

PAULA MITCHELL
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The crises for Sunak and the Tories intensify daily. Tory MP Dan Poulter, a practising doctor, has defected to Labour, on the grounds that the party no longer cares about public services. "I have to be able to look my NHS colleagues and patients in the eye".

As the Socialist goes to press, heavy losses are expected for the Tories in the 2 May local elections. On the eve of the election, the Tories announced they were rushing to deport people to Rwanda, in a desperate move to try to shore up support of traditional Tory voters. 21% of Tory councillors have told a new poll that they have thought of defecting.

At the same time, the SNP is in collapse in Scotland. All this increases even further the likelihood of a Starmer government. But the fact that Poulter was welcomed with open arms by Keir Starmer says all we need to know about the character of that government. Poulter was a Tory health minister under David Cameron. The desperate state of the NHS as it went into Covid, underfunded and understaffed, while private companies sucked the lifeblood out of it through rampant privatisation, all existed under his watch.

Yet Starmer said: "It's fantastic to welcome Dr Dan Poulter to today's changed Labour Party."

At the same time, protests were taking place in Hackney calling for the whip to be restored to left-wing Labour MP Diane Abbott. Jeremy Corbyn is still banned, along with several others.

Starmer's commitments to stick to Tory spending plans, and shadow health secretary Wes Streeting's enthusiasm for extending private sector involvement in the NHS, underline whose side a Starmer-led government would be on.

That's why the Socialist Party has been part of a 280-strong stand in the local elections, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), putting forward a fighting, anti-austerity, anti-war socialist stand and arguing the case for pro-worker candidates to stand in the general election.

A workers' list of candidates, especially if a number were elected, could apply big pressure to a Starmer government. The announcement on nationalisation of the railways shows why it is so important that the trade unions mount serious campaigns, demonstrating their determination to fight for their members both industrially and politically.

This issue of the Socialist was produced before the local election results were known. But what is clear is that working-class people need to get ready to fight for our interests, no matter what.

Read more about all these issues inside:

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RWANDA >>> p2

Tories on their way out

PREPARE TO FIGHT FOR OUR JOBS AND SERVICES



Last push: Vote for change in PCS!

The elections for the national leadership of the PCS union close on 9 May. Striving to win a leadership that is prepared to fight in the interests of members no matter who is in government could not be more important. A fighting leadership in PCS could have an effect throughout the trade union movement.

• See p5

ALSO INCLUDING: MAY DAY GREETINGS 12-PAGE PULL OUT

the Socialist

formerly Militant

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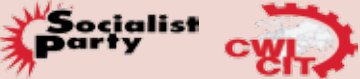
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Sunak's Rwanda deportations - a desperate attempt to stay in power

Fight for jobs, homes and services for all

After two years of back and forth between the House of Commons and House of Lords, the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill has passed into law.

The Tories are facing electoral annihilation and have no improvements to working-class living standards on offer. So instead, we have this Bill expressing their desperation and divisiveness.

Just days before local election polling day, Tory prime minister Rishi Sunak made his announcement that the process of picking up asylum seekers around the country for deportation to Rwanda would start immediately. Asylum seekers presenting at immigration centres may be placed in detention centres in preparation for deportation.

Once again, people fleeing desperate situations, prepared to put their lives at risk in dangerous boats at the hands of people smugglers to do so, are being used as political footballs. The Tories are the ones to blame for the state of the country - allowing their fat cat friends to leech their profits out of everything - not asylum seekers.

Starmer much different?

Keir Starmer says he will reverse the Rwanda scheme. But his policies on immigration are not that far different from the Tories. In fact, he attacks Sunak for spending "hundreds of millions of pounds for nothing in return" and for not deporting enough people.

While many might have hoped the Lords' interventions would improve things, the reality is that none of us can rely on big business politicians of any stripe.



Refugee Rights banner SENAN

The NHS and other services are in crisis, there is an enormous housing crisis and people are still queueing at food banks. Starmer pledges the same 'tough choices' on spending as the Tories.

We cannot wait for any of the capitalist politicians to ensure there are enough jobs and homes and services for all who need them. In the same way, we cannot wait for them

to provide genuinely safe passage for people fleeing wars, environmental and economic crisis, or persecution. Nothing they propose will really prevent desperate people falling victim to people smugglers.

The Tories and Labour cannot be trusted with our lives and livelihood. Activists will be organising actions to try to stop flights taking off and trade unions should discuss what role they

can play in helping to build effective mass action that can push the government back.

But importantly, we don't want a party that is just not as bad as the Tories, we want a party that represents the interests of all working-class people. One that will fight for domestic and foreign policies to improve the lives of all, including investing in jobs, homes and services for all.

Socialist Students sends solidarity to college protests in the US against war on Gaza

Readers will have seen the threats of exclusions and violence against student anti-war protesters on university campuses in the US. Joe Biden, Democratic Party incumbent in November's presidential elections, has condemned the protests as antisemitic. He is desperate to end the protests which are putting pressure on his hopes of re-election.

As even the Washington Post recognises: "The president won young voters by huge margins in 2020 and is looking to replicate that in November with voters under 35, especially in swing states. But Biden's campaign faces a challenge as it seeks to avoid alienating young and progressive voters demanding an end to the war, as well as independent voters and moderate Republicans, many of whom support continued military aid to Israel."

Socialist Students, which organises on campuses in England, Wales and Scotland, sends solidarity in the statement (right). Socialist Students has been organising action against the Israeli state terror since October, demanding an end to the siege of Gaza and the withdrawal of the Israeli military.

Socialist Students members stood as anti-war, anti-cuts candidates under the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition emblem in the 2 May local elections, alongside hundreds of trade unionists, socialists and anti-war campaigners. This TUSC stand is a step towards building a working-class political alternative to the pro-war parties - desperately needed here and in the US.



LEN SHAUL

Socialist Students sends our solidarity to the thousands of students occupying universities across the US against the ongoing onslaught on Gaza.

We condemn the brutal police suppression of these protests, and note the rotten role played by university executives and pro-capitalist politicians who have encouraged these attacks on students and staff.

It is not only in the US where students have faced repression for protesting in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In the UK, the Tory government has given universities the go-ahead to suspend students and student societies protesting against the slaughter in Gaza, like at SOAS university in London. University bosses have hired private security firms to spy on

student activists and forcibly break up protests. At Queen Mary University, management authorised security to raid the campus office of the University and Colleges Union (UCU).

To defend against attacks on our safety and right to protest, students need to be organised. We need our own democratic organisations, which link up with the workers' movement and fight back on all the issues affecting students - including the war on Gaza, but also the cost-of-living crisis, student housing crisis, and cuts to staff.

If you want to organise a protest against the brutal onslaught on Gaza and defend students against the ramping up of repressive measures on campus, then get in touch with Socialist Students.

- To read the text of a leaflet given out by socialists in the US see 'US Campus protests | It's not a crime to oppose genocide and war' at www.socialistworld.net

Join the student fightback
JOIN socialist students
socialiststudents.org.uk/join

NATIONALISATION BACK ON THE AGENDA

BUT UNIONS MUST ORGANISE AND FIGHT



WHAT WE THINK

Labour: We'll nationalise rail in five years," was the headline of the Daily Mirror welcoming millions into newsagents and corner shops on 25 April. "It's about time!" will have been the response from a large proportion of those who saw it.

Keir Starmer's Labour leadership has opened the door to public ownership just a crack. The wreckage of privatisation disaster lies just behind. On the same day as shadow transport secretary Louise Haigh was making her media rounds, bosses at Tata Steel dismissed unions' proposals to prevent closure of both Port Talbot steel furnaces by September.

Royal Mail faces a buy-out by a Czech vulture capitalist billionaire and workers face ongoing attacks to terms and conditions, tied up with the undermining of Royal Mail's Universal Service Obligations.

The trade union leaders should be piling in through the door demanding nationalisation.

Starmer-led government

Starmer could be in Downing Street before the Port Talbot furnaces are closed and Royal Mail is sold. Renationalisation could be decisive in saving thousands of workers' jobs, pay, terms and conditions.

