

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



# the Socialist

Issue 1317

17-23 April 2025

formerly **Militant**



ROTECOS/ALOC

# NATIONALISE!

## Fight for socialist change

**IAIN DALTON**  
SOCIALIST PARTY YORKSHIRE SECRETARY

**D**onald Trump unleashed chaos on the world economy by announcing massive tariffs on his 'Liberation Day' 2 April.

Workers across the world will be looking at market volatility and dire warnings from the media with dread, remembering the impact of

the 'great recession' in which working people were forced to pay for the bosses' crisis with cuts, job losses and many losing their homes.

The capitalist economy is at an impasse. The different capitalist classes around the world are split on how to protect and boost their profits (see pages 6-7).

But they do agree on one thing - that it should be the working class and poor made to pay for the crisis of their system. Working-class people will be faced with higher prices, attacks on pay and conditions, and job losses. That is what Starmer's Labour has planned for workers in Britain.

When the government passed emergency legislation to take control of steel production

in Scunthorpe it did so in the strategic interests of the capitalist bosses, not out of concern for workers' jobs. Workers at the site took their own action to prevent company executives gaining access. Nationalisation is likely (see pages 4-5).

Why didn't the government act to save thousands of jobs at Tata Steel in Port Talbot? Why can't they rush through emergency legislation to take over the profit-stripping water or energy companies? When the next victim of the trade war faces the axe and workers' jobs are on the line, trade unions and the workers themselves must fight for nationalisation to save jobs; for no compensation for the fat-cat bosses and for workers to have democratic control.

This is not a Labour government which is going to act to protect workers' interests. As it is showing in Birmingham, where it is fully prepared to support union-busting as the Labour council tries to drive down the living standards of bin workers, many facing an £8,000 a year pay cut (see page 5).

There is an alternative to the chaos-ridden capitalist system and the attacks on working-class living standards it demands. A socialist alternative in which the wealth and resources of society are in public ownership and democratically put to use for us all. And while Labour stands for the bosses, we need a party of our own that will stand for workers and young people.

**TRUMP'S TARIFF TURMOIL** >>> p5

**BIRMINGHAM BIN STRIKE** >>> p5

**SCUNTHORPE STEEL** >>> p4-5

**UNION ELECTIONS: PCS** >>> p4, **UNISON** >>> p9

# the Socialist

formerly **Militant**

Issue 1317  
17-23 April 2025

### DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?

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

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

### CONTACT US

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

### DEADLINES

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

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

### SUBSCRIBE

to the Socialist for weekly working-class news, analysis and fighting strategy [socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe](http://socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe)

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

### SOCIALISM TODAY

our monthly Marxist magazine [socialismtoday.org](http://socialismtoday.org)

- Paper sub £3 a month, e-sub £2.50

### SOCIALISM: THE PODCAST

available on all podcast platforms

### FOLLOW US

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

### SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk) [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)



### BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Socialist Books: our publishing house [socialistbooks.co.uk](http://socialistbooks.co.uk)  
Left Books: Marxist classics bookshop [leftbooks.co.uk](http://leftbooks.co.uk)

### OUR NEWSPAPER TEAM

<b>Editor of the Socialist</b>	<b>Editorial staff</b>
Josh Asker	Scott Jones
<a href="http://socialistparty.org.uk">socialistparty.org.uk</a>	Ian Pattison
Mark Best	Paula Mitchell
<b>Circulation manager</b>	Chris Newby
	Mark Best

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

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

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

# Housing lists top 100 years in some boroughs Socialist polices could end the housing crisis

**LOTTIE YOUNG**  
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Waiting lists for a family-sized social home now exceed 100 years in a number of local authorities, a report from the National Housing Federation has found. 164,040 children in England are homeless and stuck in damaging temporary accommodation, a dire situation that is directly linked to the fact that in 32 local authorities waiting lists for social housing now exceed an entire childhood (18 or more years). This shortage of social housing is the consequence of a system that disregards the right for all people to safe, comfortable, and affordable housing and places profits over working-class living standards.

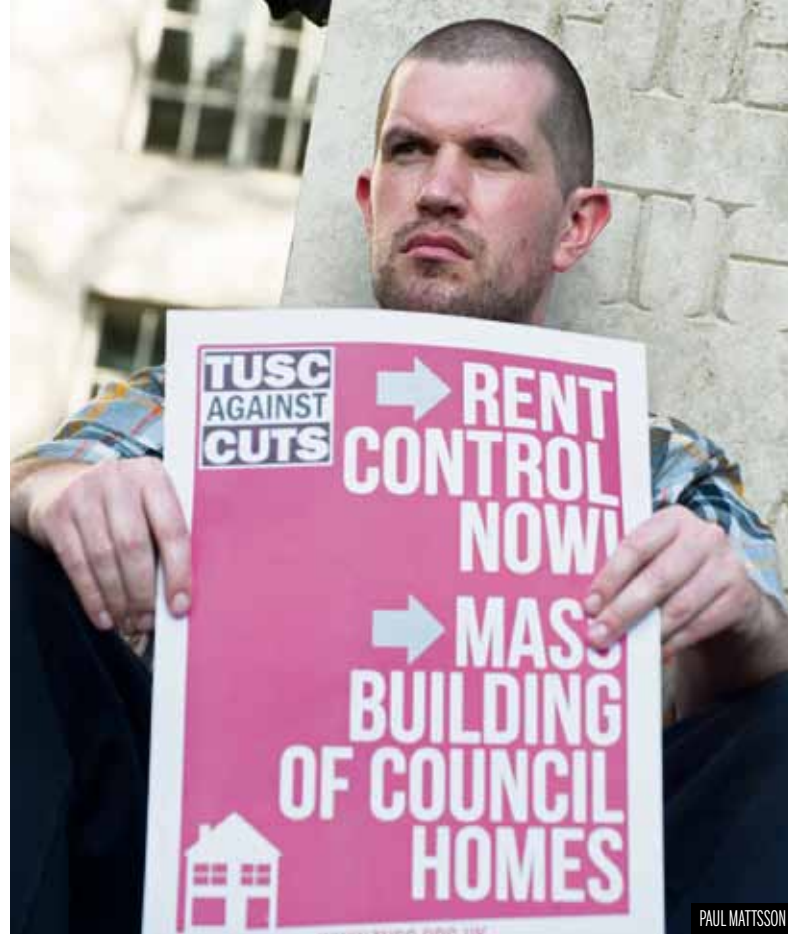
This crisis of social housing forms just a piece of the much-bigger puzzle of the housing crisis. The costs to both buy and rent are rising to levels unattainable for working-class people. Even so-called 'affordable' homes remain at a price inaccessible to most - up to 80% of the massively inflated market rate. For young people, the idea of ever owning our own home seems like a far-away dream, with many of us facing the very real possibility that we won't be able to afford to live in the area in which we grew up. For example, the average

price paid by first-time buyers in my area of Walthamstow is £475,000, - extortionate and unrealistic for so many young people.

### Capitalist housing crisis

Capitalism is a rotten system based on what makes profit for the bosses. It allows landlords to hike up rents, prevents the building of social housing, and allows private companies the liberty to set prices for their new builds which far exceed what most working-class people are able to pay.

