

Tories on their way out, but...

WHO STANDS FOR THE WORKING CLASS?

Vote Socialist

Because Starmer's Labour doesn't stand for us

CIARAN O'DONOGHUE
NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

14 years of Tory rule have inflicted misery on working people. The Tories have presided over vicious austerity and a cost-of-living crisis.

House prices and rents continue to skyrocket, as do waiting lists for social housing. Meanwhile, private water companies have been given the green light to pump waste into our seas and rivers.

Water, gas, and electric companies continue to increase extortionate prices, while raking in huge profits – British Gas in the past year has made £750 million.

Many people are also forced to rely on food banks to survive. The Conservative Party has truly made life a misery for working-class people.

Labour looks set to win the general election, and many will be grateful to see the back of the Tories. But is Labour on the side of the working class? 120 business leaders have just signed a letter supporting Labour's economic plans.

Pro-big business

Shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves has said that Labour is "the natural party of business". Labour's commitment to its 'fiscal rules' is code for more austerity.

Wes Streeting, Labour's shadow

health minister, is in the pocket of private healthcare providers. He has received £175,000 in donations from individuals linked to such firms. It is no coincidence that Labour now plans to force the NHS to pay and collaborate more with private firms.

Labour has backed the Israeli state's war on Gaza. Keir Starmer agreed on LBC Radio that Israel had the absolute right to shut off the water and electricity into Gaza.

Who stands for the working class? As it stands, we have no mass

political voice. But we need one – a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and fighting for socialism.

In this election, Socialist Party members will be standing in over 30 seats, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), on a platform that is anti-austerity, anti-war, and fighting for the working class.

Help us prepare for the battles to come under a Starmer government. Join the Socialist Party to fight for socialist change.

theSocialist

formerly Militant

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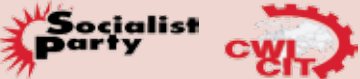
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

‘Have the Tories got a problem with young people?’

Journalist Victoria Derbyshire put it to ex-transport minister Mark Harper: “Look at what you’re doing to young people. You’re going to force them to do National Service, you’ve tripled their tuition fees. You froze the threshold at which they have to start paying back their student loan. You’ve extended the student loan repayment terms from 30 to 40 years, meaning many graduates will be paying off their debts in their 60s. You’ve invested only a third of what was recommended by the ‘catch-up tsar’ to help kids catch up after the pandemic. Rents rose nearly 9% in the last year. And houses at their most expensive since 1876. That’s why I ask: have the Tories got a problem with young people?” Mark’s

response after awkwardly sipping some water: “No, not at all.”

But with Keir Starmer’s pitch to voters being a change to ‘stability’, will any of these and all the other pressing issues facing young people be solved by sticking in the narrow lane penned in by ‘the markets’?

Low pay, crap housing and climate destruction

The situation facing young people is dire – forced to pay the price for capitalism’s failings. All the main parties in parliament are wedded to the capitalist system and all its ills – low pay, crap housing and climate destruction. So join a party that does have a problem with the capitalist system itself and join the fight for socialism.



HUGO PIERRE

Starmer ‘can’t afford to tax the rich’

Sky News political editor Beth Rigby: “You said you’d raise taxes on the top 5% of earners when you were running to be Labour leader... Do you acknowledge that part of the trust issue is also about these [pledges]?” Keir Starmer: “Totally disagree... I’ll tell you why. I think it’s more important to stand in front of voters and say: ‘I’m sorry, I can’t now afford what I said before because of the damage being done to the economy.’”

Who can’t afford it?

Working-class people can’t afford falling real-terms wages and crumbling services!

Even the London Metro, a capitalist newspaper owned by Viscount Rothermere, who also owns the Daily Mail, published a two-page spread entitled: ‘Super-rich must pay more tax, say multi-millionaires’ (3 June 2024). The feature laments that, despite public support for it, “politicians of all stripes have been unwilling to instigate any kind of wealth tax.”

The Socialist Party would. Our 30+



candidates in the general election, standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, will be campaigning to make the super-rich pay!

Even just a 20% levy on the combined wealth of £795 billion held by the 350 on the Sunday Times Rich List could raise £159 billion. Why not extend it to the richest 1,000?

Whole system guilty

And it’s more than just the super-rich hoarding the wealth. The profit-driven capitalist system, based on competition and exploitation, is inherently crisis-ridden. The desire to maximise profit leads the capitalist bosses’ class to attack the living standards of the working class – clawing back reforms, privatising services, and driving down real wages.

We call for the nationalisation of the top 150 companies that dominate the economy and the banks, so that a plan can be democratically drawn up by the working class to meet the needs of people and the environment.

‘Vote for me, I hate where you live’

Right-wing politicians have been caught slagging off the places that they’re standing. The question is, if this is what these two politicians have been caught saying, what do the rest of the anti-working-class cabal really think of us?

Reform leader Nigel Farage has finally announced he’s standing to be

MP for Clacton. He previously ruled this out, saying: “But do I want to be an MP? Do I want to spend every Friday for the next five years in Clacton?”

Now he’s said: “Am I an expert on the local area? Of course I’m not!”

LBC radio host Ian Dale wanted to be the Tory candidate for Tunbridge

Wells. But he’s been forced to withdraw from the contest, when comments he said resurfaced: “I’ve never liked the place. Still don’t.”

It’s clear that these people don’t care about the places they’re standing in. These capitalist politicians aren’t like the candidates standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist

Coalition (TUSC) – working-class people and trade unionists, campaigning with others to fight for every improvement for ordinary people.

These right-wing politicians want to claim their fat MP salaries, and the expenses that go with it. Socialist Party members, standing as part of TUSC, pledge to only accept a worker’s wage if elected.

Farage and Dale are representatives of the bosses and rich, we need representatives to fight for us.

Donate to supercharge the socialist stand!

ISAI MARIJERLA

SOCIALIST PARTY TREASURER

Thank you to everyone who has donated or pledged to the Socialist Party general election appeal. We

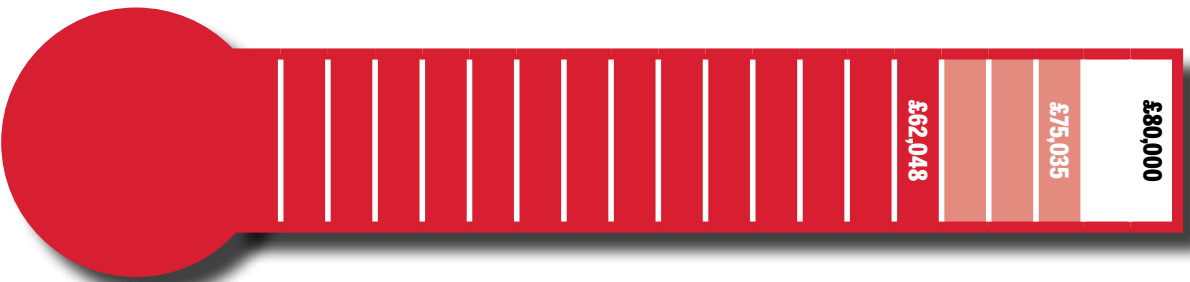
have reached the minimum amount needed to stand 30-40 candidates. The donations we’ve received so far will help us produce leaflets, posters and more outlining the programme needed for working-class people.