"We support [Royal Mail] renationalisation and it's Labour Party Conference policy," Communication Workers Union (CWU) general secretary Dave Ward told the CWU Postal Industrial Sector Conference, the same day shadow transport secretary Louise Haigh was doing her media rounds. But he then went on to say: "But Labour's frontbench says there is no money for it. So we need a new model of ownership as a step towards renationalisation". That's wrong.

Most CWU members won't accept that the existing owners - who carried out attacks on trade union representatives during the 2022 strike, with something like 400 suspended from work - deserve a penny, if Royal Mail is brought into public ownership. The Socialist Party would agree: compensation should only be paid on the basis of proven need - to safeguard workers' pensions or small shareholdings. We don't need to accept Labour's argument that 'there is no money for it'.

And anyway, many trade union activists know from experience that whether there is money or not to meet workers' demands isn't a simple mathematical calculation. The strike wave is a case in point. The Tories refused to even meet education union representatives to discuss pay in January 2022, saying there was

no money. Several strike days later, a number of them coordinated with other unions, the government increased its pay offer.

The Tory government made concessions under pressure from the working class. A Labour government will face pressure too, including from the expectation of millions that things have got to be better than under the Tories - regardless of how many times and in how many different ways shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves tells us that Labour won't be spending much money.

These are the arguments that Dave Ward should be stressing, making it clear that nationalisation is possible if it is fought for, not looking for alternatives to it - before Starmer is even in Number Ten.

Nationalising rail?

Labour's rail renationalisation plans also have serious limitations: it doesn't include public ownership of rail freight or rolling stock, and the last operator contract to expire won't do so until October 2032, for example. But that shouldn't be seen as the end of the matter.

As Mick Lynch, the RMT general secretary, said in response: "This announcement however should be a first step to completely integrating all of our railway into public ownership." But that's got to be fought for, including at the ballot box.

Haigh told media that Labour's plans would not necessarily mean cheaper fares. She also refused to commit to meeting the demands of train drivers in the Aslef union who are striking again on 7-9 May in their long-running dispute. On day one of a Labour government, it would find itself presiding over the eight train operating companies already in public ownership. Aslef leaders should be preparing the members for a battle with a Starmer government to meet the unions' demands immediately on taking office.

Starmer's purge of Jeremy Corbyn-supporting MPs and activists from the Labour Party is part of a process of trying to insulate the Labour leadership from working-class pressure - to remove any figure who they fear could be particularly susceptible to it.

Working-class action

But events and class forces can push all sorts to do all sorts of things. In 1971, against the backdrop of developing workers' militancy, the growing demand for a general strike in opposition to the anti-union Industrial Relations Act, and with workers in the Upper Clyde Shipyards striking and occupying, Rolls Royce was nationalised by a Tory government within a week of its bosses threatening closure.

Socialist Party members are fighting for the trade unions to continue to prosecute their struggles for pay rises and against other attacks, whoever is in government; countering the arguments being made by some



CWU Royal Mail strikers outside Buckingham Palace during the strike in 2022 JOSH ASKER

trade union leaders against taking action at this stage because of the expectation of a Labour government. On the contrary, the only sure way of compelling an incoming Starmer government to concede to our interests is to prepare for serious action.

As the Socialist goes to press, the result of the North East Mayor election on 2 May is not known. But in that election Jamie Driscoll, barred from Labour candidature by Starmer's machine and standing as an independent, was endorsed by the RMT.

Why not take the next step and prepare a list of workers' candidates for the general election, backed by the trade unions? That could include Jeremy Corbyn, who has also won RMT backing to stand as an independent, and others too.

Even just a handful of MPs forming a workers' bloc in parliament would be a huge source of uncomfortable working-class pressure on a Starmer government. It would act as a lightning rod for all those whose experience of a Labour government in power is leading towards the conclusion that the working class needs its own mass party, with a programme of democratic socialist public ownership that could really break the power of the capitalists over the economy and society.



Fund the Socialist Party general election campaign

The Socialist Party is preparing our general election campaign, with a target of raising £50,000 to contest 30-40 seats - paying the £500 deposit and minimum £750 for an election mailing.

We will be standing: championing the idea of a new mass workers' party; popularising the idea of nationalisation; bursting the myth that it is unaffordable by calling for compensation only on the basis of proven need; and explaining the need for democratic workers' control and management.

We will be fighting for a socialist programme, including the nationalisation of the top 150 companies and banks so a democratic plan of production can be drawn up to meet the needs of all and the environment.

How much can you contribute towards our target?

Pledges to be made by the end of June, and paid by the end of July

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£50,000

£40,000

£30,000

£20,031

£14,042

Humza Yousaf resigns - Scottish government crisis deepens

Build a new workers' party with a socialist programme

SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

“The election of Humza Yousaf as first minister has done nothing to stop the rot. It is not even certain that Yousaf will lead the party into the general election.” Socialist Party Scotland’s Scottish Perspectives document - February 2024

The political crisis that was triggered by the decision to remove the Scottish Greens from government last week has now led to the resignation of Scottish National Party (SNP) first minister Humza Yousaf.

After just over a year as party leader, Yousaf resigned before facing a confidence vote in parliament that the Scottish Greens refused to back him in if he remained in post.

Yousaf’s replacement is unclear. Former SNP leader and deputy first minister John Swinney, who is very likely to stand and will be the favoured candidate of the SNP leadership, and Kate Forbes MSP are being touted as possible alternatives. What is clear is that the political crisis, reflecting this era of acutely volatile capitalist chaos, is not over, no matter who becomes the new first minister.

An early Scottish general election - not due until 2026 - is also possible as the SNP try to stagger on as a minority government. A lot will depend on who the new SNP leader is. The Scottish Greens will almost certainly refuse to support someone like Kate Forbes. As finance secretary her post-covid budget delivered huge cuts to public spending and her focus was on the needs of big business not the working class. She also opposes LG-BTQ+ rights and a women’s right to choose.

In power at Holyrood for 17 years, the SNP had two leaders for 16 of those - Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon. Now they are facing having to elect their third leader in just 13 months.

From one of the most successful governments in Europe, the SNP are now competing with the Tories at Westminster for instability, splits and short-term leadership stunts.

At root, as we explained in our statement when the power-sharing agreement was collapsed by Humza Yousaf, the crisis is rooted in declining support among the working class in Scotland.

Years of cuts budgets, clashes with workers taking strike action for pay rises, and pro-capitalist policies generally have exposed the SNP leadership. The Scottish Greens have offered loyal support to the SNP for most of the past decade.



Humza Yousaf
PHOTO: SCOTTISH
GOVERNMENT/CC

Gone are the days of ‘peak’ SNP. The 2015 general election saw the nationalists win 56 of the 59 MPs in Scotland. Then the SNP were widely perceived as an anti-establishment party that had faced down the capitalist establishment during the 2014 independence referendum.

Today, current polling points to dozens of SNP losses in the Westminster elections. With Labour likely to make significant gains - albeit with little to no enthusiasm among workers for the Tory-lite Starmer alternative.

Independence

The now defunct power-sharing agreement with the Scottish Greens allowed for a majority “pro-independence government at Holyrood after the 2021 election”. A new independence referendum was promised by Nicola Sturgeon, then SNP First Minister.

But the SNP and Scottish Greens carried out retreat after retreat on the issue of indyref2, the fight for a new referendum on Scottish independence, since. The refusal by the Tories

at Westminster to allow a new vote, and the ruling of the UK Supreme Court that Holyrood could not legislate for a referendum, was met with quiescence.

The building of a mass working-class campaign to demand the democratic right to decide from the Tories was anathema to both partners in the Scottish government. And how could it be otherwise, given the SNP and Scottish Greens, support for a negotiated agreement with the capitalist elite for the break-up of the UK.

As the cost-of-living crisis erupted, Scotland witnessed the largest strike wave by trade unions in three decades. In the vast majority of cases workers demanding pay rises were striking against SNP politicians.

From council workers to teachers, college workers to NHS staff, massive strike ballots for action, often followed by strikes, piled enormous pressure on the Scottish government. It was working-class struggle that delivered concessions.

The Scottish TUC has calculated that workers won £3 billion extra in pay and pensions during the strike

wave by taking or threatening action. It was that power and the need to build mass struggle that shows the way forward in dealing with the capitalist crisis as well as the struggle for democratic rights in Scotland.