A mass workers' party, armed with a socialist programme that supports the needs of all working-class people, could end the housing crisis. Large building companies and banks would be nationalised under democratic workers' control and management to ensure good-quality housing and cheap mortgages; democratically decided rent controls should be introduced; and a mass programme of council house building would be carried out. Additionally, empty properties need to be taken over. Currently, there are 700,000 unoccupied homes in England and 354,000 homeless people. If these properties were brought back into use and made safe for habitation, the housing crisis could be transformed.



PAUL MATTSOON

## Bosses cut our hours to pay their taxes

**HOSPITALITY WORKER**

I'd like to take a punt and say most MPs haven't worked in hospitality. Or any precarious job that means hours and pay can differ week to week. If they had, there's no way the Employment Rights Bill would be as watered down as it is!

The so-called ban on zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire isn't worth the paper its written on. The minimum wage might have increased, but what they give with one hand, they take with the other.

### Cost of living

My council tax bill has gone up by 5%. My rent has gone up by another £50 a month. I'm not against big business paying more tax or even paying more employer National Insurance (NI). But everyone could see at the time

when the government announced employers contributing more that they were going to pass it on to us.

And look what's happened. I work for a big chain of pubs. And due to the NI increase, hours have been drastically cut. I know hospitality workers complain about that a lot - but the cuts in hours I'm seeing under this Labour government is nothing I've seen before, and my pub was open under Covid laws! Whole shifts have been struck off.

The company I work for is forking out an extra £60 million a year in NI. The business I work for can afford to pay it, but rather than reducing their profits they are attacking our pay. I hope hospitality workers wake up and smell the coffee. The only way we're going to fight job losses is by organising and standing up to the government and the bosses.

## Wetherspoons cuts hours and pay for thousands of kitchen staff

**'SUZIE'**  
WETHERSPOONS WORKER

Wetherspoons pub chain is placing the load on workers - by cutting 30 minutes away from our opens and closes.

At 6am every morning, Wetherspoons kitchen opens clock in, and are immediately faced with a two-hour countdown until service begins. A grease-soaked canopy, cleaning behind every single appliance, prep work for the whole day, the list goes on.

With the new policy, their timer will start at 6:30 instead. Most likely this will cause prep work to stretch into food-service time - double the work, but the same pay.

Similarly, kitchen closers will have half an hour less before their close is considered 'late'. This gives them a mere hour from when the service ends to clean the whole kitchen, top to bottom.

They cannot leave until the job is done. But too many late closes in a week mean being chewed out by head office, which creates pressure to rush the job. Again, less pay, less time, for the same work.

For kitchen staff like me this will mean, at best, turning equipment off early or not being able to let it cool down before cleaning it. At worst, there will be pressure to clock out early, resulting in stolen wages. It has happened to me before - five minutes here, ten minutes there, all to avoid the audit scores going down.

These changes are a punishment to the workers for 'extra business costs', brought on by the minimum wage and National Insurance increases. As workers, we cannot let Wetherspoons get away with this.

We must organise. We must demand an end to unreasonable expectations in our workplaces.

We are humans, not robots, and we deserve better!

Like what you've read?  
**SUBSCRIBE TO THE SOCIALIST**  
[socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe](http://socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe)



# School cuts impact those that need the most support

**WREN**  
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Due to the massive cuts to education by past Tory and now-Labour governments, many schools cannot afford to support every student that needs it.

This includes at my secondary school, where the number of both support and teaching staff has been cut drastically. In Year 7, I had a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), who helped with making sure I understood the content of the lesson, dealing with panic attacks and much more. However, in Year 8, she was fired and since then more LSAs have also lost their jobs.

There are now only around two LSAs per year group. This has put a massive strain on the school and has led to certain students being left behind because they are 'high functioning' and therefore do not 'need' support. Teachers either ignore those students because they do not speak in lessons, or they are deemed insolent and given detentions for asking a classmate a question that they would have asked their LSA if they had been there.

along with many others, is horribly underfunded and understaffed with over half my lessons being taught by a substitute because the GCSE and A-level students have to have a teacher. This leads to many students being unable to learn the content that they will be using in their GCSEs because they are not taught by a subject specialist, or the supply teacher is sent the incorrect lesson content.

On top of that, students are overwhelmed with homework. GCSE students in my school sometimes take three different practice papers home from almost every class that are due in the next day or two to "fill in gaps in learning."

Students overworked, taught incorrect content, and left behind because of staff shortages, because of Labour's cuts to education. Students pay the price of these cuts, finding it harder to get jobs and suffering stress and depression as a result.

### The Socialist Party fights for:

- A fully funded education system from schools to colleges and universities. Take the wealth off the super-rich. Pay teachers and school staff wages they can live on
- End all academisation and kick private profit out of our education system
- Democratic control of education by representatives of staff unions, student organisations and the community

### Staff shortages

Another example of how Labour's cuts have impacted schools can be seen in how many classes are not even taught by the class teacher. Many of my classes are taught by a supply teacher, not because my teacher is not in, but because there are simply not enough teachers to teach every class. The English department in my school,



Protesters supporting the NEU school staff strike in 2023. PAUL MATTSOON



FEYDHUXTABLE/CC

## Awful April for us, mega-profits for the bosses

**ADAM HARMSWORTH**  
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

'Awful April' has been a shock for every working-class household across the country. Bills have soared across energy, council tax, internet, and water, which is rising by as much as £200 a year. Millions of families already struggling to pay for the essentials - bills, rent, food, transport - cannot afford these obscene rises. They are now forced to debate what else they have to cut down on just to keep going. Put off replacing old clothes and shoes? Ask for extra hours at work? Join the millions visiting a food bank, or the one in seven who are already skipping meals?

The Labour government and the

bosses of the energy and water companies all line up to tell us they understand. They don't. If they did, they would find an alternative to price rises on top of price rises. Instead, the bosses are making more and more money off our backs.

### More money for the bosses

Prime minister Keir Starmer and chancellor Rachel Reeves have repeatedly told us their focus is on 'growth! Well, the wealth of billionaires and millionaires is growing and has been for years, but we're still losing out!

Britain has the sixth-largest economy in the world, but it doesn't feel like that for most of us. There is enough money here to ensure nobody has to struggle to afford the basics. But the

sick, rotten and cruel capitalist system that our money flows through pushes wealth upwards. British Gas alone has made £1 billion in profits since 2023. £1 billion from one energy giant that should have gone to lowering bills instead went to the back pockets of the super-rich.

Capitalism isn't working for the 99% of us - those of us who make the wealth that goes to the bankers and big bosses. It should be us in charge - the working class democratically deciding what we need, not what makes a profit for those at the top. We need to get rid of the capitalist system, and replace it with a fairer socialist one, where nobody is at risk of being pushed into poverty and desperation by the greed of a few.

## Labour MPs in hiding over disability cuts

Disabled people and carers across the country are trying, in vain, to contact MPs about the proposed disability cuts.

Disabled people have been telling us that, at best, most Labour MPs deliver a copy and pasted standard letter with no engagement on any points raised. No matter where you are in the country, it's always the same letter, or the same script. A 'four-line whip' direct from Labour party HQ?

In my constituency of Gower (Swansea), we haven't even had the boilerplate from Labour MP Tonia Antoniazzi. Torsten Bell, for Swansea West, at least had the decency to make a fool of himself on Newsnight. In Gower, we get no response at all.