However, raising more funds will enable us to present the biggest and boldest possible socialist alternative to the establishment parties. In addition to the £62,048 donations received, we have an extra £13,413

in pledges. The fantastic response to our election appeal demonstrates the enthusiasm for our stand.

Keir Starmer is proving time and again that he represents big business, not the working class. We need our voice in this election. Socialist Party members will be out on stalls, building support for socialist ideas. We will be holding public meetings across the country and participating in anti-war demonstrations and anti-cuts campaigns – join us and donate!

- **Donate:** socialistparty.org.uk/donate
- **Pledges to be made by the end of June and paid by the end of July**



Challenge Starmer’s purge with anti-war, anti-austerity candidates

Tens of thousands attended rallies, and millions voted for an anti-austerity manifesto, when it was put forward by Jeremy Corbyn STEVE SCORE



Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

Keir Starmer has been preparing the Labour Party for this general election since he took over as leader in 2020. His 16-point lead over Rishi Sunak is increasing. Even if the polls narrow as the election gets nearer, Starmer is still confident he will lead the next government.

His first task after taking over from Jeremy Corbyn was to show big business he could be trusted to defend their interests. He has succeeded – he has a 17-point lead over the Tories among business leaders.

Now, he is clearly looking ahead to life in Number 10, which is why he has pushed on with his purge of ‘left-wing’ Labour candidates.

Starmer is not about to govern during a healthy economic period for British capitalism. Government debt is 98% of GDP, and the economy is

still 16% smaller than if the pre-2008 crisis trends had continued. Economic data aside, there is no doubt that working-class people are feeling the impact of capitalist stagnation.

In the last 12 months, the Trussell Trust has distributed over 3.1 million emergency food parcels. More than one in five people in the UK are living in poverty, and there are around twice as many people in work and living in poverty compared to 1997.

The ‘S’ word

It’s no wonder there was so much enthusiasm for Corbyn’s demands in 2015, when he won the Labour leadership. Even when Corbyn was defiled in the press as a socialist, it just meant more people started to think of themselves as socialists as they looked for an alternative.

This latent anger and mood for change among working-class and young people still terrifies the capitalist class. We saw that anger played out in the strike wave, and in the ongoing huge Gaza protests and more.

Many will have laughed when Starmer described himself as a ‘socialist’, and few will have believed him. But the ‘S’ word was hardly uttered by Labour Party politicians

Come and discuss Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

The Socialist Party has regular meetings in towns and cities across the country.

If you would like to participate:

- **Go to** socialistparty.org.uk
- **Or text** 07761 818206 with your name and postcode.



Starmer’s New Labour machine has clearly been divided over whether she should be allowed to stand, given the anger among Black workers in particular at blocking the first Black woman MP, who has endured a huge amount of racism during her 40 years in parliament.

In addition, six general secretaries of affiliated unions, including Sharon Graham from Unite, which has over 1.2 million members, wrote to Starmer to demand Abbott be allowed to stand. However, even if Abbott is allowed to stand, it is clear that the ‘cull of the left’ she described is taking place, with Shaheen, Lloyd Russell-Moyle and perhaps others effected.

Starmer is preparing for what is ahead. With the Tories gone after 14 years, working-class people will expect an end to public service cuts and falling living standards. But this isn’t what a Starmer government has in store, and he could quickly find himself in the midst of a new strike wave, as people fight to improve their living conditions.

‘Independent’ or ‘socialist and trade unionist’?

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), in which the Socialist Party participates, was set up as an electoral umbrella for trade unionists, socialists and community campaigners to stand in elections. As Mick Lynch, general secretary of transport union RMT, said in 2022 during the strike wave: “The working class is back!”

We think that means that having socialist and trade unionist on the ballot, instead of independent, is a strength. It shows voters looking for an alternative to war and the cost-of-living crisis which alternative candidates want to take on those issues.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition name is a better description than simply ‘independent’, because this struggle isn’t independent from all the other class battles currently taking place: junior doctors’ strikes, and protests against war, cuts to services or the climate crisis. This is why the Socialist Party calls on all ousted left Labour candidates to consider being part of the TUSC election challenge.

Above all, however, we call on them to contest the general election. Jeremy Corbyn has also now announced he will be standing as an independent, having had the whip removed in 2020. He has a lot of support in the local area where he has been the MP for 41 years.

In the next parliament, Corbyn alongside any other left of Labour MPs, could play an important role as class struggle heats up. Even a small number could form a left bloc in parliament, helping to hold Starmer to account. Such a bloc can be a pole of attraction for workers entering struggle.

Very quickly after this election, the issues around privatisation disasters at Thames Water and Tata Steel will be raised, and around council cuts, rising prices, and falling take-home pay.

But any opposition, both inside and outside parliament, will need to be properly organised if it hopes to take on the rotten Starmer and the capitalist system. That means getting down to the task of building a new mass workers’ party, based on the organised trade union movement and socialist ideas.

Stop the Sewage Don't 'tinker', nationalise under democratic workers' control!

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Right across the country, privatised water companies are fleecing the public, and polluting our environment.

South West Water had to issue a "boil water" notice after a parasite outbreak. Ailing Thames Water has now had to do the same for houses in Surrey.

Here in Cumbria, as highlighted by the weekly protests of the 'Save Windermere' campaign, United Utilities continues to use one of the Lake District's most iconic lakes as a sewage pond, threatening its ecosystem and the health of swimmers and lake users. Local rivers and streams are also being polluted.

Polluting for profit

But why should anyone expect anything different? After all, these privatised companies are simply doing what they are in business to do – reward their shareholders.

Investors have withdrawn a staggering £85 billion from water and sewage firms since the industry was privatised more than 30 years ago.

Not content with continuing to pollute for profit, all the privatised water firms now want to fleece us further by hiking up water bills even more.

The obvious answer is nationalisation - but not just so that their debts can be written off, with taxpayers footing the bill, before they are handed back to profiteers! No, these firms

need to be taken back into permanent public ownership.

And, in place of the toothless 'regulator' Ofwat and the compromised Environment Agency, the renationalised firms also need to be placed under democratic workers' control so that elected representatives of water and sewage workers, lake and river users, local communities, and trade unions, can exercise real control, and agree a plan for the investment that is urgently needed to stop the sewage.

With public ownership, that vital public investment must also then be provided, without being siphoned off by greedy shareholders.

But, while party leaders like Lib Dem Ed Davey and Labour's Keir Starmer are happy to make some vote-grabbing headlines opposing water pollution, they refuse to make the clear and obvious call for nationalisation!

The renationalisation of water and other public utilities was one of the many commitments ditched by Keir Starmer after the defeat of Jeremy Corbyn. Instead, Labour's policy now just says it will 'strengthen regulation' and 'block the payment of bonuses'.

The Lib Dems have now added the call for water firms to become 'public benefit companies' with 'local environment experts' sitting on the company boards as non-executive directors to "improve public accountability and transparency".

But no amount of 'regulation' or rebranding will stop these private companies being primarily in business for the benefit of their



shareholders! Public money will continue to go towards private profit instead of into public infrastructure. Adding a few non-executive directors will never allow for the genuine control for, and by, the public in the way that democratic workers' control would be able to.

