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the Socialist

Issue 1325

12-18 June 2025

formerly **Militant**

FIGHT LABOUR'S CUTS

Take the wealth off the super-rich

If you spent your life sat indoors reading government press releases, you would believe Britain is on the up. Stick your head out of the front door and reality hits. Need to use any of Britain's public services? Another blow.

For all the Labour government's infrastructure spending fanfare before and after the 11 June spending review, taking place after the Socialist goes to press, it will detail Tory-style cuts to day-to-day spending on public services.

Local government, in which an estimated 600,000 jobs have been lost since austerity began in 2010, continues to face cuts. That means more closed libraries and children's centres, and more brutal attacks on workers like the £8,000 pay cut Birmingham City Council is inflicting on bin workers.

Government departments face a literal jobs decimation - 10% of civil service jobs are set

to go. Any area that isn't health or defence will be cut in real terms. Even then, the expected 1.2% real-terms increase in health spending is far less than what is needed and well below the pre-2008 average of 4.3%. The trade unions need to fight. The vast majority of public sector pay deals, themselves insufficient, are unfunded. Cue the Labour government trying to play off workers demanding fair pay against funding for services. We demand both! Strike ballots scheduled for this summer and autumn should link the issue of pay to funding.

Britain has 156 billionaires, and the government can 'afford' to spend through the nose

for new submarines and nuclear warheads. It can definitely afford to stop closing libraries and to give NHS workers a decent pay rise. However, this Labour government is choosing to leave vast hoards of wealth and resources in the hands of the super-rich while attacking working-class communities.

We need a political alternative. The trade unions' fight for pay and funding should be linked to backing their own candidates in elections, independent of Labour, to fight on the side of workers against the super-rich bosses, and as a step towards building a new mass party of the working class.

DEFENCE SPENDING AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT >>> p4-5

THE OBITUARY THE GUARDIAN WOULDN'T PRINT >>> p8-9

LA RESISTS TRUMP'S CRACKDOWN >>> p10-11,16

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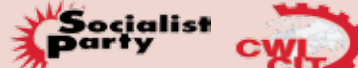
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Free school meals should be universal and fully funded

ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Keir Starmer's Labour government announced a week before the cutting spending review that it will extend the free school meals programme to include the children of all families on Universal Credit in England. It claims this will lift 100,000 children completely out of poverty. Currently, only children from households earning less than £7,400 a year in total are eligible!

While the aim of ensuring children aren't starving at school is to be welcomed, the Labour government is applauding itself while ignoring the elephant in the room - funding. Currently, schools only receive £2.58 per child for school meals, which is rising by a pitiful 3p to £2.61 from September, while the average hot school meal actually costs about £3.16 to make. Schools are already subsidising free meals for children from budgets already stretched after a decade and a half of cuts. This will only become a bigger problem once eligibility increases.

Woefully underfunded schools, especially in poorer areas, struggle to find the money for school meals, unfunded pay rises for teachers and increasing day-to-day running of a school in a cost-of-living crisis. Inevitably, the quality of education in these schools will be further eroded as overstretched headteachers make further cuts to support staff and other important school services.

Free school meals should be universal. Councils can implement that policy now; all school students in

Tower Hamlets, east London, where the council is run by 'independent' party Aspire, get free school meals, for example. A council carrying out the policy needs to combine it with a campaign for government funding.

How to end child poverty

Government ministers, who dine on heavily subsidised steaks and salmon, tell us they are committed to ending child poverty, but their actions show these words to be empty. Child poverty doesn't happen in isolation. If a child is going to school hungry, then their parents are already starving. This government could make huge steps towards ending child poverty by scrapping the two-child benefit cap, ensuring that all parents are paid a decent living wage of at least £15 an hour, given secure, safe, reasonably priced housing, free childcare and free school breakfasts and lunches for all children, all fully funded.

Of course, Labour, like the Tories before them, will tell us that such policies are unaffordable. We say that they are perfectly affordable if we used the wealth of society to fund them. By taking into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks under democratic workers' control, we could plan production for what we need not what makes a profit for a few. In such a socialist society no child would ever have to go to school hungry, and every child would receive the high-quality education they deserve. Working-class children would be able to achieve more than they can ever manage under this blighted capitalist system.



PAUL MATTSSON

We need council houses now!

JOE WATERS
GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Despite being elected on promises to address the housing crisis, among multiple other issues, Starmer's Labour has made little progress in delivering council housing, or 'social rent' equivalents, since taking power last summer. Only 6% of homes approved by local councils between July and December 2024 were for social rent. Half of councils who responded to Hyphen magazine's enquiries had not approved a single council house in the first six months of Starmer's government.

