I met the Socialist Party at a Saturday campaign stall in the middle of Coventry town centre. I've been in the party a little over a year now.

During that time, we've seen the consciousness of the working class grow. From millions of trade union members striking for a pay rise, to young people talking more and more about a general strike. It's a great time to be a part of the party.

Since I started getting involved, I've hardly missed one of our Saturday stalls campaigning against hospital parking charges.

There are so many young people out there that might think the same as I did when I approached it. I had little trust in the system, as well as how this and many other countries are run.

It's easy to see the problems in the system, but not the solution. Getting involved in politics felt so beyond me. It felt like something that I didn't 'qualify' for.

After attending a few branch meetings, and reading the Socialist Party's 'What we stand for', it all just clicked. I joined in summer 2022, after years of thinking that Labour is just not doing enough.

Building for socialism can involve lots of small and big steps. Everyone

can get involved, wherever they're at. As more people look for a working-class alternative, any activity we do for the growing hunger for socialist ideas is so important.

How Socialist Party members encourage each other feels refreshing. The wealth of knowledge that the party holds from young and older members' experience is overwhelming. You can ask the other Socialist Party members around you the daunting questions that are on your mind.

I felt energised after Socialism 2022 (see page 11). There I learnt more about some of the Socialist Party's key concepts and approaches to historical events. Seeing real democracy in local and national Socialist Party events shows how serious we are.

Being at the first walkout of Coventry Amazon workers, courageously fighting against pay injustice and their working conditions, felt electrifying. Showing solidarity firsthand to workers on picket lines, and learning about the complexities of their disputes, strengthened my link to how we can put forward socialist solutions day-to-day.

I've also met other youth that feel demoralised by the capitalist system, campaigning with Socialist Students.

I joined the Socialist Party as I had an appetite for finding like-minded people who know that change to the system is necessary. And I was not disappointed.

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1244

28 September - 4 October 2023

formerly **Militant**

SOCIALIST CHANGE



PHOTOS: PAUL MATTISSON AND MARY FINCH

NOT CAPITALIST CLIMATE CHAOS

MARK BEST
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, Rishi Sunak has rowed back from commitments made by Boris Johnson to, among other things, phase out petrol cars by 2030, force landlords to take action on their buildings' energy efficiency, and to move away from new gas boilers (see page 3).

He's claimed that this will save people from paying the price of a

new cost-of-living crisis caused by these measures. That's the same prime minister who appears on the Sunday Times Rich List, and as PM and previously chancellor has presided over the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation!

If he thinks that he can present himself as a cost-of-living crusader, he's living in cloud cuckoo land.

Studies have found that, overall, people support measures to reduce fossil-fuel emissions. But that number falls if, by implementing them, prices for goods and services rise.

But why should they? It is not the fault of workers and young people that the climate has been damaged. Floods, forest fires and deadly storms can't be laid at the feet of someone buying fruit from abroad because they can't afford an alternative, or they have to drive to work because public transport is too expensive or non-existent.

It is the big companies and bosses that are to blame. Who every year make massive profits off the labour of working people, and are quite happy to destroy the environment

while they're at it. To truly deal with environmental catastrophe, we need to take the big companies and banks that dominate the economy, including the energy companies and the polluting fossil fuel industry, into public ownership, under the democratic control of the working class.

On this basis we could draw up a plan based on what we need, not what makes a profit for a few at the top. A democratic plan which would include what's needed to keep the planet a place we can live on.

The only way this is achievable is by fighting to clear away the capitalists at the top of society and the politicians that represent them. To replace the current undemocratic system where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few with a truly democratic socialist society based on the cooperation of workers across the world. This isn't on offer from the Tories, or from Starmer's Labour. Join the Socialist Party to fight for the change necessary to save the planet and give us all a decent standard of living.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 14



9 771366 962103

ISSN 1366-9621