Lib Dems

Windermere's local Liberal Democrat MP Tim Farron was asked by a BBC Radio 4 presenter: "Why not just nationalise rather than tinker with the board?". His answer? It's not "very

sensible to be giving billions of pounds to shareholders and big corporations to buy those companies back into the state'. New Labour has previously come up with similar excuses too.

But why should these fat cats receive a penny more? They've already fleeced billions out of the public purse and billpayers. Compensation should only be paid where there is a genuine proven need, for example to safeguard workers' pension investments or small shareholders – but certainly none to the 'big corporations' at all!

The establishment 'opposition' parties are too tied to big business to make the obvious call for nationalisation to stop the sewage. However, the Socialist Party and others standing in the general election for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition certainly will!

Martin is standing as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate in Chorley, against Speaker Lindsay Hoyle. He is a former member of the National Union of Teachers (now the NEU) NEC.

Starmer must commit to nationalising Tata now!

ALEC THRAVES
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY AND SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL

Tata's threat to close down its UK steel operations must be met with united strike action from all of the steel unions.

Over the weekend, Rajesh Nair, Tata Steel CEO, has responded to Unite's planned work to rule and overtime ban, due to start on 18 June, with a threatening letter to steelworkers if they take industrial action. Community and GMB have both also won strike ballots.

Provocation from Tata

Tata's bullying proposals include removing the enhanced redundancy terms, legally challenging Unite's successful industrial ballot, bringing forward the closure of the Port

Talbot blast furnaces and ultimately withdrawing from all its UK steel operations!

The misplaced strategy of the steel unions, including unfortunately Unite, who all opposed Swansea Trades Council's motion for nationalisation at the recent TUC Cymru Congress in favour of "urging Tata to come back to the table with better alternatives for the future of Port Talbot" steelworks", has rapidly been shown to have been mistaken.

In a welcome and noticeable change of emphasis, Sharon Graham, Unite's general secretary, commented: "If Tata is not prepared to do the right thing, then an incoming Labour government must ensure it does! Tata's actions show the fundamental problem with private multinational companies owning the UK's foundation industries."

Even though still not explicitly demanded, steelworkers will assume this comment means that Tata should be immediately nationalised by a 'soon-to-be' Labour government. Unite is demanding the renationalisation of the energy companies.

That demand must now urgently be placed on the shoulders of Sir Keir Starmer, alongside preparations to mobilise the whole trade union movement in solidarity with striking steelworkers to save their jobs, their plant and our communities! Should Tata attempt to bring forward the closure of the blast furnaces, militant action will be posed, such as an immediate stoppage and even occupation, backed up by an emergency demonstration outside the steelworks of the wider union movement and working-class communities.



Why employment rights from day one are important

DAVE GORTON
SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER AND NSSN COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Rights from day one of employment is a simple demand deliberately made confusing by employers' representatives to deter implementation. Why is it important?

When employment tribunals were extended to encompass unfair dismissal, a qualifying period was introduced before a case could be heard. The qualification means a worker has to have been in employment with that particular employer for a specific length of time before they can bring forward a case.

Originally it was six months, but the majority of the time since it has wavered between one and the current two years. Because employers know their staff can't usually challenge unfair dismissals before this period is exhausted, the most unscrupulous can use it as a hire-and-fire mechanism, dismissing workers easily after, say, 23 months of employment. (There are exceptions,

for example firings due to protected characteristics or whistleblowing).

To cover up the malpractices of some employers, business leaders claim they need 'flexibility' because some workers are unable to match the demands or skills needed to do a particular job. This is a smokescreen. Probation periods would still exist to ensure a match between workers and task is a good one, although employers can also abuse these so would need oversight by workplace trade unions. A worker not being kept on at the end of a probationary period is not legally a dismissal and means that worker doesn't have the automatic right to representation from their union.

Many employers have shortened disciplinary procedures that allow them to sack workers more easily, based on the qualifying period. This is not just a 'manager's right to manage' as employers like to term it, but an open door for outright abuse.

Rights from day one should be an intrinsic part of employment, of particular importance to parents,

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nationalshop stewardsnetwork Conference 2024

The NSSN has set out a list of demands:

- To repeal Sunak's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act along with Cameron's Trade Union Act 2016, and all the rest of the Tory anti-union laws, going back to Thatcher and Major
- To re-nationalise Royal Mail, BT, buses, the energy and utility companies, and steel. Immediate renationalisation of the railways, rather than waiting for franchises to expire
- To end privatisation in the NHS and our public services
- For a real inflation-proof pay rise for workers, that protects our living standards
- For a £15-an-hour minimum wage with no age exemptions
- Repeal of 'fire and rehire' and zero-hour contracts
- Workers' rights from day one of employment

Saturday 22 June
11am-4.30pm
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R
Attendance fee – £8.
Email us for more info – info@shopstewards.net

'Labour's plan to make work pay' - A bad bosses' charter?

Come to the National Shop Stewards Network conference to debate how we fight for a workers' manifesto

THEO SHARIEFF

The general election on 4 July will be a welcome chance for workers to end fourteen years of Tory rule. But will Keir Starmer's New Labour represent the interests of trade unionists and workers and young people generally?

Starmer and Reeves recently unveiled 'Labour's Plan to Make Work Pay' which represents a further quashing of policies advanced under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party. Ultimately, it defends the right of employers to use fire and rehire (only when they really want to!), proposes a ban only on 'exploitative' zero-hour contracts, and pledges to repeal the Tory anti-union laws dating back to 2016, leaving the rest on the statute book.

In Unite general secretary Sharon Graham's words, "The number of caveats and get-outs means it is in danger of becoming a bad bosses' charter." It couldn't be clearer that after clearing the Tories out of power at the election, trade unionists are going to have to fight from day one to defend and advance our interests against Starmer's pro-big business Labour.

That's why this year's National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference – the last NSSN event before the New Labour government takes power – will be a crucial meeting for all trade unionists wanting to prepare for that struggle. As usual, this will be a meeting to bring together rank-and-file trade union reps and activists to discuss how we can best link up and coordinate our disputes.

But it will also be a chance for trade unionists to discuss what policies we need to fight for – such as repealing all the anti-union laws going back to Thatcher's era, immediate renationalisation of key industries such as steel and transport - as well as how we can fight to make those policies a reality.

The NSSN has written to different political parties claiming to be an alternative to the Tories - including Starmer's Labour – to come and address a conference of rank-and-file trade union reps and stewards, to tell us what they would do for our movement and the working class in the first 100 days of government.

This conference will be a chance for workers to have their voice heard politically in this election – and even more importantly prepare for the battles that will follow 4 July! Come to NSSN Conference – support the strikes and join the debate.



Young socialists Who will fight to prevent climate catastrophe?



JOHN WILLIAMS
CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

While politicians campaign for votes to decide who's sitting in parliament for the next five years, the world is heading for climate catastrophe, and the guilty culprit is capitalism. A UN estimate suggests that water stress could displace 700 million people by 2030. And the 2021 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that within two decades, temperatures are likely to rise by more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, with devastating consequences.

Students and young people have directed their anger at the capitalist system itself, and its political representatives. Many young people took their first political action walking out of school and colleges to protest against the inaction of the Tory government. Empty words at the COP climate conference were followed up with empty wallets when it came to invest what's needed to prevent catastrophe. And Sunak's desperate dumping of net-zero pledges, granting new oil and gas licences, and posturing as a polluter-friendly politician won't stem the tide of young people abandoning the Tory party one bit.