Splits and membership losses from the SNP have also been a reflection of their declining base of support, as well as divisions over how to take the struggle for independence forward.

The creation of new party Alba by Alex Salmond was an example of this. But increased tensions inside the SNP - including over having the Greens in government - were also evident in the leadership contest to replace Nicola Sturgeon in 2023. Yousaf only won by 52% to 48% over Kate Forbes.

Salmond has attacked the Scottish government, and especially the Scottish Greens, for its commitment to divisive identity politics over issues like self-ID for trans people.

But Alba also use the politics of identity and add fuel to the so-called culture wars by arguing that women’s rights and the rights of trans people are in competition with each other, something that Socialist Party Scotland rejects. A mass struggle of the working class and the building of a political voice can fight for the rights of all as part of the fight for socialism.

As we argued when this latest crisis began, and have done consistently, the building of a working-class political alternative is vital. That should and must come from the trade unions playing a central role in forging that alternative - a new mass workers’ party with a fighting socialist programme.

● **Read analysis on the collapse of the Scottish government and the Greens at:**
socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

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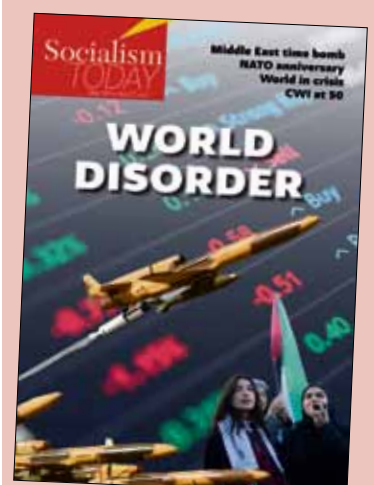
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Members say it's time for change in PCS

Vote Marion Lloyd for PCS president and the team of candidates for change in the national and group elections

PCS MEMBER

Activists in the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) are campaigning in the leadership elections to change PCS into a genuinely fighting, democratic union.

Supporters of the PCS Broad Left Network (BLN), in which the Socialist Party participates, are standing alongside a wide range of activists from across the union.

Members are currently voting in a national pay ballot, the Tories have just threatened to cut 70,000 jobs, and we face a general election.

PCS conference in May should be an opportunity to plan a fight-back: placing clear demands on Keir Starmer to commit now to a 10% pay rise and real steps towards pay restoration, and to end cuts and privatisation in the civil service, and

gearing up for action to press for those demands.

But to achieve that, we need a fighting leadership.

The current leadership is in the hands of the 'Democracy Alliance', which includes the 'Left Unity' grouping. Their election leaflet brazenly adopts the slogan of the candidates standing against them, declaring they are "for a fighting and democratic PCS".

But everywhere we go, members tell us they feel badly let down. We have constant conversations with members who say they are about to leave the union.

Members in smaller sectors feel that the national union isn't interested in their issues. Reps who are victimised feel unsupported.

Many are increasingly angry at the outcome of the 2023 strikes. The leadership wasted three months

after massive 'yes' votes before calling any national action, then when the government offered a one-off £1,500, they cancelled the strikes, rebalances and strike levy. In the summer, members voted to "continue the campaign" but there's been no campaigning since.

Vote 'yes' in the pay ballot and vote for a leadership that is up to the challenges we face.

• Vote Marion Lloyd for PCS president and the candidates for change for the National Executive Committee (NEC) and DWP and HMRC Group Executive Committees. See the full list of candidates at socialistparty.org.uk/PCScandidates2024

• Return president and NEC ballot papers in the post by 7 May to be counted by the closing date of 9 May. The online elections for Groups close on 16 May.

Marion Lloyd responds to Tory threat of more civil service job cuts

PCS members and their families will be furious at the threat to 70,000 civil service jobs made by Grant Shapps. This is a cynical attempt by the Tories to attack our hardworking members to justify increasing defence spending. We, along with all other workers, kept things going under Covid.

Another reason to get rid of this Tory government after 14 nightmare years for working people!

PCS must respond firmly, including a demand that Labour immediately commits to ruling out such an outrageous job cull in the event of them winning the general election.



PCS members working for Border Force on strike at Heathrow Airport
SOCIALIST PARTY

Tata Steel confirms death blow at Port Talbot!

Strike to fight the jobs massacre - Nationalisation not devastation

ALEC THRIVES

SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY AND SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL

Seven months of fruitless 'negotiations' between the steel unions and Tata's deaf, brutal and intransigent bosses have resulted in the widely expected rejection of both the Unite and the Community/GMB alternative proposals to retain primary steel making at Port Talbot.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Tata Steel's billionaire managing director, TV Narendran, claimed the unions' proposals were 'unaffordable', and that Tata would proceed with its original plans to close both furnaces and the 'heavy end' of production by September, with the loss of at least 2,000 jobs, resulting in the social and economic devastation of the local communities.

Unite members have already voted in support of industrial action, to save all jobs at the plant, and Community, the largest steel union, is in the process of balloting its members, alongside the smaller GMB union, with the ballots closing on 7 May.

Tata is attempting to further increase pressure on the workforce by announcing the opening of a voluntary redundancy scheme from 15 May, with enhanced payments offered to those who do not participate in any industrial action.

A report in 'Mint', an Indian business and financial newspaper, highlighted the contempt Tata has for the steel unions. They commented that discussions will continue with the unions over the next two weeks to try and reach a 'Memorandum of Understanding' over the future ambitions of the business and the impact of the restructuring on employees!



Steel workers protesting, supported by Swansea Trades Council and Socialist Party members
SOCIALIST PARTY WALES

This type of deliberate misinformation has been regularly used by Tata to try to sow confusion and demoralisation among steelworkers.

Urgent task

In reality, the urgent task over the next two weeks will be the preparation, plans and strategy by the three steel unions for united industrial action to save the plant.

Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham has responded to Tata's dogmatic proposals by warning that Unite "will be using every power at its disposal and will not be so easily defeated. Its plans will be answered with industrial action".

After Keir Starmer announced the effective renationalisation of passenger rail, this was immediately taken up by steelworkers and their supporters as the only realistic option to save the plant and all the jobs at Port Talbot.

Comments on our Socialist Party campaign stall included: "We have

voted for industrial action, which is great, but industrial action for what outcome? To put more pressure on Tata to change their minds? That's a sick joke! To get other private/public investors to take over? No chance! Our union leaders should demand that Starmer commits to nationalise Tata immediately on taking office, and that's our only hope of giving confidence to members to reject the redundancy bribe and guarantee our jobs for the future!"

Another said: "Remember that the last Labour government in 2007-08 bailed out the billionaire bankers, which cost working-class people a whopping £127 billion of our taxes. So why can't we spend £12 billion to save our steelworkers?"

Those comments highlight the willingness to fight to save steel but also the demand for a political intervention by a Welsh-led Labour government and a 'soon-to-be' Labour government in Westminster.

The most serious industrial action

is now necessary to combat Tata's ultimatum of primary steel destruction and job losses, which must be supported by the whole trade union movement, including mass mobilisations on the first day of strike action.

This industrial action has to go hand in hand with the political pressure that will be necessary to demand nationalisation of this 'critical' manufacturing industry.

The Tata announcement means this really is crunch time to save steel and the demand for 'Nationalisation not Devastation' can unite steel workers and communities for an historic victory!

• May Day rallies and march in support of the steelworkers, organised by the trades councils:

• Cardiff rally and march: 12 noon, Saturday 4 May, top of Churchill Way at Queen Street, CF10 2GR

• Swansea rally: 12noon, Saturday 4 May, Castle Square, Swansea, SA1 1DW



NSSN conference 2024

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ON THE DAY THIS ISSUE OF THE SOCIALIST HITS THE STREETS, MILLIONS OF VOTERS WILL BE GOING TO THE POLLS IN LOCAL AUTHORITY, MAYORAL, AND POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS. IS THE SOCIALIST PARTY STANDING CANDIDATES?