At our Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) protest in Swansea, disabled people were approaching us with complicated technical questions about their benefits. We are not equipped to be their caseworkers. Our MPs claim a hefty sum from the taxpayer in order to employ the staff who are supposed to help with these issues. Always, the same reply - we've asked our MP, they've ignored us, so we're asking DPAC.

We have very little faith in a so-called "consultation process" that

starts by setting out a table of all the areas it is not consulting on. There is only one public consultation being held for the whole of Wales, meaning those few who can even register for a ticket will have to travel to Cardiff.

The fact that a so-called Labour government could act this way should spark an urgent debate about political representation. I would

suggest that means a new workers' party, backed by the trade unions, involving disabled people at the heart of everything it does.

We challenge our MPs to publicly debate us. If they refuse, we will soon hold the debate, in public, without them.

Have no doubt about this. Disabled people and carers have had enough of being ignored. The consultation runs for 12 weeks. Just two days after meeting for the first time, DPAC Swansea organised a protest of a hundred people, opened the microphone to the crowd, and made national news. If we did that in two days, what will we achieve in 84?

**SWANSEA DISABLED PEOPLE AGAINST CUTS (DPAC)**

**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

● [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)

or, if you're not online, write to the Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT

## Vote Marion Lloyd for PCS president and a fighting NEC



FIONA BRITTE  
PCS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

**A** fighting, democratic PCS is within grasp, as national leadership elections get under way in the union representing civil service workers and workers on national privatised contracts, from 16 April to 9 May.

Activists in PCS (including Socialist Party members) are campaigning and leafleting at workplaces across the UK to raise support for the programme of action agreed by the left coalition, and its candidates for the National President and National Executive Committee (NEC).

Now more than ever it is vital that PCS is led by a strong socialist leadership that will stand up to our employers and governments, as Keir Starmer's programme of Labour austerity gathers speed. Just last week, Cabinet Office Minister Pat McFadden declared his department would be "leading by example" with "mutually agreed exits". This was followed by announcements that the Cabinet Office will be cut by as much as a third - just the beginning of a cull of civil servants.

This spells disaster for civil servants at risk of losing their jobs - but it also means a massive decrease in the capacity to provide and improve the quality of public services for working-class people across the UK. PCS members need their trade union to defend them, and yet the silence from PCS National President Martin Cavanagh and General Secretary Fran Heathcote has been deafening. Articles on the cuts carry quotes from the FDA and Prospect, two much smaller and more conservative trade unions within the civil service, expressing concerns and promising to "engage" with the government. Why is this the voice of trade unions in the civil service, where is PCS? Where is the call to rally our workers and take them out on strike to defend their jobs, as they mandated us to do?

When 50% staffing cuts to NHS England was announced in March, Marion Lloyd (Socialist Party member and convenor of the PCS NEC

Left majority coalition) wrote to Martin Cavanagh requesting an emergency NEC to agree a fighting response to defend our members and the thousands of other working-class people in the organisation. Cavanagh denied this as he believed no emergency decisions were required.

His and Heathcote's faction within PCS, the misnamed Left Unity (LU), immediately produced an article calling the request electioneering. The article, sounding more like an email from senior management than a supposedly socialist trade union faction, rejected the need for action as the government has "comprehensively dismissed" media characterisations of their plans to take a chainsaw to the civil service. LU also shamefully published PCS's density in NHS England as an argument not to bother organising there - sending a clear signal to Labour to forge ahead, as we won't be fighting their cuts on LU's watch.

This is who socialists within PCS are battling against for control of our union. It is not a minor skirmish over irrelevant 'factional' differences. We are up against a group dedicated to undermining effective industrial struggle by our members, and giving bureaucratic support to a pro-capitalist, pro-business government that couldn't be clearer about its intention to carry out austerity and attack our members.

Enough is enough. Poor leadership has plagued PCS members for too long, and blocked us from achieving the wage rises, job security and working conditions we desperately need and deserve. LU, as the former NEC majority, refused to build and implement fighting campaigns, leaving us behind other public sector workers. They continue to block socialist strategies through undemocratic presidential decree, even after losing their majority and the support of members at the last elections.

We need as much support as possible from all those who want to fight Labour austerity and the cuts over the next few weeks, to help us turn out the vote and ensure that we elect Marion Lloyd as President, and a left coalition NEC majority.

Scan for full slate of candidates



Or search 'PCS must fight Starmer's cuts' at socialistparty.org.uk

# Government takes control of Scunthorpe steelworks



## Fight for nationalisation and workers' control

### Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

**“A** change of control, not of ownership, a team of government officials is now in charge of the British Steel steelworks in Scunthorpe. Its ownership remains in the hands of Chinese company Jingye. It is reportedly a race to secure the raw materials to keep two blast furnaces burning, the billionaire owners having been in the process of running down production and cancelling orders.

It is reported that while parliament met for an emergency session on Saturday, steelworkers - members of Community, GMB and Unite unions - refused Jingye senior officials entry to the plant, for fear of industrial sabotage. The long-term future of these workers' jobs are not safe in the hands of Jingye or any capitalist investors. Nationalisation, which the government could easily have done immediately but didn't, is needed.

This is not a Labour government motivated primarily by a desire to save the 2,700 steelworkers' jobs, and many more in the supply chain, but a Labour government trying to act in the best interests of British capitalism in the Trumpian world of trade wars and tariffs. That on Saturday it couldn't even bring itself to

nationalise reveals its craven desire to show the capitalists it has no intention of infringing on their investments and profits. While it is likely to be forced to nationalise in the coming days and weeks, the government's plans for the future of the plant is for a "long-term co-investment agreement with a private sector partner."



**Nationalisation - with compensation only on the basis of proven need, not for the profiteering bosses, and under workers' democratic control and management - must be central to the programme put forward by the trade union and workers' movement**

Even Tory politicians have called for public ownership, as well as opportunists Reform UK. An indication of the huge public mood in favour of nationalisation, and that Britain's capitalist class see the move as being in its strategic interests. After all, the Tories nationalised Sheffield Forgemasters in 2021; it is now wholly owned by the Ministry of Defence.

# Birmingham bin workers face down Labour assault



### Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

**A**s Unite members' all-out strike action on the bins in Birmingham entered its sixth week on 14 April, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner announced that the Labour government was drafting in Army planners to try and organise to break the strike, following the Labour council's declaration of an emergency in the city. But the strikers have stood firm against this attempted intimidation and have voted overwhelmingly to reject the latest inadequate offer from the council.

The council is demanding bin workers take a pay cut of up to £8,000. It has tried every trick in the book to break the strike - from threats to draft in refuse collectors from neighbouring councils to deploying police on picket lines. But this latest move would be enough to make the Tories blush!

This isn't new form on the part of Labour. Birmingham's council services have been cut by £1 billion since 2010. Until July 2024, the Labour council falsely claimed it had no choice but to make cuts, because of the Tory government's savage cuts to its funding. But now it is Keir Starmer's pro-capitalist Labour which is in government, and yet the cuts and council tax rises are being stepped up in Birmingham and local authorities nationwide. It is clear that the government, in the context of an unfolding world economic crisis and the widespread crisis in local government nationally, is desperate to make an example of this dispute. A

win for the Birmingham bin workers would boost not only the confidence of workers and young people in Birmingham to fight the council's cuts, but workers facing similar attacks in other local authorities too.