We all want to see the Tories gone, but when the alternative put in front of us is Starmer's Labour, its hard to feel enthusiastic. Not too long ago, he dropped Labour's promise of £28

billion a year on environmental investment. Keir Starmer said it would be "irresponsible" to keep it! Is it 'irresponsible' to invest in our futures to guarantee a world we can actually live comfortably in?

Nationalise energy companies

Labour's flagship environment policy is creating 'GB Energy' - a publicly owned energy company competing with the big privately owned energy giants. The majority of the oil and gas and energy producing infrastructure will remain in private hands - and they can't be trusted! They can't be trusted either to stump up the cash for a transition to environmentally sustainable production, and any action they do take will be punishing their workers. Look at Tata Steel; bosses want to close down the steel furnace in Port Talbot that will decimate jobs and the local economy if it goes ahead, and they claim to be doing it to 'reduce emissions' – keep their profits safe more like!

We need a pro-worker government that will take on these climate criminal vultures. The major corporations that dominate the economy are responsible for the bulk of carbon emissions, and there is no prospect of them accepting the hit to their profits required to take the action.

You can't control what you don't own! To secure our future we need to take the infrastructure, logistics and

science out of the hands of the capitalists and put them in the hands of workers ourselves. That way, a democratic plan can be drawn up to provide the goods and services we need while protecting the environment.

Socialist Party members standing in the general election under the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition banner are standing for:

- Stop climate change – invest in renewable energy, make the super-rich polluting bosses pay
- End oil and gas – guarantee jobs for existing workers with no loss of pay, pensions and conditions – and fully paid free training
- Free public transport – expand and improve services, kick out the profiteers
- Nationalise the energy industry, big business and the banks – no money to the fat-cat bosses, compensation only where there is proven need
- For a socialist plan of production, drawn up democratically by the working class to meet the needs of all and the environment
- For a new mass workers' party fighting for socialist change in Britain and internationally

John is a young worker and Unite member. He is standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in Cardiff East.

Student encampments

● Queen Mary: ‘We won’t pack up and give up!’

QMUL STUDENT
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

As we go into the fourth week of the Queen Mary University student encampment for Palestine, East London, it’s becoming clear that university management has no respect for the will and demands, its students and staff. The university has refused to meet with us even after statements of support from the UCU, Unison and many other local trade unions. However, this has not deterred us; numbers at the encampment have only grown since week one and students are determined to stay until the university meets us and agrees to our demands.

Management have gone out of their way to try and villainize the campers to the rest of the student body. Since the start, they have been sending out emails claiming that the encampment is a risk to health and safety.

However, these slandering and insulting emails did violate the safety of protesters. Just a few days after the university sent them, two students came onto the encampment and physically assaulted some of the campers, spraying urine across the camp. Campus security, many of whom were hired specifically because of this encampment, saw this and did nothing.

University management followed up the attack with yet another email, again villainizing the encampment and implying it was the student protesters’ fault for setting up a camp in the first place!

The local community and trade unions are firmly on our side. This camp, and the entire movement for Palestinian liberation, won’t just go away. We are determined and passionate about this struggle and can see that all our struggles are connected; we will not simply pack up and give up!



● Leeds: We need a socialist voice in general election

LOUIE FULTON
TUSC CANDIDATE FOR LEEDS CENTRAL AND
HEADINGLEY IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

While campaigning in the upcoming general election, we stopped by the encampment at University of Leeds. While talking to representatives of the camp, they were clear that they do not support the Labour Party due to the failure to vote for a ceasefire in November. They advocated voters look to other parties outside of the main two. We discussed pro-Palestine independents. The protesters were supportive of any candidate that supports the Palestinian cause but agreed that there is a need for a socialist voice to speak up for workers in Britain, as well as internationally.

WHAT CAN END GAZA SLAUGHTER?

Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

As the UK general election campaign goes into full swing, many Tory and Blairite Labour politicians will probably be hoping that minds turn away from Gaza and their parties’ refusal during eight months of war to take or support action to end it. But with the Israeli military onslaught unrelenting and charities reporting “apocalyptic” conditions in Rafah, including starvation and disease, concern over Gaza among ordinary people remains high.

While Labour is the certain election victor, it will be in spite of its record on the war and not in any way validating it. Starmer has kept Labour’s policy on Gaza largely aligned with the Tories’ defence of the Israeli government’s brutality, only shifting from it slightly in the latter period of the war, for instance through questioning the continued endorsement of arms sales to Israel.

Some voters have made it clear that they can’t bring themselves to vote for either the Tories or Labour on the issue of Gaza alone. In some constituencies they will be able to vote for a Socialist Party member standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, with a key demand on our leaflet being “Stop the slaughter in Gaza; For mass trade union action to stop arming the Israeli state”. There are also other left and ‘independent’ candidates calling for an end to the war, with various programmes.

No doubt some voters will consider voting Green or Lib Dem on the basis that those parties at least called for a ceasefire at an earlier stage of the war. But neither of them have challenged capitalist interests when elected to positions of influence or power, and no solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict has ever come from any pro-capitalist government or political party.

Many of those parties, including the Greens and Lib Dems, foster illusions in what international capitalist institutions like the United Nations (UN) might be able to deliver. Palestinian deaths reached nearly 36,000, including 15,000 children, before the UN’s International Court of Justice (ICJ) demanded that the Israeli military should hold back – a demand simply ignored by Israel’s leaders and those of its most powerful backer, the US. Also unable to end the war is the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants for Israel’s prime minister and defence minister, along with leaders of Hamas.

Given the overwhelming Israeli military force faced by the Palestinians, most people worldwide welcome what they see as the Israeli state being called to account. But the ICJ, ICC and



other international bodies have no means of enforcing their rulings. In 2022, the ICJ told Russia to suspend its military operations in Ukraine, but Putin just ignored the ICJ, as Israeli prime minister Netanyahu does now. It has recently been revealed that over five years from 2017 to 2021 Israel’s Mossad intelligence agency threatened the ICC’s chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, to try to stop an investigation into Israeli military actions. Clearly the ICC did not feel powerful enough to expose that intimidation or take action against it.

Capitalist institutions

The capitalist international institutions are funded and maintained by capitalist governments who are more and more unable to act collectively in a world marked by capitalist economic stagnation and division. They continually come up against each other’s interests and the fact that

the leadership in the world’s strongest power, the US, picks and chooses which international laws to subscribe to. Even laws the US formally accepts are applied selectively, according to its imperialist interests.

Globally, governments are feeling great pressure from below against the war. So they are increasingly resorting to largely symbolic gestures to appear to be doing something to uphold ‘humanitarian law’.

The processes of recognising a Palestinian state by the governments in Spain, Norway and Ireland, again while understandably welcomed by many people, won’t bring about an end to the war and a Palestinian state. Those governments have no programme that will help deliver a genuine state, nor does any other capitalist government. The UK parliament voted in 2014 to recognise a Palestinian state but that had no effect on the reality for the Palestinians.