Socialist Party candidates are standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). TUSC is an electoral coalition which was co-founded by the late Bob Crow, then general secretary of the RMT transport workers' union. Its primary goal is to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand candidates against pro-austerity establishment politicians. In the elections taking place on 2 May, TUSC is standing 280 candidates. That means there is a TUSC candidate in 10% of the council seats available, making it the sixth biggest party contesting these elections.

SO TUSC IS GAINING GROUND. ARE YOU SUGGESTING IT COULD SOON WIN A MAJORITY IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS?

No of course not, it is gaining ground, but obviously TUSC is not going to be able to form the next government! It is pretty clear to everyone that Starmer's New Labour is going to win the general election; or, to be more accurate, is going to come to power as the least unpopular alternative, benefiting from voters' visceral need to punish the Tories.

But it is also certain that Starmer will lead a government that defends the interests of the super-rich and the capitalist class. The ex-Tory health minister, Dan Poulter, can safely cross over to the Labour benches confident that, "thanks to Keir Starmer, Labour has changed fundamentally. The Labour Party of 2019", as he accurately declared, "has been consigned to history."

The crushing of Corbynism within the Labour Party, and the stranglehold on the party of the Starmerites, means that the working class in Britain can currently see no prospect of a mass party that fights in their interests. Changing that situation is a key task facing the workers' movement. TUSC is not a mass party but it is an important lever to fight for steps in that direction.

BUT THE SOCIALIST PARTY COULD FIGHT FOR THOSE STEPS WITHOUT BEING PART OF TUSC, COULDN'T IT?

Of course we could. Fighting for the working class to have its own independent party is an important part of all of our work. In the trade unions, for example, our members have been campaigning for unions to stand and back candidates outside of Labour who fight in their members' interests. In the RMT transport workers' union we initiated a motion – passed unanimously at the 2023 annual general meeting – to support Jeremy Corbyn if he stands as an independent. Members of ours also initiated a proposed amendment to the Unite union's rules at the 2023 rules conference, which would have allowed the union to support non-Labour candidates. The conference didn't pass our motion this time, but we were central to making sure the issues were debated in the union.

These are just two of numerous examples of our campaigning to raise this issue in the trade union movement. This is probably the single most important part of the campaign for a new mass workers' party. The trade unions, currently with 6.25 million members, are the most powerful

workers' organisations in existence in Britain. The strike waves that swept Britain in 2022-23 gave a glimpse of workers' potential collective power. The trade unions currently have no political voice, but when two key trade union leaders, Mick Lynch, general secretary of the RMT, and Dave Ward, general secretary of the Communication Workers Union, launched the Enough is Enough campaign at the height of the strike wave, half a million people joined very quickly. That shows how rapidly a workers' party based on even sections of the trade unions could grow. Unfortunately, because it wasn't a new party, Enough is Enough has fizzled out.

We are also campaigning for activists in the Gaza movement to enter the electoral arena on an anti-war, anti-austerity programme.

And of course, we could do all that and more, including standing in elections ourselves, without being part of TUSC. But, in our view, it is far more effective if we also work as part of TUSC. TUSC is a banner under which any trade unionist who agrees that the workers' movement needs to start standing its own candidates can put that into practice by standing themselves. So can anti-war activists, community campaigners and others.

All who want to stand under the TUSC banner have autonomy to run their own campaigns. The only provision is that candidates are expected to endorse the TUSC core policy platform for the relevant election. TUSC acts as an umbrella to coordinate the work of different organisations and individuals who want to contest elections on a socialist platform.

BUT WE ARE ALWAYS BEING TOLD THAT 'ONLY UNITED PARTIES WIN ELECTIONS'. HOW CAN YOU HAVE SUCCESS WITH THAT KIND OF FEDERAL APPROACH?

We might be told it, but actually it isn't true even for capitalist parties. The Tories were hardly united when they won the 2019 election, for example. And historically a federal approach has been crucial to the development of working-class political representation in Britain.

The Labour Party came into being based on important sections of the trade union movement, along with socialist organisations, who saw the need for independent working-class politics. It was a federation – until 1918 individuals could only join via one of the affiliated organisations. In fact, at first it had an even more 'free and easy' approach than TUSC has today. Affiliated organisations were 'left free to select their own candidates without let or hindrance, the one condition being that, when returned to parliament, the candidate should agree to form one of the Labour group there.'

TUSC is actually a little more centralised than that. It has an all-Britain steering committee made up of



members of the national executives of trade unions (all sitting in a personal capacity at this stage), plus representatives of the different constituent organisations, and of the individual independent socialists who support TUSC. The steering committee has to authorise election candidates and operates 'by consensus', meaning that if any of its constituent parts is opposed to making a particular decision, it is able to block it.

The case for taking a federal approach, broadly similar to that taken by the early Labour Party is, in our view, crystal clear. It allows different workers' organisations and campaigns to collaborate together around a common goal. It is that approach that has allowed TUSC to achieve 280 candidates in the current local elections. That is modest, but it is on a much bigger scale than other electoral forces on the left that have chosen to stay outside of the TUSC 'umbrella'. TUSC has been able to identify 62 council candidates that fall into that category.

WHAT ATTITUDE DOES TUSC TAKE TO THOSE OUTSIDE ITS 'UMBRELLA'?

TUSC seeks to collaborate with all forces who stand anti-austerity candidates in elections, including those currently outside of TUSC. For example,

in February of this year, TUSC initiated a 'convention to organise a working-class challenge at the general election'. It was attended by 12 different campaign groups and socialist organisations, and agreed that "A joint election challenge should attempt to contest enough seats (98 candidates appearing on the ballot paper with a common name or variants of it) to reach the broadcasting authorities 'fair media coverage' threshold."

Representatives of two of the parties present – Transform and the Workers' Party – abstained because they wanted to prioritise building their own profile which, they felt, meant standing under their own name. Since then TUSC has proposed to both that they register joint descriptions with TUSC so that they could stand, for example, as Workers Party – TUSC, enabling them to keep their own identity and to aid getting a workers' list of candidates over the 'fair media coverage' threshold in the general election. They have declined to do so. Nonetheless, the Workers Party has observers on the TUSC steering committee. In addition, both have participated in the process TUSC initiated where proposed candidates from each organisation are circulated in order to try and avoid clashes wherever possible.

SO THE SOCIALIST PARTY WANTS TO COLLABORATE WITH ALL THOSE FORCES STANDING WORKERS' CANDIDATES, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF TUSC?

Of course we do! Like all other organisations on the TUSC steering committee, we could have blocked TUSC's collaboration with other groups, but instead we are enthusiastically in favour. We see workers' candidates standing in elections on an anti-austerity, anti-war programme as an important step towards the working class having its own political voice. That in turn is a small but crucial step towards the much bigger tasks of our class successfully carrying out the socialist transformation of society.

However, that does not mean we are uncritical of the other left forces standing in elections. Our attitude to this work, and also our work in the trade unions and other fields, could be summed up as a 'united front' approach. When Leon Trotsky put forward the united front tactic in the 1920s and 1930s he was talking about mass forces, with hundreds of thousands of members. Clearly that is not the case with any of the forces standing workers' candidates in elections at this point in time. Nonetheless, the basic approach of "march separately" – that is, argue for our own

independent Marxist programme – but "strike together" at the ballot box – wherever possible under one banner, and if not by maximising electoral collaboration with other forces – is a good summary of our approach today.

SO WHAT CRITICISMS WOULD YOU HAVE OF OTHER FORCES? THAT THEY AREN'T IN TUSC?

Of course there are many, in our view vital, issues on which we disagree with others on the left. On this question, one of the most immediate is the repeated tendency of small forces, with a few thousand members or even less, to claim to be 'the solution' to the crisis of working-class political representation, rather than fighting for real steps forward by the broader working class.

Claiming to be the mass party for the working class does not make it so! None with this approach have succeeded in making a qualitative breakthrough, and many have rapidly disappeared. Transform, which was founded in November 2023, appears at risk of being the latest to become no more than a memory, soon after being founded. To our knowledge, they were not able to stand a single candidate in the local elections, for example.

In the past, another party which ultimately failed – although it had far more initial success than Transform – was Respect, the party under which George Galloway was previously twice elected as an MP, first in Tower Hamlets and then in Bradford. However, on neither occasion did George's victory lead to the consolidation of a base or the building of a stable organisation. Early gains – 12 councillors in Tower Hamlets and five in Bradford – evaporated.