Vital to ensuring the best possible settlement for the bin workers is the mobilisation of city- and region-wide trade union solidarity to bring the maximum possible pressure to bear on the council and government as they ramp up their attacks on the bin workers and negotiations enter crunch point.

#### Solidarity

Solidarity mobilisations to bin worker picket lines and rallies from other trade unions - starting with the council unions - would not only be a massive boost to the strike, but could mark the beginning of a city-wide movement to win the funding Birmingham needs from central government to halt and reverse these austerity attacks, including the 21% council tax rise for Birmingham residents over two years.

It is a scandal therefore that individuals connected to the United Left (UL) grouping in Unite are instead attempting to undermine the maximum unity of the union in the face of these attacks. On 10 April, the BBC published an attack by figures in Unite against the union's leadership for allegedly delaying a settlement in Birmingham. This comes after members of UL walked out and boycotted a meeting of the union's Executive Council on 10 March.

The reality is that it's the bin workers themselves who have democratically decided to continue their struggle against the council. Given the attempts of UL in Unite's last policy conference to roll back the union's position of calling on Labour councils to set no-cuts budgets, these attacks will undoubtedly raise suspicion and questions amongst Unite



**Strikers have stood firm against this attempted intimidation and have voted overwhelmingly to reject the latest inadequate offer from the council**

members and activists that UL is attempting to politically cover for the actions of the Labour council and government.

The Socialist Party meanwhile will continue to fight for the maximum unity between workers and trade unions in standing against these attacks in the city. We will be building for the West Midlands National Shop Stewards' Network (NSSN) meeting taking place in Birmingham on Saturday 26 April to discuss how a city-wide movement against the cuts can be built.

That meeting could act as a council of war against all the council's proposed cuts - bringing together delegations from trade union branches across the city and region to support the bin workers' dispute as the first port of call in the struggle, and drawing up a people's budget for Birmingham as a whole.

But the fight for a people's budget to reverse the austerity attacks carried through since 2010 also poses the need for a working-class political alternative prepared to fight for it. The next council elections scheduled to take place in Birmingham are on 7 May 2026, when all 101 council seats will be up for election. Vital now is a discussion in the trade union movement in Birmingham in preparation for those elections about how the trade unions can back candidates which stand on the side of their members, not on the side of the bosses.

#### Stand with striking bin workers

*'How can we build a citywide movement to defeat the cuts?'*

Saturday 26 April, 12 noon  
Comfort Inn, Station Street,  
Birmingham City Centre, B5 4DY

Public meeting hosted by West Midlands National Shop Stewards Network

# TRUMP'S TARIFF TURMOIL

HANNAH SELL

SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY

James Carville, the political advisor who coined the phrase 'it's the economy stupid' as a campaigning slogan for Democrat Bill Clinton to win the 1992 presidential election, was once asked what he'd like to be reincarnated as. "The bond market," he replied, "it can intimidate anyone." 9 April 2025 will be remembered as the day that proved that 'anyone' includes current US President Donald Trump.

Traditionally, when stock markets are falling, government debt or bond markets go up, as investors search for safe havens. This is particularly true of US government debt given the US's dominance of the world financial system. In the first days after 'Liberation Day' that was what happened, but then the US bond markets suffered the steepest fall in four decades. Even more alarming, the price of gold – traditionally the safest haven of all – also started to fall. This was an indication that the whole global financial system was in danger of freezing up. Investors were selling whatever they could. A new global financial crisis was on the cards – probably on an even bigger scale than the one that triggered the Great Recession of 2008-09.

## Trump blinked

In the face of that looming catastrophe, Trump blinked and announced the '90-day pause' in the higher levels of tariffs (except for China). In a sense, on a bigger stage, this was a 'Liz Truss moment'. However, Trump is still in a stronger position than Truss and is not yet being bundled out of the White House as she was from Downing Street. Nor has he been forced into a complete volte face. On the contrary, even after his U-turn, he has currently – within the space of two months – increased the US's average tariff rate from 3% to more than 20%, putting them at their highest rate in almost a century.

This is a much bigger shift than introduced by the US Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 in response to the 1929 Wall Street crash. Smoot-Hawley, and the tit-for-tat protectionist response to it by other governments, was a central factor in the severity of the Great Depression. Nonetheless, it only increased America's effective tariff rate by 6%. Today, in a world economy that is more integrated than was the case in the early twentieth century, with highly complex global supply chains, Trump's measures look set not just to copy US President Herbert Hoover – and the congressmen Reed Smoot and Willis Hawley – in massively exacerbating the next global economic downturn, but to be responsible for triggering a likely world recession.

It is therefore no surprise that, at this stage, Trump's U-turn has not

resulted in the markets looking as "beautiful" as he predicted. On the contrary, things continued to get uglier. The US bond yield (effectively an interest rate which goes up as bond prices fall) finished the week with its biggest increase in any week since 2001. That means the cost of US government borrowing has gone up and is currently at a higher rate than Greece. At the same time the value of the dollar fell against other major currencies.

In one sense, however, Trump's U-turn seems to have had some effect, at least for now. At this stage, the world financial system seems to be no longer on the brink of freezing up, and the rush to safe havens has returned – with the price of gold and the Swiss franc soaring. Such is the damage Trump has done to the status of US capitalism, however, the markets are not treating US government debt as a 'safe bet'.

Of course, there are other factors which have contributed to the falls in the US bond markets. They include the fear that China might start to sell the 2.6% of US Treasury bonds, worth \$750 billion, that it holds. Another element is the hedge funds' highly leveraged gambling on US treasuries, where they borrow something like \$49 for every dollar of their own money they invest – and therefore simultaneously have to sell when the financial waters get choppy.

A similar process took place under Truss in the UK government debt markets, involving pension funds. But the central factor then was the markets' lack of confidence in Truss; today it is the markets' horror at the consequences of Trump's rule. And whereas Britain is a second-rate power, the US is still the strongest economy in the world, with the global reserve currency. The consequences are therefore far greater for the world economy. Last week, Britain's government borrowing costs reached their highest level since 1998, not as a result of any policy announcements by the UK government, but as a result of the particular weaknesses of British capitalism, meaning that it is often the first to prove the truth of the saying that 'when the US sneezes, the world catches a cold'.

## What motivates Trump?

So, what is the logic of the massive tariffs introduced by Trump? Despite appearances, it is not simply a question of a crazy billionaire having got the keys to the White House. Trump reflects the decline of US imperialism, still the strongest power on the planet but increasingly less able to set the framework for the world. During Trump's first term, and under Biden, tariffs and protectionist measures increased, in an attempt to protect US markets from its global rivals. 'Liberation Day', however, was on a qualitatively different scale. Trump and his



The most important starting point for international solidarity is to strengthen the movement against the capitalist elites in our own countries, not least by building independent workers' parties

Donald Trump announces tariff executive order  
PHOTO: WHITE HOUSE/PUBLIC DOMAIN

co-thinkers had drawn the conclusion that it is necessary to launch an offensive 'knock-em-down, drag-'em-out' economic fight to defend US capitalism against its competitors, above all China.