In the US, president Biden is treating multiple tightropes, trying to defend the interests of the US Democratic Party and himself in the run-up to the presidential election in November, faced with anger from potential Democratic voters over his Gaza policy, while also trying to promote the interests of the US in the Middle East. Those interests include preventing a wider war, defending Israel as a key US ally, maintaining influence over the Arab elites, and warding off new workers’ uprisings in the region.

His postponement in May of sending the largest US-made bombs to Israel was a gesture of warning to Netanyahu’s government but very mild considering the overall massive supply of US arms to Israel. Its limited nature was shown when Netanyahu quickly snubbed Biden’s new public announcement on a peace proposal and stressed the war would go on, though it’s possible that further

measures are being raised behind the scenes - at the time of writing the fate of the proposal isn’t yet known.

The failure of the capitalist powers to intervene decisively against the war discredits their governments and worldwide institutions further in the eyes of ordinary people. The western powers merely try to curb what they see as the most problematic excesses of the Israeli regime, while at root maintaining their close relations with Israeli capitalism.

Crocodile tears

All are utterly hypocritical, expressing crocodile tears over Palestinian suffering. France’s government approved of the ICC’s threat against Israeli leaders and president Macron was “outraged” by a recent Israeli missile strike that killed 45 civilians in a non-evacuated area of Rafah, but just last month Macron sent reinforcements of French troops across the world to use force

against the independence movement in New Caledonia.

What about the situation inside Israel? Polls show a growing majority of Israelis believing that no ‘victory’ is possible in the war and reports indicate a mood of demoralisation due to the social and economic impact of the war, and the protest movements internationally and sanctions. But at the same time, most Israeli Jewish people are reacting to the sanctions and Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaigns with increased nationalist and defensive sentiment, added to by their fear of further military attacks from Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas or elsewhere. Also, support for Netanyahu, which fell to a low level after the Hamas attack on 7 October, has recently increased a bit.

However, before the military assault on Rafah, a poll by the Israel Democracy Institute found that 62% of Israelis preferred a hostage deal over a military offensive on Rafah. Also, the parents of more than 900 Israeli soldiers being deployed in Gaza have signed a letter calling for the Rafah offensive to be called off, fearing for the soldiers’ lives.

Open divisions are rife at the top of Israeli society, including in the war cabinet, particularly over what to advocate for the Gaza Strip after the war. When negotiations on the aftermath of the war do eventually take place, a genuine, independent Palestinian state will not be delivered by any combination of capitalist representatives in Israel, the region, or internationally, as the Socialist Party has consistently explained. Only on a socialist basis, with the complete removal of profit-reliant, unequal, rotten capitalism, can the Palestinians achieve national liberation and also decent living standards in a socialist Palestine. Israeli workers can only achieve security and decent living standards through the removal of capitalism too, through achieving a socialist Israel, alongside a socialist Palestine, in a socialist confederation of the Middle East.

This necessitates the building of independent workers’ organisations across the Palestinian territories, in Israel and across the region, that can grow to challenge and remove capitalism. Of course, no sanctions or other actions by the capitalist ruling classes are aimed at that outcome – on the contrary, they want to prevent it at all costs. So only sanctions carried out by workers internationally, through their trade unions, can be trusted, and can be aimed at the Israeli capitalist class and its instruments of repression and occupation and not at Israeli workers, to help expose the class divide in Israel. Also, building action by organised workers in Britain, the US, and across the globe is the route to stopping the war. The working class has the potential for a decisive say in events through its ability to collectively withdraw its labour. Helping to bring the voice and action of organised workers into the anti-war movement needs to be part of the election manifesto of all socialists who stand in the UK general election, as it is for the Socialist Party.

● Sheffield rallies in defiance

SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST STUDENTS MEMBER

It’s early morning on Monday 3 June, and the University of Sheffield (UoS) is keen to have the place nice and presentable for a wave of new potential ‘customers’ on open day. At the pro-Palestine encampment, now in its fifth week, a worker hurriedly tries to clean off a slogan written in chalk on the wall - about the complicity of UoS vice-chancellor Koen Lamberts in war, but you’d need much more than a wet sponge to wash off the stain of these crimes!

The UoS has made at least £72 million from the arms trade since 2012-13, receiving investment from companies including BAE Systems, GKN and Boeing.

After over a month of struggle, the encampment of over 50 tents has received a contemptible open letter from

UoS, demanding that we disband before the lucrative open day tours start. Naturally, we responded by escalating - calling an emergency rally.

What followed was one of the largest campus demonstrations I have seen: a vibrant mixture of chants, a daring operation to cover the uni’s flagship building with banners and paint, and even some theatrics. On what they’d hoped would be a day to celebrate, Lamberts was nowhere to be found.

The message the Sheffield encampment has sent to the UoS, and to the rest of the world, is clear: despite all the predictions of naysayers, the movement for Palestinian liberation is here to stay, and Monday’s demonstration has swelled the encampment ranks.

There is a sense that change must be fought for - change to the entire capitalist system that breeds conflict and war. The message from the Sheffield students: ‘All those who chose to profiteer while Gazan blood is flowing: Get going, your Villainy is showing!’



● Emergency Rafah Downing Street demo

ROSE KWIECINSKA
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

More than 10,000 people gathered outside Downing Street on 28 May for an emergency protest, after Israel carried out a horrendous attack on Rafah, bombing a refugee camp and killing at least 50 civilians.

This was despite an International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling demanding an end to the Israeli state offensive.

What happened in Rafah has, once again, brought people to the streets. It was one of the biggest emergency protests, despite the fact that we have been consistently protesting for eight months. We sold a lot of copies of the Socialist and handed out all of the

placards we brought. People are still ready to fight.

The Tory government is still providing support for the ongoing genocide. Labour is failing to put up any real opposition. The White House says that the Israeli military attacks still do not cross Biden’s ‘red line’ announced just weeks ago.

There is no trust in capitalist politicians. They won’t stand for Palestinians. In the election we need anti-war, anti-cuts and pro-worker candidates. That’s why Socialist Party is standing as a part of TUSC (Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition).

We need to build mass parties of the working class in Britain, and internationally too, including in Palestine and Israel.



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!

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Trump trial: Stormy weather for US democracy



DAVE MURRAY

On 30 May, Donald Trump made history by becoming the first former US president to be convicted of a felony. The 34 guilty verdicts were for false accounting - Trump reimbursed his lawyer for paying hush money to Stormy Daniels, an 'adult' film performer, to ensure that she never let on that she'd had 'consensual but unwanted' sexual intercourse with the then frontman for 'The Apprentice' TV show. This pay-off was misrepresented, through 34 separate payments, as a retainer for his lawyer, Michael Cohen. Cohen appeared in court as the main prosecution witness.

Without feeling too much sorrow for the big orange man-baby, it does seem a bit unfair that the actions of present and past presidents - bombing Cambodia to oblivion, running a school of torture in Panama, enabling a genocidal war on the civilian population of Gaza - matter less than covering up a bit of hush money. That said, the notorious 1930s gangster Al Capone was put away, in the end, for tax fraud.

Predictably, Trump has said that the whole thing was a show trial, orchestrated by the Democratic Party. Doubtless he will do the same when proceedings get under way for more serious offences, such as stealing state secrets and attempting to steal the 2020 presidential election. The tiny grain of truth that Trump is building this martyrdom story on is that the Democratic Party, the creature of the finance and tech wings of

American capitalism, cannot muster enough support for its programme to guarantee victory at a presidential election - even against a narcissistic sociopath - and hopes that a section of Trump's support will peel away now that he is a convicted felon; theoretically barred from voting, owning a gun, serving on a jury or becoming a police officer.