The initial victories were based primarily on Muslim voters who had broken with New Labour over the government's warmongering in Iraq. This was potentially a huge step forward, but for it to have been consolidated would have required Respect acting as a bridge to draw angry Muslim workers towards seeing their common interests with other sections of the working class. On that basis Respect could have sped up the development of a mass democratic workers' party. However, instead, Respect did declare itself 'the alternative'. It had a very top-down structure. Trade unions could donate to it, but had no say over its decision-making.

Today, Starmer's support for the Israeli state's onslaught on Gaza has again driven many Muslim voters to break with Labour, this time even before it is in government. Coming on top of Blair's crimes in office, plus the experience of Labour councils implementing austerity over recent decades, Muslim voters' anger at Labour is the deepest it has ever been.

That anger was reflected in the important victory for George Galloway and his current party, the Workers Party, in the Rochdale by-election, and it is probable that some of their candidates in the current local authority elections will also make breakthroughs. It is very positive that the Rochdale victory has helped to raise confidence in the possibility of building a left alternative to Labour. However, capitalising on that will require developing a different approach to the one taken by the Workers Party up until now.

For example, the Workers Party calls for unions to stop funding Labour, but if a union's members were to vote to do so and instead start funding the Workers' Party, the union would currently have no means to take part in the party's decision making. This is despite the fact that its membership would – even with the smallest unions – dwarf the current membership of the Workers Party.

It would not, for example, have had any means to scrutinise the decision to back Rabina Asghar, a Liberal Democrat council candidate in Rochdale, as she was "best placed to get Labour out", even though the Liberal Democrats, part of a government coalition with the Tories from 2010-15, are just another pro-capitalist

party. Individuals, of course, can take big leaps forward in their political understanding, but that is not the same as the accountability that comes from participation in a workers' organisation.

Nor would an affiliated union have any say over the recent decision of the Workers Party to stand Rizwana Karim, who joined the Workers Party on 3 March, against the Labour left MP John McDonnell in Hayes and Harlington. This is not an approach which can succeed in consolidating a significant stable base in the working class. If the Workers Party is serious about using its general election challenge to give a voice to the working class, it should, for example, call a meeting with workers representing trade union organisations in McDonnell's constituency to discuss whether or not a candidate should be stood against him.

So to conclude, we do not see TUSC as the 'finished product' or 'the alternative'. However, TUSC has been able to work solidly for 14 years to take forward the fight for working-class political representation exactly because it is based on collaboration – working together on the basis of consensus.

The other vital approach of TUSC is summed up in its name: it is a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. For ten years the RMT had official representation on the TUSC steering committee. That meant that RMT members could be confident that TUSC would not take any decisions that the RMT was opposed to.

AND WHAT NEXT?

We are continuing the fight to get a workers' list for the general election. There is the real prospect of getting at least a small bloc of MPs elected, including Jeremy Corbyn, that could help prepare the ground for a new party.

TUSC itself is not the finished product, but the TUSC 'umbrella' approach is likely to remain applicable for any new mass broad force, at least at first, just as it was for the early Labour Party. A party's structure ultimately reflects its political basis. Any new mass party will inevitably have a wide range of different views within it, not least on how socialism can be achieved. In fact, part of the role of a new party will be to debate those issues. Its organisational structure will need to reflect that. That is different to our democratic structure in the Socialist Party, which reflects our high level of political cohesion.

For Marxists, it is vital to take part in the struggle for the working class to develop its own political voice. There were alleged Marxist organisations that stood aside from that struggle during the pre-history of the Labour Party, like the Social Democratic Federation, with 10,000 members at its peak. They considered this central struggle of the working class irrelevant, and as a result became completely irrelevant to the working class.

But of course, while we fight for every immediate step forward for the working class, we don't leave it there. The working class having its own party is vital, but so is that party adopting a socialist programme for the overthrow of this rotten capitalist system, and the building of a new society that really does meet the needs of the many not the few. At all times, the Socialist Party seeks to win workers and young people to our programme for the socialist transformation of society.



Fighting for the working class to have its own independent party is an important part of all of our work



The working class having its own party is vital, but so is that party adopting a socialist programme for the overthrow of this rotten capitalist system, and the building of a new society that really does meet the needs of the many not the few



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!

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Universities and Home Office threaten deportation

Nigerian students demand justice



Campaigning on campus PHOTO: MARIAM KAMISH

MARIAM KAMISH
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF SOCIALIST PARTY

Nigerian students at the University of South Wales, Trefforest – and across the UK – face a stark funding gap. Thanks to the economic crisis in Nigeria, the money they had saved and borrowed back home, to pay their tuition fees here, has lost two thirds of its value in the last year.

The university is showing little sympathy. One student said: "If I can't pay my fees, they say I'll be cut off from IT resources and my online classes. And I've had a letter from the Home Office. They say if I'm not a student, they'll deport me."

The stress and lack of money has people unable to sleep, skimping on food, moving out of their housing to camp on friends' floors. Reportedly, a number are sleeping in the library. Socialist Students demands that the university:

- Agrees no exclusions for students who can't pay
- Extends the payment period
- Allows students to pay at the old Naira rate of N584.20

It had been hard to generate interest in a fightback. Then, news came of the partial victory at the University of Surrey – and the mood rose. Socialist

Students set up a campaign stall, and started taking names and publicising an organising meeting.

Within a few days, we've had a positive response from the student union, and interest from lecturers' union UCU. On 3 May, we'll be taking this campaign to the vice-chancellor's office.

Socialist Students says a university should not be run like a business. Wherever you come from, join the fight to kick out the market, and bring back free education.

• Read what we're saying – 'Nigerian students face deportation but Surrey students win reprieve' at socialistparty.org.uk

Join the student fightback: join...



- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8761**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07749 379 010**

Aslef strikes: Fighting to keep hard-earned conditions



Birmingham Aslef picket SOCIALIST PARTY

CATHERINE CLARKE
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Aslef members are now in their 21st month of action, with action 7-9 May.

Strikers in Southampton told us that the main reason the strike has been prolonged is due to the train operating companies' (TOCs) determination to dismantle the drivers' terms and conditions. Behind the employers stand the Tories and the Department for Transport (DfT). The government has refused to sit down and speak to the union representatives, and no formal discussions have been held for a year.

The employers state that taxpayers continue to provide an extra £54 million a week to keep the trains moving since Covid. But none of this money goes to the train drivers! The drivers have not had a pay rise since 2019.

So where does the money go? Well, we know the profits of the rolling stock companies trebled in 2022-23, to £409.7 million. The companies are based in China, Canada and Luxembourg. All the private TOCs make large profits each year.

Train drivers told us they were willing to accept a 6% pay rise, but

they will not be forced to relinquish hard-earned terms and conditions, fought for and won over decades. Attacks include:

- If you are a stand-in driver (available in case a driver is absent) the new terms say you must be available four hours before and after the normal shift, rather than the present two hours

- If you are given 36-hours' notice that you need to start work at another depot – which from Southampton could be Bristol or London – you will no longer be funded to get there or for an overnight stay

Working-class people are allowed to have a life outside work! By smashing terms and conditions, we are destroying our civil society and family life. The only real answer to these continuous attacks is for our rail network to be nationalised, and democratically run and managed by the working class (see page 3).

Workers should not have to strike each year to keep their heads above water.

Thank you for the amazing sausage bap, Southampton Northam branch!

Solidarity always!

Barts NHS workers strike again: 'Unity in standing up for pay equality'

Unite members at Barts Health Trust in East London have voted in a reballot to continue strike action for the Covid lump sum they have been denied. In 2022, these workers fought successfully to be brought back into the NHS from private sector employers, and they demand to be treated the same as other NHS employees.

ARSHAD AHMAD, UNITE HEALTH AND SAFETY REP AT WHIPPS CROSS HOSPITAL, PART OF THE TRUST, SPOKE TO THE SOCIALIST.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all Unite members at Barts Trust for the resounding success in voting for industrial strike action and achieving a remarkable 98.11% 'yes'

vote. Our dedication and unity in standing up for pay equality, justice, safer staffing levels, and fair treatment is truly commendable.