The current result is a 10% minimum tariff on goods entering the US from other countries, 25% on steel, aluminium, and vehicles, and a mind-blowing 145% tariff on Chinese imports. China has responded by saying it will 'fight to the end', increasing tariffs on US goods to 125%, and by allowing its currency to fall. Of course, none of this is the final word. Even had Trump not been forced to introduce his 90-day pause, he would still have proceeded to exult in world leaders phoning him to 'kiss ass': playing court to the king in order to get improved tariff deals.

And, no doubt, domestic pressures will force him to adjust. Already the opposition of the majority of the US capitalist class to his antics has been reflected inside his own team, with Elon Musk attacking Peter Navarro, Trump's trade advisor, as a motion who is "dumber than a stack of bricks". The removal of smartphones

and computers from the tariffs is undoubtedly a response to the screams of the tech industry behind the scenes. As the consequences of the tariffs are felt beyond Wall Street in 'Main Street', among working-class Americans, Trump will face far greater opposition.

## No going back

However, no matter how much he retreats under pressure, the consequences of 'Liberation Day' cannot be undone. The fish soup cannot be turned back into an aquarium, as one newspaper columnist vividly summed it up. The status of US imperialism has been dramatically undermined, and the mutual co-dependence of the US and China, which has been the central axis of the world economy in the era since the 1990s collapse of Russian Stalinism, has been broken, even if there is a retreat from the current pitch of the trade war.

The trade war with China is going to lead to major suffering for the working class in both countries, and worldwide. It looks set to trigger a world economic downturn and will fuel huge class conflicts in the US and

China. Ultimately no side will win.

Nonetheless, it is probable that Trump will pay the price soonest and hardest. The unique character of China, with the state playing a large directing role in the allocation of capital, is what has enabled it to develop from an economy one tenth of the size of the US in 2001 to almost half the size today, now responsible for over a third of global manufacturing output. That unique character has also allowed it to consciously prepare for the coming trade war. China remains extremely reliant on exports, which are responsible for around 20% of GDP. However, whereas in 2017 almost a fifth of China's exports went to the US, today it is only 13%, accounting for less than 3% of its GDP. Meanwhile, most of China's imports from the US are agricultural and industrial products, rather than the consumer goods which it exports to the US, which more directly impact on workers' pockets.

At the same time, Trump's actions, lashing out at all competitors regardless of whether they are traditional allies, is accelerating the 'multipolar'

character of the world. In an editorial on 12 April the Financial Times urges China "to take advantage of the turmoil" and the "sapping" of "US credibility with trading partners". No doubt many Western capitalist countries will agree, including Britain, and be keen to defend their own interests via increased economic cooperation with China. This will be even more the case for many neo-colonial countries.

Balancing between the two major powers will not be simple for any country, however. The same Financial Times editorial also pathetically pleads with China to "reform" and stop "dumping" and "unfair subsidies". Back in 2001, when China joined the World Trade Organisation, US imperialism was the clear global hyperpower and imagined that China would indefinitely remain its willing cheap labour sweatshop. China's refusal to follow that path is what lay behind US Vice President JD Vance's comment that globalisation hasn't worked out how it was meant to, where "rich countries move further up the value chain, while poor countries made the simpler things". Today,

with China the second global power, Western capitalism in crisis and the US in decline, there is no prospect of pleading by the likes of the Financial Times pushing China to change course when US imperialism failed.

Nonetheless, China's fundamental internal contradictions will be exacerbated by this crisis, which could manifest in multiple ways. Contradictions exist at the top between the brutal Chinese Communist Party dictatorship – which uses socialist rhetoric yet has consciously developed what is now the second-richest capitalist class in the world – and that capitalist class, large sections of which will not accept state direction forever. But the biggest conflicts will be between the working class – the most powerful on the planet – and all the elite, and will result in huge revolutionary upheavals at a certain stage.

## Class conflict ahead for Trump

Class conflict is also on the agenda in the US. Polls taken at the start of last week, just before Liberation Day, already showed a huge 19% drop in confidence that Trump would improve living standards. That figure will fall further. Right now, there are bound to be some workers still hoping that tariffs will mean the return of 'good jobs' to the US after decades of manufacturing decline. However, for most those hopes will be quickly dashed by the brutal reality of sharp price inflation and economic slowdown.

At the same time, the mass protests across 1,400 towns and cities on 5 April under the slogan "End this millionaire power grab" represented the first stirrings of mass mobilisation against Trump. Large crowds have also turned out for the rallies against the oligarchy called by Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In Denver, Colorado, 34,000 people packed in to hear them speak and 37,000 turned out in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, their message has not been to build the new party of the working class that is so desperately needed. However, the most recent CNN poll shows a 'favourability rating' of only 29% for the Democrats, the lowest on record, and a sign of the huge potential support for building a new party.

## International socialism

Trumpism is both a reflection and an accelerator of the ruling elites worldwide increasingly beating the nationalist drum. While the productive forces have long since outgrown the barriers of the nation state, capitalism has never been able to fully surmount them, even in the age of US-dominated globalisation. Now, however, the nation state has come roaring back as the different national capitalist classes struggle to defend their own interests in a multipolar world.

The need for the workers' movement to fight for socialism on an

international level is urgent. The pressure to back 'our' capitalist class against others will be considerable. But the working class does not have the same interests as the bosses who exploit us – regardless of their nationality. Our common interests are with the working class worldwide. The most important starting point for international solidarity is to strengthen the movement against the capitalist elites in our own countries, not least by building independent workers' parties.

The growth of nationalism is a sign of the growing rottenness of capitalism in the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, it also exposes the lie that workers have been told in the decades when globalisation was rampant. At that stage we were told that nation states were powerless against the almighty power of the global markets. So, we were told, we had to accept wages 'racing to the bottom' and manufacturing being moved to countries with cheaper labour. Steel plants and car factories closing were acts of god that governments were powerless to stop. The Socialist Party opposed those lies with every fibre of our beings. And now, it turns out, the government can intervene when needed, as Starmer has shown with British Steel.

Starmer's government didn't nationalise the Tata Steel plant in Port Talbot, allowing thousands of jobs to go to the wall. That they are being pushed in that direction to save the Scunthorpe plant is because they can see, in this Trumpian world, it is not viable that Britain becomes the only G7 country without a steel industry. They are acting in the interests of British capitalism, not the working class, and no doubt will intend to hand it back to the private sector as soon as possible. Nonetheless, it gives a pointer to what a workers' government could do.

If parliament can be recalled on a Saturday over the Easter recess to save British Steel, why couldn't a workers' government act to nationalise the major banks and industries that dominate the economy, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need? Those are the kind of decisive measures that a socialist government would need to take to successfully defy the power of the bond markets. They would lay the basis to begin to develop a socialist planned economy, under democratic working-class control, which could meet the needs of all. Of course, socialism could not be built in one country, but the first steps will be taken in one nation – which would then inspire workers worldwide to break with capitalism. Right now, billions of people around the world are looking on in horror at the horrible reality of capitalism in this era, but in the struggles that will result, the ground is being prepared for socialism.

## Birmingham bins: 'Solidarity will win the day'

I would like to wish success to Birmingham refuse collectors in their strike action.

As a former London dustman, I was on strike in the so-called Winter of Discontent 1978-79.

We were on strike against the London Borough of Richmond for over ten weeks. It was a time of great hardship, having good family and friends helped us to keep up the struggle.