Capitalist crisis

If that succeeds, that is just the beginning of the problem for the American capitalist class. If Trump loses the November election, he has already signalled that he will contest the result, summoning the dark forces that mobilised for the tragicomic invasion of the Capitol in January 2021. If not, then once again, the fate of the 'American Empire' will be in the hands of a man whose main trait is to be unpredictable, and who is a self-confessed admirer of US hate-figures such as Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un.

That is their problem, though. For the working class the real issue is that they have no one in the political system who is representing their interests. As November comes closer, the Democratic Party will use every trick in its book to persuade the working class to vote for the liberal wing of the American plutocracy, even though it can't offer universal healthcare, decent education or a way out of poverty for millions of Americans. Like our co-thinkers in the Independent Socialist Group in the USA, we call for opponents of the billionaire class to create and rally round a genuine workers' party with a socialist programme.

Angry Chingford rallies for Faiza Shaheen, sick of Labour betrayal

CHRIS CORNEY
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

A flashmob crowd of 500 plus showed up outside the Highams Park Tesco in London on 31 May, carrying homemade placards in support of Faiza Shaheen. The left-leaning former Labour candidate for Chingford and Woodford Green was unceremoniously dumped by the Labour leadership on 29 May after having stood in 2019, nearly defeating the reviled Tory Iain Duncan Smith.

A series of speakers from the local community spoke with strong emotion about how shocked and betrayed they felt.

These were not seasoned socialists. For the most part, the speakers were typical Labour-voting Londoners, who would have been happy to vote for Starmer's Labour Party until the exclusion decision.

Shaheen herself spoke to loud cheers, sounding shaken, but seeming to draw strength from the crowd.

The biggest cheer came when someone shouted: "Stand as an independent!" Shaheen said she would be doing some hard thinking over the next few days. It seemed at least possible that she may stand as an independent following the cue of Jeremy Corbyn in nearby Islington North.

Waltham Forest Socialist Party members attended and spoke to a layer of normally solid Labour voters who appeared profoundly repulsed by Starmer's anti-democratic politics. The shopping precinct echoed with boos when his name was mentioned. People who would not normally have listened to our calls for a new party to represent working-class Londoners took leaflets with interest.



Faiza Shaheen solidarity protest
JAMES IVENS

Who can working-class Black people vote for?

DEJI OLAYINKA
CROYDON AND SUTTON SOCIALIST PARTY

A group of Black activists and trade unionists from the UK and around the world met online on 2 June for a discussion entitled: "Are you voting in the UK's 2024 general election? If so, who are you voting for?"

Historically, the Labour Party has been seen as the party for working-class Black people. But not a single person in the meeting spoke in favour of Labour (or any of the other major parties). However, because of the desperation to get the Tories out, some people said they would be voting Labour in what they saw as a 'two-horse race'.

This meeting came after a week of the right-wing Labour Party leadership leaking that it was going to block Diane Abbott, the UK's first Black woman MP and a member of Labour's Socialist Campaign Group, from standing. By the time of the meeting, Starmer was forced to announce that in fact she could stand.



Diane Abbott solidarity protest
ISAM MARJERLA

But that was only done reluctantly in fear of the growing backlash from working-class activists and her community.

The meeting saw this attack on Diane as just the latest proof that the Labour Party is now against the interests of working-class Black people. People spoke on the racism exposed in the Forde report, the racist purge of left candidates and Starmer's recent pledge to "bring immigration numbers down". Some contributors raised historic

betrayals of New Labour and many saw the potential for a positive change during Corbyn's leadership. But that hope has been lost.

It was clear in the meeting that Black people are searching for a party to vote for that can represent our interests and stand for our communities. I spoke to explain how the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) plays that role, as a banner to bring together trade unionists, Black activists, socialists and campaigners to stand in elections.

Leeds Little Owls nurseries campaign continues against privatisation

IAIN DALTON
SAVE LITTLE OWLS NURSERIES STEERING COMMITTEE

The fifth local rally in defence of Little Owls nurseries took place in Bramley, Leeds, where two dozen parents and children marched against the potential privatisation of their nursery.

This rally was the first since the

announcement of the general election, which seems to have prompted some Leeds Labour MPs, such as Richard Burgon and Fabian Hamilton to express support for their campaign. However, Labour shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves, whose constituency the rally took place in, declined to send a message of support.

With the likelihood of the Tories being booted out on 4 July, the Save Little Owls nurseries campaign has raised the call for the decision on the nurseries' future, to be delayed until after the general election.

It was therefore welcome that two local Labour councillors in the area, Adele Rae and Kevin Ritchie, attended the rally. Kevin backed the call for

the council to delay this decision and other proposed cuts, and pointed to the SEND transport campaign in 2018 which forced the Labour council to U-turn.

As we have emphasised all along, councillors do have a choice. Save Little Owls has consistently called for, instead of cutting vital nurseries (and other services), councillors to work with trade unions and community groups to fight for the funding our city needs.

A new Labour government needs to fully fund nursery places and reverse the austerity in local government. The council leaders need to withdraw the proposed nursery closures and privatisations and join with us in fighting for that.

Enfield election stand:

'Working-class people here and in Palestine need their own political voice'



Karl (center), campaigning with Socialist Party members in Enfield
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SP

Karl Vidal, a UCU trade union rep and recent recruit to the Socialist Party in Enfield, won the support of Enfield Community Action Group (ECAG) at a community meeting held at Edmonton Islamic Centre on 29 May. Karl will stand for election in the Southgate and Wood Green constituency, as a candidate for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, endorsed by ECAG.

ECAG, a group - made up mainly of people from a Muslim background - angry about Labour's unwillingness to oppose the Israeli state's murderous actions in Gaza, is determined to oppose the establishment parties at the ballot box, and build a voice for our working-class community in the three Enfield constituencies.

Karl's speech:

I have always been a trade unionist and a socialist. I left the Labour Party because, under Starmer, it's no longer a party for working people.

Starmer didn't support nurses and other workers when they went on strike for a wage rise because of the cost-of-living crisis. He told MPs not to go onto picket lines, but welcomes right-wing Tory MPs like Natalie Elphicke into the party.

Labour councils like Enfield have implemented Tory cuts to local services instead of standing up and fighting - demanding the Tories cough up the money for the services we need.

Starmer says there's no more money for the NHS and Wes Streeting wants more privatisation.

On top of all of that, Starmer didn't support a ceasefire and said it was ok for Israel to cut off food and medicines to the people of Gaza.

I want to stand in this election as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate, to give a voice to working-class people, including the Black and Asian workers abandoned by Labour. It's not just about this election, but what happens after too. Working people need their own party, I want to see a new party come about based on the trade unions and community organisations.

Some of the main things I am fighting for include:

- A minimum wage of £15 an hour for everyone, and decent pay rises to match the increase in the cost of living
- Stop privatisation of local services and in the NHS and education
- Full funding for local councils so they can build the council houses and provide the local services we need
- Fully fund the NHS and education. End tuition fees and increase student grants
- Renationalise rail, mail, energy companies, water and telecoms under democratic control of workers and service users
- Tax the rich
- Immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Right of Palestinians to their own state.