It is evident that our commitment to putting patients first is unwavering. Our hard work and sacrifices during the pandemic showcase our dedication to providing the best care for patients. It is unacceptable that we feel victimised, discriminated against, and have not received the recognition and support we deserve – especially those in the departments of portering, domestic, security and catering who did not receive the lump sum during the pandemic.

The disparities and inequalities we have faced are unjust and must

be addressed. Our demands for safer staffing levels, fair treatment, and equality in the workplace are not only justified but essential for creating a supportive and equitable work environment.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to the Unite members in the West Midlands Dudley hospitals for their successful campaign. Their dedication and determination are setting a powerful example for all of us.

As we continue our strike for justice and fair treatment, our voices are strong. Together, we will make a difference, and our demands will not go unheard.

Stay united, stay strong, and continue to fight for what we deserve!



Barts strike demo HUGO PIERRE

Leicester NHS workers fighting on for back pay

STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Health Care Assistants in Leicester Hospitals are part way through their announced ten days of strike action so far, demanding back pay they're owed.

They have already won a re-banding for most staff, and the hospital trust has accepted that they were underpaid for the work that they do. However, management has not been prepared to pay sufficient back pay to recognise the years of underpayment.

The picket lines are big and lively, getting honks of support from motorists. The action has brought a whole new layer of people into activity.

"We are fighting for our back pay and against basically unfair treatment. Yes, we have been moved to Band 3. But we're still fighting because we want six years of back pay when we worked above our band. We were on Band 2, but our duties were Band 3. We were working above our pay."

UNISON STEWARD KATARZYNA KRYSZTOFIK

Usdaw delegates discuss a Starmer government

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN USDAW

The Activist bulletin, produced by Socialist Party members in retail and distribution union Usdaw, hosted its biggest fringe meeting yet at Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). Over 25 delegates and conference attendees came to discuss "What can Usdaw members expect from a Starmer-led government?"

Iain Dalton, a Socialist Party member and conference delegate, introduced the discussion.

The impending general election and the likelihood of a Keir Starmer-led Labour government has been the backdrop to the ADM, with numerous propositions placing demands on such a government.

These include calling on a Labour government to enact policies which

Starmer has retreated on, such as free school meals, removing the two-child benefit cap, and tackling the climate crisis.

There is a lack of confidence that Starmer would be prepared to take on profiteering bosses, including the private equity owners of Asda and Morrisons, reflected in the various strikes taking place at Asda, GXO in Swindon and potentially Morrisons.

One delegate reported that Tory defector Dan Poulter was his local MP. He found out Poulter had been welcomed into Labour while at the conference, and was shocked, given Poulter's record as a health minister implementing the Tory Health and Social Care Act.

Some delegates who were Labour Party members reflected the desire

of many trade union members just to see the back of the Tories, stating we had to get them out first, then worry about what sort of Labour government we would get.

But others pointed out that voter turnouts have been low and that creates space for other political forces to fill the vacuum, including the right-populist Reform UK. This is one reason why the Socialist Party argues for trade unions to back candidates who support their policies.

Iain concluded that we have to fight for Usdaw to adopt the policies our members need and place demands on Starmer now, in advance of a Labour government. If we are clear we are prepared to back those up with action we will be in a stronger position.

And if there were trade union-backed candidates, such as Jeremy



Meeting attendees show solidarity with the GXO strike in Swindon SOCIALIST PARTY

Corbyn, other banned Labour MPs, and trade unionists, standing in the elections, that would also be an important lever on a Starmer-led Labour government.

- A report of the debates at the ADM will be carried in a later issue of the Socialist.
- See more at usdawactivist.wordpress.com

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the Socialist

Issue 1273

3-8 May 2024

formerly **Militant**

FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD FREE FROM WAR

SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE
SOCIALISM 2024 ORGANISING TEAM

We all worry about the world becoming more dangerous. How can we trust Rishi Sunak to find solutions to the global problems of war and conflict?

The Tory approach to foreign policy is no different to any other issue - big-business profits before all else.

At home, that means fat cat profiteers in our public services. Hospitals spent equivalent to the salaries of around 65,000 newly qualified nurses paying for legacy PFI privatisation projects in one year of the pandemic!

So when Sunak announces an increase in defence spending, we know the only thing guaranteed to be defended is arms manufacturers' profits.

BAE Systems made record profits of over 10% on record sales of £25.3 billion in 2023.

To pay billions of pounds for more military and arms spending, Sunak plans public sector job cuts and a further slashing of spending on public services. More misery at home to pay for more misery abroad.

Instead, we need a mass movement to fight to reverse all the cuts and privatisation, and for an end to war.

Instead of more weapons of mass misery being produced, the skills and technique involved in the arms industry should be used to benefit society, with no loss of jobs, pay and conditions for the workers involved.

This is not the offer from Starmer's Labour Party. They've promised that big business will 'be in government' with Labour. That means more austerity, privatisation war and military spending.

Nonetheless Labour will be seen by many

as the best tool to get rid of the Tories - and will form the next government.

The fights against cuts, against war, to defend jobs will need to continue.

That means the working class getting organised - transforming the unions, building a political voice, fighting for an alternative to capitalism and its wars.

And that means ideas around which to organise. That's why Socialism 2024 is worth putting in your diary now.

Taking place on the weekend of 9-10 November, this socialist weekend event will be the main national event where you can discuss and debate the ideas needed to fight the cuts, war and capitalism to which the new Starmer government will be committed.

● **Book now and take advantage of the 20% discount: socialism.org.uk**



SOCIALISM 2024

Taking place on 9&10 November, in central London, Socialism 2024 will be an opportunity to say at last, we have seen the back of the Tories...but Starmer promises more of the same...**Get ready to fight back!**

Tickets & info: socialism.org.uk

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WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ►►► see column on page 8

9 771366 962103 ISSN 1366-9621

1 MAY INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

May Day is an annual celebration of workers' struggle against capitalism. And workers have been doing just that in the fantastic strike waves of the last few years, with millions of workers taking strike action and fighting back.

May Day's origins lie in the general strike for an eight-hour working day, put down by police gunfire in Chicago in 1886, and in the foundation of the Second International, bringing together revolutionary socialists around the world in 1889. Its history shows us the power of the working class to transform society, and the need to overturn the capitalist state.

The Socialist Party's links with the organised working class - the agent of socialist change - are fundamental to our work. Each year, we ask groups of workers and trade unionists to support the Socialist newspaper and its ideas by financing a May Day greeting. There has been a fantastic response to our campaign. We have once again received pledges totalling over £8,500, represented by 94 greetings across 12 pages.

Scott Jones,
May Day greetings organiser



Workers' struggle for a socialist alternative to cuts and war

May Day greetings from

Striking Sanctuary housing workers fighting for pay and union recognition!



Housing Workers
BRANCH LE1111
JOBS AND HOMES FOR ALL



the **Activist** - bulletin of Socialist Party members in

U **USDAW**

- Nationalise failing retailers to save jobs
- Minimum wage of £15 an hour
- Retail workers need a fighting and democratic union

usdawactivist.wordpress.com

May Day greetings from

U

Broad Left

Usdaw
Broad Left

national education union

Socialist Party members in the NEU

Solidarity with educators across the world

Fight for a socialist world free from poverty

Educate, agitate, organise

May Day greetings from Committee for a Workers' International members in

unite the UNION

May Day greetings from Socialist Party members in the Public and Commercial Services Union

pcs

Vote Marion Lloyd for president and for a fighting leadership on the NEC and groups

See socialistparty.org.uk/
PCScandidates2024 and read 'PCS elections: Choose a fighting democratic union' at socialistparty.org.uk for more

Socialist Party members in

UNISON

the public service union

The following Socialist Party members are standing for election in the Unison service group elections

- Helen Couchman, Community
- Mathew John, Local government
- Angie Waller, Local government
- Steve Bell, Health
- Adrian O'Malley, Health

End academisation

May Day greetings and solidarity from the **Anti Academies Alliance**

Let's build a National Education Service together

- Comprehensive and progressive
- Democratically accountable to local communities
- Fully funded and inclusive