In an attempt to break the strike, management called a meeting to try to get us to return to work or lock us out for good. Our stewards asked the question: "Well boys, do we want to work for Richmond council?" The resounding answer was "NO!"

At that point, management played their last card: "All those that want to

go can come over to the office and get their cards and money at one o'clock". What happened next illustrated to me just what can be achieved by solidarity. 300 dustmen, the entire refuse workforce, assembled in the yard. I can still see the horror on management's faces!

"You can't do this! Please give us 24 hours to call a special council meeting", they bleated.

The following 24 hours saw us get everything we asked for, everything.

I know how hard things must be for many of you as I've been there myself. Stick together. It will be hard, but solidarity will win the day. Good luck!

**TOM KING**

CHAIR, UNITE RETIRED MEMBERS KENT BRANCH (SE100R1)

## NEU conference votes for strike over pay and funding



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON/CC

### NEU CONFERENCE DELEGATES

**N**ational Education Union (NEU) conference (14-17 April) voted for districts, branches and school groups to "immediately prepare" for a formal industrial ballot for strike action over the pay and funding offer for 2025/26. Should the current pay offer remain unacceptable, or if the government does not announce real-terms funding increases in its June spending review, NEU will be launching a formal ballot.

Socialist Party members proposed an amendment to strengthen the motion, calling for any ballot to include wider issues of school funding driving redundancies and increased workloads, not just the fact that our pay award is currently unfunded.

Unfortunately, not enough time was made in the agenda to discuss these pressing issues and not all amendments were heard.

Teacher pay has fallen by 20% in real terms since 2021 – compounding the recruitment and retention crisis. Speech after speech highlighted schools' chronic lack of funding!

The teacher pay award is completely unfunded, meaning an estimated 76% of primaries and 94% of secondaries will need to make cuts to pay for what is an inadequate pay award. In addition, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced in the Spring Statement that we are facing 'the worst squeeze in a generation', meaning yet more cuts to education being passed on by the Labour government.

We believe the NEU is right to

move to a formal ballot – and we think that the union should ballot both teachers and support staff over funding and pay.

In an indicative ballot, 83.4% indicated they would be willing to strike, on a 47.2% turnout – just short of the Tories' undemocratic 50% turnout threshold Labour had promised to scrap and yet still imposes on the trade unions.

The eight days of strike action taken in 2023 won a 6.5% increase and the mere threat of action in 2024 won 5.5% – with more funding gained at the same time. It is essential that we urgently prepare for the formal ballot.

● **A full report of NEU conference will be published in the next issue of the Socialist**



PHOTO: BRUM SP

## Unison health conference: members press leadership over action on pay

### ADRIAN O'MALLEY

UNISON HEALTH SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE MEMBER YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE AND SECRETARY UNISON MID YORKSHIRE HEALTH BRANCH (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Conference started six days after NHS staff should have received their 2025-26 pay rise, and weeks after Starmer and Reeves stepped up their austerity offensive. With no sign of a pay recommendation from the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) and with the Labour government ignoring the union's call for pay negotiations, pay and terms and conditions dominated the debates.

The Unison health group's leadership (the majority on the right of the union, supporters of general secretary Christina McAnea) is being put to the test and so far is failing to deliver. Whilst calling for direct talks with the government they also had to defend themselves from criticism of concessions they made in previous agreements, including the three-year deal in 2018 which agreed cuts in sick pay and reduced unsocial hours payments.

A composite motion calling for Unison's policy for a £15-an-hour

minimum wage to be the union's demand in future pay claims was manoeuvred off the agenda, but it was raised by many delegates demanding action over low pay in the NHS.

Dave Byrom, delegate from Mid Yorkshire Health, and a Socialist Party member, said: "£15 an hour is a necessity, not an aspiration, for NHS workers."

The Service Group Executive (SGE), sensing the angry mood of conference, changed its position on a motion calling for restoration of pay enhancements for things such as unsocial hours and overtime from opposition to 'support with qualifications'. Conference has made it clear that we want direct bargaining with the government but it will not accept paying for an increase in pay by sacrificing hard-won terms and conditions.

Socialist Party member Eve Miller, delegate from George Eliot Hospital Branch, questioned why the union negotiated away sick pay and enhancements in the first place and explained why it is important to restore and improve our terms and conditions.

Conference agreed an emergency motion from the SGE that started

a consultation of the whole NHS membership over strike action if the government or PRB doesn't come up with an above-inflation pay rise. The offer from the government is likely to be the 2.8% it is proposing across most of the public sector.

The union's relationship with the Labour government is also being put to the test. With massive job cuts announced with the scrapping of NHS England and many more at risk, and with his reputation as a privatiser, health minister Wes Streeting came to address conference under huge pressure. But he made it clear in his speech and Q&A session to conference that Labour will not come to the rescue and deliver the pay restoration our members demand.

Given the anger of delegates against Starmer and Streeting's Labour, even Christina McAnea couldn't be as gushing in support of the government as she would have liked.

2025 is a crucial year for Unison, with elections for the National Executive Council (NEC) taking place from 21 April to 21 May, and a general secretary election taking place later in the year. (See right)



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

# FOR A FIGHTING, DEMOCRATIC UNISON

## Vote for NEC candidates to end Labour austerity

HUGO PIERRE

UNISON LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP  
EXECUTIVE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Unison members are facing more years of vicious cuts to jobs, pay and services. The election of Starmer's Labour and the budgets of chancellor Rachel Reeves are demonstrating that the general election result has changed nothing fundamentally for public sector workers. The promises of our own leaders that Labour would make a difference has completely disappeared.

Health secretary Wes Streeting has added to this agenda by declaring thousands of jobs must go in hospitals. And he expects this year's below-inflation pay rise must be paid for in full by more job cuts.

Unison members will be watching the actions of the Labour council in

Birmingham, backed to the hilt by this government, attacking frontline council workers' pay and conditions. Bin workers face up to an £8,000 pay cut and Labour declares a 'major incident' rather than resolve the council's funding crisis.

The leadership of our union has to back our members - our general secretary believes the best approach is through trying to work in partnership with the Labour government. We need a National Executive Council (NEC) that is prepared to organise to fight.

A serious campaign to defend public services, backed by all public sector unions, could force this government to provide the money needed.

This year's Unison NEC election is our chance to win a leadership that is prepared to stand up to Starmer's government. After years of failing to

mount the fight we needed, in the 2021 NEC elections, members boot-ed out the right-wing leadership, after decades of domination.

To strengthen the position of the left-led NEC and give the leadership needed by members, a fighting programme and a real strategy for action is needed.

Later this year, there will also be the election for general secretary. Christina McAnea, elected in 2020, was the 'continuity candidate' of the old right wing. Now we have the chance to win an NEC and general secretary that will stand up to Starmer and fight for members.

The Socialist Party is part of the fight to transform Unison into a fighting left union.

Increasing the number of Socialist Party members on the NEC will help win the programme and strategy necessary.



### Public services not warfare

Councils across the UK are facing a crisis after years of not fighting Tory austerity cuts. Now Labour is failing to put in the money needed to stop cuts to jobs and services. More and more councils are unable to manage their budgets.