Also Palestinian workers and poor need their own party to fight for a socialist Palestine to guarantee jobs, housing, services and a secure future.

Working-class people here and in Palestine need their own political voice. That's why I want to stand in this election. As a first step to building the socialist and fighting alternative we need.

ECAG has adopted a list of key pledges, based on the TUSC general election core programme, and has selected another candidate to contest the Enfield North constituency who will stand as an independent. The third constituency, Edmonton and Winchmore Hill, is currently held by Kate Osamor - who has had the Labour whip restored having apologised following a recent suspension for referring to the genocide in Gaza.

An ECAG delegation, including representatives from the local trades council and Socialist Party, discussed with Kate what she was prepared to do to stand up to the Labour leadership on issues facing the working class and on Gaza. Unconvinced by her responses, ECAG members held a democratic discussion and voted to stand a third candidate in Enfield, Khalid Sadur, as an independent.

Trades Councils conference: Delegates lay down marker for struggle under Labour

PHOTO: SCOTT JONES



SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS AND CONFERENCE DELEGATES

“We have a real fight on our hands,” said a delegate to the Trades Councils conference in London on 1-2 June. She wasn’t referring to getting rid of the Tories in the general election, but to the actions of Labour-led Barnet council in taking on agency workers to break the strike of the Unison mental health workers. This comment was made as a warning to delegates as to how a future Labour government might act.

Trades councils are the local organisations of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and have the power to bring together unions and campaign with them on all issues. However, this year’s conference was attended by only 35 trades councils. This isn’t a reflection of the increased activity many trades councils have been conducting since the recent strike wave broke out, but rather the costs to them of sending a delegate to stay in London for a weekend. Delegates voted overwhelmingly for conference to be rotated around the England and Wales. We also heard that some delegates were excluded due to bureaucratic confusion.

Paul Nowak, general secretary of the TUC, addressed the conference. He outlined the stark class inequalities in Britain today and promised to defend any worker attacked by the minimum service levels legislation. But he wanted to ensure that the

likely Labour government would deliver its ‘New Deal for Workers’, a proposal seemingly being watered down daily, in its first 100 days. A delegate from Berkshire, expelled from Labour, said all he expected was ‘small change’.

Katrine Williams from Cardiff Trades Council, and a member of the Trades Union Councils Joint Consultative Committee (TUCJCC), asked Nowak whether the TUC would challenge Labour’s first pledge: “Sticking to tough spending rules in order to deliver economic stability”. Workers cannot wait 100 days to sort out pay, jobs and staffing levels in our public services, and what is the TUC going to do to fight for our services from day one of a Labour government?

Motions were passed demanding more funding for health services and local authorities. Conference demanded all anti-trade union laws be scrapped. A motion from Waltham Forest was carried calling on the TUCJCC to build a campaign to fight all cuts in local councils and to demand needs budgets. Councils should use reserves and fight for funding.

Overall, delegates were pleased the Tories seem to be on their way out, but are sceptical that Labour will make much difference. The TUC and TUCJCC must prime trades councils for struggles if Labour doesn’t deliver, based around the policies agreed at the conference.

UCU Congress resolves there should be “no honeymoon” for Starmer’s Labour

JAMES KIRKUP
UCU CONGRESS DELEGATE AND REP

UCU Congress, held from 29 to 31 June, was the first trade union congress held since Rishi Sunak called the general election. Delegates made it clear that they want to see the back of the Tories urgently, and that the union should prepare to fight under a Labour government. Significantly, motion 16 entitled “No honeymoon for Labour”, was passed, which reflected the mood of Congress not to back down to appease an incumbent Labour.

This was my first trade union conference. Members at the colleges I represent voted almost unanimously for me to bring an emergency motion that resolved to use the UCU fighting fund to put pressure on Labour. This was after Starmer showed his willingness to backpedal on his commitments to workers’ rights. Unfortunately, the motion was ruled out by the congress business committee.

However, delegates we spoke to supported our argument that, as well as preparing to fight industrially, we also need a new political strategy. As our Socialist Party leaflet, which we gave out to delegates, stated: “We can’t rely on Labour to defend workers’ rights without pressure - we need a working-class political voice too”.

Congress was marked by a strong discontent towards the leadership of the union. Undoubtedly, this is rooted in how the UCU leadership misled the HE and FE disputes over the last few years. The Black members standing committee (BMSC) had been boycotting UCU for the 6 months leading up to this congress. On top of that, UCU



staff in Unite were on strike against UCU senior management over the treatment of Black members of staff, workplace stress and other working condition-related issues.

Jo Grady, who was re-elected general secretary earlier this year with just 35% of first-preference votes, did not even address delegates. Instead she opted for a pre-recorded video uploaded online, presumably to avoid potential disruption from staff or delegates.

The Unite strike on Thursday meant the sector conferences didn’t go ahead. Many important motions were missed, much to the disappointment of delegates. The responsibility lies firmly with the general secretary. Socialist Party members visited the picket line to express our solidarity.

On Friday, motions were passed in support of the staff, including

confronting the claimed structural racism within UCU. For me, a highlight was a speech challenging the genocide the Israeli state is unleashing on Gaza, and the importance of resisting Israeli ‘scholasticide’: the complete destruction of Gaza’s education infrastructure.

It is a longstanding UCU policy to support the Palestinians’ struggle for liberation, and further pro-Palestine motions were passed during the congress. The trade union movement has a vital role to play in the anti-war movement, but not enough has been done so far. Backing the student encampments and supporting pro-worker, anti-war candidates that support our policies in the general election are important steps as part of the process of building a workers’ party in Britain that fights for socialism and internationalism.

Jobcentre security guards strike



ALEX CHAPMAN
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

On 29 May, all but two of the Oxford Jobcentre security guards went on strike. A picket line formed, GMB union flags were raised and the Jobcentre was forced to shut its doors for the day.

This strike accompanies many others across the country; all resisting the gross profiteering of the private security company G4S. G4S was

contracted by the DWP to provide security for Jobcentres and given £211 million to do so. However, while G4S receives £35 an hour for each guard, the guards themselves only receive minimum wage. This is despite the fact that they have to deal with frequent physical and verbal abuse. Furthermore, the guards are expected to fund their own training. One guard revealed to me that, shockingly, while their basic one-day first aid course is paid for, they have had

to pay for every other training course demanded of them. They aren’t even reimbursed for travel expenses!

Clearly, change is vital. GMB has demanded a pay increase to £13 an hour for their members, plus back-pay. Though this would be a welcome improvement for the security guards, some of whom are currently having to work second jobs, it is worth remembering that this would only bring their wages in line with those already offered by G4S to guards employed via an agency. Ultimately, we should question the need for G4S as a middleman: were the DWP to employ security guards directly, the £35 an hour per guard they currently pay G4S could instead be used to directly pay the guards themselves.

However, G4S is refusing to budge, even when facing GMB’s mild, easily actionable demands. In response, GMB has organised week-long strikes, every other week. Having been on the picket line, I am confident that the guards shall force concessions from G4S. The guards I met were aware of both the value and power their labour held, and they looked towards future strike action with hope and determination.