Let's make a landmark statement for future generations by abolishing the social barbarism of grammars and selection and the structural inequality of private education

Twitter: @antiacademies
Facebook: Anti Academies Alliance
Email: office@antiacademies.org.uk
Website: www.antiacademies.org.uk

"A good local school for every child"

May Day greetings from Socialist Party members in the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

RMT

LE/0375M Doctors in Unite

- May Day greetings to all health workers and NHS campaigners
- Standing up for doctors
- Fighting for the NHS
- www.doctorsinunite.com

unite the UNION in HEALTH

May Day greetings from

socialist students

For student and workers' unity against war, cuts and capitalism!

socialiststudents.org.uk

Socialist Party members on the NSSN steering committee

national shop stewards network

send May Day greetings to the Socialist

Solidarity from Socialist Party members and supporters in

UCU
University and College Union

TAMIL SOLIDARITY
For the rights of workers & all oppressed people in Sri Lanka

May Day greetings from

Tamil Solidarity

For a working-class alternative to war, national oppression and poverty

Defend the right to self-determination for the Tamil-speaking people

MULLIVAICAL EXHIBITION

A SHOWCASE OF MEMORIES FROM MULLIVAICAL AND THE GLOBAL DEMONSTRATIONS IN 2009

FREE ENTRY

Honouring and Remembering the lives lost in the Mullivaikal genocide and the global Tamil resistance in 2009

11 & 12 May 2024

MANOR PARK HALL, MALDEN ROAD, NEW MALDEN KT3 6AU

12PM-7PM

WWW.TAMILSOLIDARITY.ORG



May Day greetings from Bracknell Unite

**Solidarity with all workers in struggle!
For an end to war, terror and oppression!
United we stand, divided we fall!**



**Unite Community
Berkshire, Oxfordshire
and Buckinghamshire
sends international
solidarity greetings
to workers across the
world**



**sends May Day greetings and a big thank
you to the workers' newspaper that is
always on our side - the Socialist**



May Day greetings from South East Kent TUC



Southampton and South West Hampshire TUC

**No to war and austerity -
for workers' unity and socialism**



Brighton Hove and District TUC

- May Day Greetings to the workers of the world
- Solidarity with the Palestinian people!
- Fight the anti-union laws!
- Stop the attacks on civil liberties!

Brighton Unemployed Workers Centre Ltd

brings May Day greetings to all those fighting poverty, racism, imperialism and oppression

- We reject any return to austerity or to the politics of New Labour. Reject Starmer's witch-hunt. Restore the whip to Jeremy Corbyn: Sack Starmer!
- Liberation for the Palestinians, opposition to Zionism and apartheid Israel
- Coronavirus has demonstrated that cuts to the NHS and privatisation has caused thousands of deaths
- Oppose all benefit cuts and attacks on employed, unemployed and disabled people
- No to imperialism's wars – Abolish NATO
- Fighting poverty amidst plenty
- For international socialism

Bill North - chairperson; Andy Richards - secretary; Tony Greenstein - treasurer; Val Cane
PO Box 173, Brighton BN51 9EZ; brightonunemployedcentre2000@yahoo.co.uk; 07843 350 343



Greetings from Southern & South East Socialist Party

**Aylesbury ★ Basingstoke ★
Brighton ★ Kent ★ Oxford
★ Portsmouth ★ Reading
★ Southampton ★
Staines**

May Day
greetings
from



**May Day greetings from
Mike Marx, handyman -
hammering the Tories!**

May Day Greetings from activists in Surrey County Unison branch



- Smash the cost-of-living crisis - for an inclusive, cross-sector pay campaign - no-one left behind!
- Fight for a £15 an hour minimum wage in Local Government, Health, Private and Community employers
- Agitate, Educate and Organise - challenge the mainstream austerity narrative
- Celebrate diversity and fight discrimination - jobs and homes not racism - access is a right not a privilege

- Stop the cuts in Woking! Trade unionists and socialists making a stand
- Socialist planning to reverse climate change
- Fight for Zane's Law and the Truth About Zane (www.truthaboutzane.com)
- For solidarity - at home and internationally
- Ceasefire now! End the genocide in Gaza!
- No to war in Ukraine - no to NATO expansion

This greeting was funded by generous donations from the following branch activists and staff:

(all in a personal capacity)

● Shaka Anderson - Workplace Rep
● Tracy Baker - School Support Staff Convenor
● Tom Bancroft, Branch Employed Caseworker/Organiser
● Stuart Burt - Workplace Rep
● Jan Callender - Branch Employed Office Manager

● Sam Church - Young Members Officer
● Nicolae Ciupitu - Education and Lifelong Learning
● Chris Collins - Workplace Rep
● Helen Couchman - Community Convenor
● Paul Couchman - Branch Secretary
● Duncan Eastoe - Workplace Rep

● Nancy El-Shatoury - Workplace Rep
● Ginny Eaton - Retired Members Joint Secretary
● Lisa Fogerty-Scott - Joint Treasurer
● Emma Gray - Joint Treasurer
● Istvan Gulyas - Childrens Services Convenor
● Jane Gupta - Workplace Rep

● Russ Harland - Deputy Branch Secretary
● Andy Hayler - Workplace Rep
● Peta Lawrence - Senior Libraries Rep
● James Lewis - Workplace Contact
● Andy Pattinson - Joint Chair
● Tanya San Juan - Branch Employed Case Worker/Organiser
● Jose Trigo - Workplace Rep

● Vikki Walton-Cole - Joint Equalities Coordinator
● Ellie Waple - LGBT+ Members' Officer
● Sheila Wright - Retired Members Joint Secretary

Plus several anonymous donations from branch and regional activists

May Day greetings and solidarity to all workers from Unite London Digital & Tech branch including all tech workers internationally



Calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza now and solidarity with Diane Abbot and all those resisting racism wherever it occurs



RMT
Piccadilly and District
Line West

Socialist Party supporters in Hounslow Unison



Waltham Forest Trades Council sends May Day greetings to the people of Gaza and the West Bank



We say:

- Stop the genocide!
- Stop the assault on Rafah!
- Not war! ■ For workers' unity!
- Freedom for Palestine!

Waltham Forest Trades Council

Solidarity from **Fenland Unite Community - Peterborough, Wisbech & King's Lynn**



Greetings from Eastern Socialist Party

Cambs ★ Stevenage ★
Watford ★ Essex ★
Ipswich



Ealing Trades Council
Solidarity to workers everywhere

Solidarity from Hillingdon TUC



Greetings from London Socialist Party

Newham & East London ★ Hackney & Islington ★ Waltham Forest ★ Hillingdon ★ Camden & Haringey ★ Enfield & Lea Valley ★ West London ★ Tower Hamlets ★ Lambeth & South West London ★ South East London ★ Croydon & Sutton

Unite LE/1228 Waltham Forest

sends May Day greetings. Fight council cuts and redundancies! Demand that a future Labour government fully fund public services!

Fraternal greetings to all workers from Stevenage & District Trades Union Council



May Day greetings from

Unite Barts Health workers branch
LE/7384L



- May Day greetings from fighting-back Unite health worker members at Bart's NHS Trust
- Cleaners, catering workers, security and porters, after six months of strike action for the Covid lump sum and balloting again, say:

We have a message for Barts and NHS England bosses: Pay up now! No to inequality and discrimination! For a fully funded democratically run NHS!