- We need a union leadership that will fight for the money our members need to run services by backing 'needs-based, no-cuts budgets' and national action that doesn't leave branches to fight on their own

- Rather than defending our NHS, Labour are taking the first steps to breaking it up. Labour's plans to sack thousands of our members in NHS England and other health bodies will not lead to much-needed extra money for frontline health teams in hospitals, ambulance services, primary care and health prevention. Instead it will prepare the ground for more privatisation.



- We need a union leadership that will back our members to fight against job losses and privatisation, and for the staff needed to end the NHS crisis

All services that Unison members provide are in a funding crisis Labour aren't dealing with: School support staff are always in the firing line when budgets freeze up; hundreds of universities could go bust; water companies are facing bankruptcy; probation services and police back office staffing are severely underfunded; local transport is being cut. We know the money is there - in 2024 the FTSE 100 companies paid out £89 billion to their shareholders!

- We need our union leadership to fight for the money for our public services and demand Labour makes the rich pay

- We oppose the cuts in our services to be used for increased military spending

### Co-ordinated action to win back lost pay

Our pay is worth at least 20% less than it was in 2009, and inflation is still making it worse. But the strike action taken by many trade unionists, including our ambulance and hospital members in 2022, shows that striking works!

This year, Labour wants to impose a 2.8% pay cap with no extra funding to our services.

- We need a union leadership that will co-ordinate inside our union and with others for national strike action to win pay campaigns to beat the cost-of-living crisis

- We need a fight to end low pay, endemic amongst our members who are proven essential workers. We need a leadership that will develop a determined campaign for £15 an hour now!



### Union democracy - organise and fight

We need a vibrant union where members debate and discuss how best to run campaigns that win at branch, regional and national level. Our members need the right to campaign to develop and change policy so we can break the obstacles we face to win our campaigns.

- We need a leadership that allows branches to organise with other branches, that boosts our strike funds so members in dispute aren't starved back to work, and that builds energetic national campaigns that are member-led

- We consistently call for the election of all union officials, paid the average wage of a skilled worker, to keep those that help organise our union in touch with the members they represent

### Tory anti-union laws

Labour has so far failed on their promise to repeal the most recent anti-trade union laws that could mean we help managers to organise members to work when we're on strike. Even the Tory turnout thresholds are still in place - they should have been repealed on day one!

- We need a leadership that fights to repeal the Tory turnout thresholds immediately, and all the anti-trade union laws

### End discrimination

Our members provide services to all in our communities and we need united community campaigns to fight for the resources we need. We oppose all discrimination and attacks.

- We need a union leadership that is prepared to back trade union struggle and mobilise our members against right-wing populism that wants to smash our services! That means building an anti-austerity political alternative too

### Time to use our political muscle

Labour politicians in councils across the UK are choosing to attack members' jobs rather than fight for the money we need for our services. Labour politicians in Westminster are choosing to attack working-class living standards as they attack benefits and disability payments rather than take the money from the rich.

We don't need politicians who take our money then sack our members and won't fight for the wealth in society to be under democratic control to build our public services.

- Unison should only support candidates that support us

- A bloc of MPs in parliament that champion workers' demands would be a good step towards the new workers' party we need

We need a National Executive Council prepared to stand up to Starmer's Labour government and fight for pay, jobs and services. No more cuts and privatisation!

### Please vote for the following socialist candidates:

**April Ashley** - Black members female seat (standing for re-election)

**Balaka Fell-Holden** - London reserved seat

**Jim McFarlane** - Scotland general seat

**Eve Miller** - West Midlands reserved seat

**Adrian O'Malley** - Health general seat

**Amy Sage** - Police, Probation and Cafcass female seat

**Ellie Waple** - Disabled members female seat

Please also vote for other candidates standing for a fighting union:

**James Robinson** - North West general seat

and candidates on the 'Time for real Change' list standing in other seats



## 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 trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand of a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, 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](https://socialistparty.org.uk/join)
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07958 032 071**  
to find out more today!

Help fund the fightback!

## DONATE TODAY

[socialistparty.org.uk/donate](https://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)



# Slough engineering workers strike for better pay



NEIL ADAMS  
READING SOCIALIST PARTY

Unite the Union is currently in dispute with John Crane UK, a specialist engineering company based in Slough. The strike on 10 April was the second of six consecutive Thursdays of strike action.

The 40 angry workers rejected an insulting pay offer of 3%. This follows the removal of the final salary pension scheme in 2009 and ten years of below-inflation pay deals, with no pay award during Covid, despite working through it!

These highly skilled and undervalued workers are quite rightly angry. Last year, the previous CEO was awarded a 22% increase and

his severance package will see him drawing an income until 2026!

The pickets also highlighted the fact that a production manager received a £10,000 bonus while they are not entitled to any.

And it's not like John Crane UK is hard up, being part of Smiths Group, with an operating profit of £526 million last year.

The friendly picket line was lively and well attended with 40 having turned out during the day.

I distributed leaflets for the upcoming National Shop Stewards Network conference and sold the Socialist.

We plan on visiting the upcoming picket lines with solidarity, support and socialist ideas!

# Nottingham healthcare workers strike for backpay

BILLY HUGHES  
NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Unison members took two days of strike action at Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust (NUH) on 10-11 April.

Healthcare support workers attended lively picket lines at Nottingham City Hospital and Queen's Medical Centre, determined to receive appropriate backpay compensation for clinical duties that they have been performing routinely for years.

NHS guidance states that duties for workers on salary 'Band 2' should be limited to personal care provision such as bathing and feeding patients, while 'Band 3' duties include delegated clinical tasks such as monitoring blood and heart rate pressure, taking blood and cannulation. NUH has continued to refuse fair compensation for workers performing Band 3 duties for, in many cases, over a decade.

In light of this, Unison's six-year backpay claim should be considered a terrific deal for the Trust, a sentiment clearly not shared by NUH senior management as their last

offer stood at three years and three months, backdated from August 2021 to the time of rebanding in November 2024. This deal was rejected by Unison members, 94% voting to strike.

NUH's claim that it cannot be evidenced that workers carried out Band 3 work throughout Covid, has also angered and bewildered many healthcare assistants who risked their lives and those of their families providing essential services.

Workers on the picket line spoke passionately about feeling that their contributions had been deliberately ignored by management.

Neighbouring NHS Trusts in both Leicester and Northamptonshire have agreed six-year backpay deals. The disparity of treatment of staff across different NHS Trusts was in stark contrast to the solidarity of workers across the strike.

Socialist Party members attended both days. We have offered our PA system and megaphone to the union for use on the picket lines. Nottingham Socialist Party fully supports the strike and will continue to support the further strikes that are planned for 17, 22 and 28 April.

# Socialists Students win free societies and increased democracy at Herts uni



MORGAN TRITTON  
HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We started Herts Socialist Students in November 2024 and were frustrated by the inaction of the students' union (SU) on our campus. At the University of Hertfordshire the SU has repeatedly defended the university's actions over the interests of its own members – students ourselves. There is no real separation between the university and the SU which often echoes university management.

We investigated the SU's governance, transparency, and action plan. We found little evidence of advocacy on urgent issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, tuition fee hikes, accommodation conditions, violence against women, and campus safety. What we did find, however, was stagnation – a culture that prioritises protecting the image of the university over fighting for the needs of the student body.