Unison NEC: We need to show Starmer’s Labour we are prepared to fight

APRIL ASHLEY
UNISON NEC MEMBER, BLACK MEMBERS’ REP, PERSONAL CAPACITY

At the Unison National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting taking place on the day the general election was called, general secretary Christina McAnea told us that “a vote for parties other than Labour is a vote for the Tories”, and that the choice was between Labour and the Tories.

Just a week later, she had to come out and defend Diane Abbott as an inspiration, trailblazer, and “celebrated by Unison members” when she had been seemingly barred from standing for Labour in the general election.

It now seems Keir Starmer has backed down and Abbott will be standing for Labour in Hackney and Stoke Newington. This followed outrage in the local community with hundreds of people demonstrating outside Hackney Town Hall, crying “we stand with Diane”.

Starmer clearly fears any opposition to his leadership and to show big business that their profits are safe with the Labour Party.

At the NEC meeting, Christina said ‘we want a Labour government to deliver’ and believes, correctly, that Unison can influence and put pressure on a Labour government.

She, incorrectly, told us that the

‘New Deal for Working People’ had not been watered down and that Unison wouldn’t accept a watering down. She blamed stories of Labour backtracking on “Conservative-supporting media spinning stories about the New Deal just before the 2 May elections.” However, two days later, the watered-down plan was published.

The NEC meeting also discussed the crisis in local government funding, and how Unison will need to put pressure on an incoming Labour government to fully fund local government. The Birmingham council funding crisis alone could lead to hundreds of job losses and the decimation of services.

The meeting also heard about the very poor local government pay offer, which the National Joint Council (the body which brings together local government trade unions to negotiate with employers nationally) is recommending members to reject.

It is clear that Unison will need to do more than just talk to the Labour Party. We have to show that members are willing to take action, including coordinated industrial action, on local government funding and pay in order for a new Labour government to meet our demands. We must not take our foot off the pedal. We need to prepare now for industrial action on pay and funding cuts.



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PCS: left NEC meets for the first time Battle against bureaucracy ahead



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN PCS

The newly elected National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, which represents UK and devolved civil servants and privatised workers on government contracts, met for the first time on Tuesday 4 June.

A new left majority - composed of supporters of the PCS Broad Left Network (BLN - in which Socialist Party members participate), supporters of the PCS Independent Left (IL) and independents - tried to chart a new direction for the union, in line with the clear views expressed by the union’s recent Annual Delegate Conference (ADC).

All supporters of the new majority, which won 19 seats on the NEC in this May’s election, including three Vice President posts, want a serious battle over jobs, pay, pensions, rights at work and all of the issues faced by members. Socialist Party members and our allies are united by the belief that the now-minority, under PCS Left Unity, are directly responsible for the failure to launch that serious battle.

The Left Unity-led leadership, including general secretary Fran Heathcote and president Martin Cavanagh, failed to to organise a serious strike campaign when the union won a mandate in 2022-23 for 135,000 members.

They delayed the launch of action by six weeks, resulting in the loss of the strike mandate in Northern Ireland entirely. They delayed national

action by three months. They refused to seriously analyse what action would work. They halted the campaign from June 2023 to March 2024 on the basis of the first paltry offer made by the government.

Undemocratic manoeuvres by PCS Left Unity

That same faction, despite defeat in the union’s national elections, now seems intent on using the powers of the president post, a post which they won despite losing their overall majority, to undemocratically block serious business being transacted by the NEC.

“Chair’s rulings” made by the president, which ought to be used sparingly and not as a means of closing down debate, were first used to force the new NEC to adopt undemocratic standing orders (rules of procedure for meetings) by a two-thirds majority, or face the total suspension of all NEC business indefinitely by the president, leaving crucial issues facing PCS members undiscussed.

Knowing full well that the general secretary and president would rejoice in the NEC not meeting, and therefore being unable to scrutinise their actions and hold them to account, the left majority coalition voted for, with three symbolic votes by the union’s national vice presidents in protest at the undemocratic decision.

Further chair’s rulings were used to totally dispose of, without a vote, two serious motions on political

strategy, each proposed and seconded by elected members of the NEC. These motions grappled seriously with the issues facing the union, including how to exert pressure on any incoming government to concede to our national campaign demands in the context of the general election. Ways in which a serious political strategy, with high-profile demands on Labour could be used to prepare and mobilise members for the fight we know is coming.

A weak ‘make your vote count’ style approach was passed (this refers to an old approach where PCS would write to candidates and parties and publicise their responses, but would not actively support candidates who support the union’s campaigns on pay etc).

Also passed was a stronger motion, based on the A12 motion passed at ADC, supported by all parts of the majority left coalition, to make putting demands on Labour central to our strategy during the general election period.

Shamefully, and despite proposals by BLN supporters both to reorder the agenda to ensure that the report on a key update on how the NEC is urgently implementing ADC policy on victimised reps was taken early on, when the meeting reconvened after the President suspended it, and to “suspend Standing Orders” so as to extend the meeting so that this item of business could be heard, the NEC adjourned at 1.30pm and no report was heard on this vital business of defending our reps.

As the slaughter in Gaza continues

FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO WAR

The Socialist Party is fighting for:

- End the siege – for the permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from the occupied territories
- For a mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for liberation
- For the building of independent workers' parties in Palestine and Israel and links between them
- For an independent, socialist Palestinian state, alongside a socialist Israel, with guaranteed rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East
- No trust in the capitalist politicians, internationally or in Britain. Fight to build a workers' party in Britain that fights for socialism and internationalism

BERKAY KARTAV
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

“Who can I vote for?” is the question many who are horrified by the sheer brutality of Israeli state terror will be asking, disgusted by the mainstream pro-capitalist politicians.

Days after US president Joe Biden announced another futile ceasefire attempt, Israeli airstrikes on refugee camps killed 40 people in just 24 hours. Over a million Palestinians are being forced to leave Rafah as the attacks continue, with thousands of children on the verge of dying because of a lack of aid getting through.

The war has exposed everything rotten about careerist politicians internationally who stand for the interests of the broken capitalist system. They have only dared to call for ‘restraint’, and only then because they are worried about the potential power of the working class fighting back in their countries and around the world.

We need to urgently kick them all out, starting with the Tories here in Britain! And many will be relieved that they have that opportunity on 4 July.

But Starmer’s Labour doesn’t offer an alternative. They couldn’t even call for a ceasefire as a bare minimum for months and months while in opposition. What can we expect from them when they are actually in power?

What is crystal clear is that workers need our own candidates and a party of our own that will fight for our interests – not those of the billionaires and the warmongers.

The Socialist Party has campaigned for such a party – a new mass workers’ party based on the trade unions. It is positive that Jeremy Corbyn, with the backing of trade unions including the RMT, is standing alongside other anti-war campaigners nationally.

Socialist Party members will be contributing to this electoral challenge to Sunak and Starmer by standing, alongside others, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), offering a socialist alternative to war and austerity.

We fight for an end to wars and national oppression. We fight for a fully funded NHS and other public services, a mass programme of council-house building, inflation-proof pay rises and the nationalisation of transport, mail, energy, steel and other privatised utilities under democratic workers’ control and management.

Vote for socialists on 4 July! But more importantly, join the Socialist Party today to join the fight to take the wealth and resources out of the hands of the super-rich and democratically plan society to meet the needs of all – we need socialist change!



PAUL MATTSSON