Hackney trade unionists send May Day greetings to workers of the world

We say no to Hackney Council's cuts to children's centres and all cuts to services and Israel's war on Gaza

We say yes to a world free of poverty, profit and injustice

This advert is sponsored by the following in a personal capacity:

- Aasia Attas, treasurer Hackney Unison
- Peter Coleman, Private Sector Organiser
- Balaka Fell-Holden, library steward
- Steve Edwards, Unite Branch Secretary Hackney

- Nick Panteli, library steward
- Carlene Glover, Unison steward
- Matt Paul, Unison branch secretary
- Doreen Hamilton, Children's Centre steward
- Don Green, steward
- Brian Debus, Chair Hackney Unison

- Clementina Anya, Libraries
- Osei Mensa, ex-Hackney Libraries
- Sharmila Thyagarajan, Unison
- Will Leng, NEU
- Sandra Hall, NEU
- Jim Boyd, Unite
- Doug Holton, Joint branch secretary Trades Council
- Henry Lagbiola



Croydon Trades Union Council



Enfield Trades Union Council



Affiliations: enfieldtuc@hotmail.com

May Day greetings from NEU Newham



Hackney Trades Council sends Mayday greetings to all workers fighting the cost-of-living crisis. **We totally oppose the continued bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli state**

Basildon & Thurrock TUC
Working-class solidarity in the community



Newham Trades Union Council



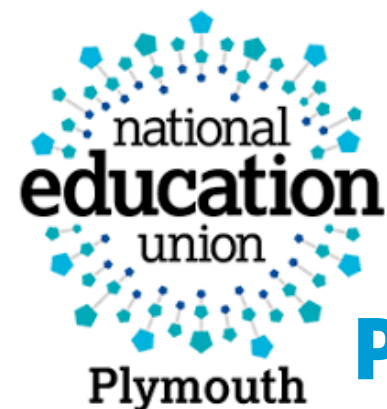
Solidarity May Day greetings
London GPM print branch LE/7031L

For solidarity and socialism throughout the world
■ Tim Colgan Branch Chair
■ Tom Murphy Branch Secretary



The Barking Reach Residents Association sends May Day greetings for International Workers Day to the Socialist newspaper, which has always supported and reported on our campaigns over the years

- We demand a walk-in GP service for our healthy new town
- Abolish leasehold
- Abolish tax haven-based landlords who are grabbing ground rent for hedge funds
- Nationalise the top ten homebuilders profiteering from building unsafe and poorly finished properties
- Housing Associations to end the 30-60 minute call centre wait times and fix issues swiftly
- Councils have failed to stop the decades-long drift to deregulation and unsafe homes. They must engage in a mass home-building programme of genuinely affordable, safe and secure, good-quality homes. Residents must hold them to account
- Nationalise the insurance and energy industry to provide green solutions for energy that in turn imparts an affordable service charge to residents
- Sprinklers to be retrofitted into all blocks owned by large landlords such as Adriatic/Bellway, at the landlords' or builders' expense



**May Day
greetings
from
Plymouth NEU**

**BFAWU Kernow sends
lashings of solidarity to all
trade union members and
all socialists on May Day**



**Special thanks to
Plymouth Socialist
Party and TUSC for its
ongoing support**



**May Day
greetings
from
Devon
Unite Community**

**May Day greetings
from
Highworth
Climate Talks**

**May Day Greetings from
Swindon Palestine
Solidarity
Free Palestine!**



Greetings from South West Socialist Party

**Bristol North and South
★ Dorset ★ Cornwall ★
Gloucestershire ★ Devon ★
Plymouth ★ Somerset
★ Swindon ★
Salisbury**



**Cirencester
College**
socialist students

**New College
Swindon**
socialist students

**May Day greetings from Bristol
and Gloucester Area Unite
Community branch**



**Bristol
Trades
Council**

May Day Greetings



We join with our comrades across the world, many under occupation, starvation, flooding or drought. All workers should have the right to self-determination, to lead a life free from death and oppression. We need better homes, better jobs and a right to a safe and secure environment. We've been proud to march on demos against the attacks on Gaza and send solidarity greetings to all socialists and those concerned with the world situation.

**Victory to the
Tata Steel Workers!**
**SOLIDARITY FROM
Caerphilly
Trades Council**



Swansea Trades Council

**Nationalisation
not
devastation
- solidarity
with the steel
workers**



**May Day greetings from
Cardiff Trades
Council**



**Fighting all anti-union
employers in Cardiff**



Greetings from Socialist Party Wales

**Caerphilly ★ Rhondda
Cynon Taff ★ Cardiff East
& West ★ Newport ★
Swansea & West
Wales**

**Solidarity from
Carmarthenshire County
Unison
supporters**
UNISON
the public service union

**May Day
solidarity from
Coventry TUC**



**Stop the cuts
Stop the war on Gaza**



**Solidarity to all workers
and stop arming Israel
May Day greetings from
the Unite WM/6050
Tom Mann Coventry
and Warwickshire
Local branch**

**From supporters
in Swansea retired
members branch -
'retired from work
but not from the
class struggle!'**
unite
the UNION

**May Day greetings
from Coventry Unite
Community Alice
Arnold branch
End war in Gaza now! Fight anti-trade
union laws! Support Amazon workers!**
unite
the UNION



Greetings from West Mids Socialist Party

**Coventry ★ Nuneaton ★ Stoke ★
South East Staffs ★ Birmingham
North, South, Central ★
Bromsgrove ★ Black
Country ★ Shropshire ★
Worcester**

**Unite Birmingham South Local
WM/6030**

**sends May Day greetings to
workers around the world**

■ End austerity policies
■ End Israeli genocide
■ For a socialist world based
on international solidarity



May Day Greetings

Unite Nottinghamshire Health Branch



- Restore our NHS - end privatisation and profiteering
- Keep the NHS free to all, including migrant workers and refugees
- Fund the NHS to meet need
- Decent wages for all health workers
- Abolish student fees
- Abolish Private Finance Initiative - draining money needed for patient care

unite
the UNION



Greetings from East Mids Socialist Party

Chesterfield ★ Derby ★
Leicester ★ Lincolnshire
★ Mansfield ★
Northampton ★
Nottingham

Solidarity
and May Day
greetings from
Bill and Marilyn
Buchanan,
Nottingham

Socialist Party members in East Midlands
National Pensioners' Convention

Fighting for our lives
Fighting for your future

NPC
NATIONAL
PENSIONERS
CONVENTION



May Day greetings
from Notts
Trades
Council



May Day greetings
from Unite East
Midlands Area
Activist Committee

unite
the UNION

May Day greetings from

**THE LIVERPOOL
47 GROUP OF
COUNCILLORS 1983-87**



Still standing as a magnificent example to those Labour councils who carry out every cut demanded by the Tories



■ We refused to cut and fought back successfully for resources which Thatcher had stolen from Liverpool

■ Labour councils should refuse to implement any further Tory austerity



**May Day greetings from Liverpool
and District Socialist Party branch
- forward to a new workers' party!**

**May Day greetings from
Merseyside Construction
and Civil Engineering
branch**

Solidarity with the people of
Gaza, ceasefire now!

unite
the UNION

**May Day greetings to readers
of the Socialist from**



- Fighting for unemployed, disabled and retired people, and exploited working class communities!
- Ceasefire in Gaza now! End genocide!
- Total opposition to NHS cuts and privatisation!
- Solidarity with all workers in struggle!
- Climate change is a trade union issue!
- Time to end this squalid capitalist system!

**May Day greetings from
Cheshire Unite Community
Branch (NW100/C3)**



Greetings from North West Socialist Party

**Lancashire ★ Manchester
and Salford ★ Liverpool
and District ★ West
Cheshire**



Hull and District Trades Council and Unity Shop

Workers of the world unite

Supporting workers in and outside the workplace





Greetings from Yorkshire Socialist Party

Grimsby and Scunthorpe ★
Hull ★ Sheffield SE & NW ★
South Yorkshire ★ Bradford ★
Leeds ★ Wakefield and Pontefract ★ York

May Day greetings from Yorkshire Youth Fight for Jobs

YOUTH FIGHT FOR JOBS



May Day greetings from

Leeds, Wakefield and York Unite Community

Save UK steel
Energy 4 all



May Day greetings from Hull and East Riding NEU to workers of the world



Leeds Trades Union Council March and Rally

MAY DAY

MARCH FOR PEACE

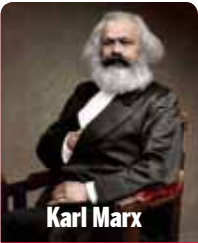
Saturday 4th May

Assemble 11.30
ready to march 12 noon

Outside Leeds City Art Gallery,
Victoria Gardens,
The Headrow, LS1 3AA



May Day greetings from readers of the Socialist in Leeds Labour Party



Karl Marx

Workers of all lands, unite!



Greetings from Northern Socialist Party

Carlisle ★ Newcastle ★
South Tyne and Wearside ★ Teesside

May Day greetings from

Unite Community Cumbria