We raised our concerns at the November 2024 student council meeting. It took four months, and the submission of a formal motion, before any action was taken!

In April 2025, we submitted three motions: to improve SU governance and transparency, to allow free society memberships and open meetings, and to demand action on violence against women on campus. Prior to this, there had only been one motion passed in the last two years. We faced attempts to resist, delay, water down, or dismiss the motions entirely from SU staff. They downplayed safety concerns by citing a lack of official reports and claimed transparency had now been addressed and further student oversight was unnecessary.

We responded in full, challenged their narrative, and two days before the council meeting, the SU backed

down. All three motions were debated and passed overwhelmingly. We came in force to a student council meeting to highlight inaction and received a positive response from students.

This fight is far from over. We are in contact with the SU President and Women's Officer and will be meeting in the coming weeks. Our passed governance motion requires monthly officer updates, motion tracking, and scheduled council meetings, basic measures that should have existed already, and we will make sure these happen.

We are fighting to repoliticise and democratise our SU. We are organising not just for better policies, but for a shift in power on campus from unelected managers and bureaucrats to the hands of students ourselves, alongside representatives of staff unions. We must continue to scrutinise our SUs and question: who benefits from keeping students in the dark? Who benefits from an unorganised student body? University managements and the relationships they have with pro-capitalist politicians and big business.

The failures of Herts SU reflect a nationwide crisis across higher education, faced with a funding crisis universities constantly put their finances above the interests of students and staff.

As part of the Funding Not Fees campaign, we must confront every institution on campuses that facilitate poor student and staff conditions and rising costs for students. Compromised and undemocratic student unions, acting as extensions of university management, must be challenged as part of a broader fight for free, fully funded education, and fighting democratic student organisations must be built.

# Why I joined the Socialist Party: 'Not just people who care, but taking action'

GIULIETTE ALEXANDRIA  
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

I've always been the political one in my family – bringing up social issues at the dinner table, questioning why things are the way they are, and calling out my parents wherever I can. Moving away from home for university made me even more aware of the world around me.

Coming from the chaos of London, to the much quieter streets of Plymouth, I started noticing the political movements shaping my new city. From Palestine solidarity protests, to Socialist Party campaign stalls and marches.

Activism here felt real. People weren't just frustrated with the system, they were out there trying to change it.

I've been campaigning for women's rights since 2015. But organising my first march in Plymouth in January was a turning point.

At the end of the demo, someone handed me a flyer for a Socialist Party meeting. I've always believed in socialist principles – strengthening the working class, fighting capitalist

exploitation, ending disability cuts, and standing up for women's rights.

I knew these struggles existed. But this was my first real step into an organised movement.

That meeting was about women's rights. From the moment I walked in, I felt like I belonged.

The discussion was powerful, focused on issues that directly affect me and the women around me. These weren't just people who cared. They were people taking action.

I haven't looked back. I attend every meeting, help out on stalls, flyers, sell the Socialist. I've even joined the book club to learn more about Marxism.

Being part of the Socialist Party isn't just about activism. It's about community, knowing that we don't have to accept things as they are.

Since joining the Socialist Party, I've organised another march for International Women's Day, and my comrades were right there with me – selling the Socialist and marching in solidarity.

Socialism isn't just an idea, it's action. And I'm proud to be part of that fight.



Giuliette (left) PHOTO: PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Join the fightback  
**JOIN THE SOCIALISTS**

- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](https://socialistparty.org.uk/join)
  - or call **020 8988 8777**
  - or text your name and postcode to **07958 032 071**
- to find out more today!

# Labour collapse and socialist challenge in London by-election

DAVID KAPLAN  
TUSC CANDIDATE

Just nine months into a new government, the Labour vote in St Ann's ward, Haringey, collapsed as a result of their austerity policies. The Labour-run council has just increased council tax by 5%; it is attempting to increase class sizes in secondary schools; and is in dispute with housing repair workers over pay. There is massive anger at Labour, and the

Greens were seen as the party which could unseat them.

Haringey and Camden Socialist Party stood a candidate as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in the by-election. We were the only party calling for a needs-based budget. Rather than campaigning for a socialist candidate, Stand up to Racism distributed a leaflet simply calling for people 'not to vote for Reform', not offering a political alternative to Labour austerity.

The Green candidate, while pledging to oppose the cuts in opposition to Labour, would not commit to such a promise if they ever manage to gain

control of the council.

We campaigned a lot in the area over the last four weeks, knocking on doors and distributing leaflets to every house in the ward. We had lots of positive discussions on the doorstep and will have further discussions with people who were interested in our ideas. We have planted the seeds of a socialist, working-class alternative.

**TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION**

TUSC, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, is the electoral coalition under which the Socialist Party stands in elections.

- Find out more visit: [tusc.org.uk](https://tusc.org.uk)



# TUSC campaigning in Preston



PHOTO: LANCS SOCIALIST PARTY

LOUIE NARDINI  
MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

In the Lancashire local elections TUSC is standing six working-class candidates! The great success of our Preston stall shows that we are in the heart of something positive. Over 40 signed our petition with many copies of the Socialist sold and leaflets handed out. Obviously, the deep discontent has made many sick of the main political parties. "Anything other than Labour!" one signee said.

We told signees that the way to get back at Labour and Tory is through pro-worker policies. TUSC candidates are the only ones demanding actual progressive change this election. Fight for funding, jobs and anti-austerity by voting on 1 May!

Join the student fightback!

JOIN **socialist students**



- Visit [socialiststudents.org.uk/join](https://socialiststudents.org.uk/join)
- or call **020 8988 8761**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07515 921 699**

£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



# the Socialist

Issue 1317

17-23 April 2025

formerly **Militant**

# A VOICE FOR THE WORKING CLASS



YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

## Stick it to Starmer on 1 May

### VOTE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION

Millions of people will have the chance to register their dissatisfaction with Keir Starmer's Labour government on 1 May. Local elections are taking place in 23 different authorities, mostly outside of the major urban areas.

There will be 104 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates – each of them pledging to fight against further austerity cuts. The stand makes up the sixth-biggest in this election and points towards the need for the working class to have its own mass party, fighting for a socialist alternative.

A full list of candidates is available at [tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)

## Socialist stand for Doncaster Mayor

**D**oncaster has traditionally been a Labour stronghold. But there is no love for Labour in this election. Talking with people when out campaigning, asking them what they make of this government, after their initial hesitation I find myself giving them permission to swear!

At the election on 1 May it will have been just ten months of a Labour government, but it feels like ten years. We have met loads of people through the campaign who are enthused by our

demand that the working class needs its own party. We have met loads of students campaigning at the college and several have been involved helping with our campaign.

Unfortunately, Nigel Farage's Reform are also trying to capitalise on disenchantment with Labour. Local news seem to use every opportunity to broadcast Reform politicians – opportunists who offer no way forward for the working class to fight for the funding our services need, who instead stoke divisions and blame migrants

not the bosses. They have ignored our requests for airtime.

Maybe they don't want trade unionists and socialists on the airwaves making the case for socialist nationalisation of British Steel, under democratic workers' control and management. Or calling for the profiteers to be kicked out of the NHS and other services too, with public services fully funded by making the super-rich pay.

**ANDY HILES**  
TUSC CANDIDATE FOR DONCASTER MAYOR