During the general election, Labour pledged that 1.5 million homes would be built in five years, but made no commitments as to how many of those would be for social rent or council homes. For these properties, rent is set according to a formula which keeps it at about 50% of local market rate. Massively inflated market rents are either totally unaffordable, or place unviable financial burdens on workers. This is

1.3 million households currently on council house waiting lists

especially the case in major cities or when those workers have children to support. Recent government targets have been based around provision of 'affordable housing' which, at 80% of market rates, offers little improvement to the situation for struggling workers.

As a result, there are currently 1.3 million households on council housing waiting lists. Just 150,000 council houses were built across the whole of the 2010s, compared to 1.24 million built in the 1960s. To resolve the housing crisis, the need for a massive programme of council house building is clear. Working-class people desperately need a government that is willing to start construction immediately, or local councils that are willing to build council homes while building a campaign to demand the necessary resources from central government.

Under capitalism, decisions are made based on what is most profitable for the capitalists, and that includes decisions over proving a basic human need - somewhere to live. For working-class people to ensure that our housing needs are met we should nationalise the big housing and construction companies, and all other massive private operations on which millions rely, under democratic workers' control and management. Then we can operate them according to what we need, not what keeps the rich getting richer.



Council houses built in the 1920s in Gateshead © BALDWIN/CC

We need socialist change to fight climate change

HANNAH PONTING
LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

It is no secret that the world has been in an environmental crisis for years now, and this crisis is only accelerating. The internationally agreed target of 1.5°C warming from preindustrial levels, viewed by climate scientists as necessary to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, looks more and more out of reach.

A recent World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) report has outlined a number of worrying possibilities, including an 80% chance that global temperatures will break at least one annual heat record in the next five years and, crucially, that there is a chance of a year being 2°C hotter than the preindustrial era, before 2030.

Glaciers under threat

These changes will undoubtedly have an effect worldwide. 40% of glaciers are already beyond saving and are therefore doomed to melt. This will affect the billions of people reliant on glaciers to regulate the water used to grow food. As well as this, glacier losses are certain to devastate downstream communities, as well as harming regions that rely on glacial tourism to sustain themselves.

However, despite these worrying figures, the capitalist system continues to demonstrate its willingness

to prioritise profit above all else, including the environment and the wellbeing of us all. We have seen the continued funding of ongoing war and genocide across the world, while cuts to public services take money from those most vulnerable.

We need socialist change

While many may still hold onto the hope that international agreements can form the basis for resolving the climate crisis, Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Agreement in 2020 clearly demonstrates that capitalist leaders are more than willing to set aside internationally agreed climate legislation in favour of pursuing their own national interests.

The evidence is clear: capitalism, driven by competition and profit, is fundamentally incompatible with the coordinated, long-term planning required to address the climate crisis. In order to properly combat this crisis we need a socialist plan of production. By taking into public ownership the big businesses and banks, including the polluting oil and gas and energy companies, we would be able to transition away from fossil fuels without workers paying the price. Environmental concerns could be integrated into plans of production democratically decided by workers across the world, to deal with capitalist climate chaos's effects and reverse polluting production.



PAUL MATTSSON

Labour membership figures an embarrassment

Labour Party membership figures will no longer be reported to its National Executive Committee. The practice has ended supposedly to end 'leaks' but the real reason is these figures are an embarrassment to the right-wing Labour Party establishment.

Figures in the press have shown that Labour's membership is falling, and falling rapidly. From over half a million members when anti-austerity Jeremy Corbyn was leader to now only 309,000. Between the end of November last year and the start of February, the Labour Party lost a member every ten minutes!

And it's no wonder. Why would you want to be a member of a party that abolished universal winter fuel payments, is increasing tuition fees, and is preparing brutal austerity measures?

And if you are a member, or your trade union is affiliated to Labour and hands over piles of dosh every year, what say do you have over the direction it is heading? Despite Labour Party conference voting in favour of renationalising Royal Mail,



NUMBER 10/CC

Starmer's Labour has presided over it being handed off to another billionaire, just one example of the undemocratic character of the pro-big business Labour Party.

Corbyn's programme was popular because it offered an alternative to the austerity consensus of establishment politicians. We need a party that represents the working class, that stands up to austerity and big business bosses, and fights for us.

SIGN THE PETITION

Time for trade unions to take the lead in forming a new working class party

- www.change.org/TradeUnions-LaunchANewParty



NatWest walks away with billions of public money

JIMMY HADDOW
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Starmer's Labour government has sold the last of its interest in NatWest - formerly Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) - returning the bank fully to private hands.

This after 17 years and over £46 billion in a publicly funded bailout following the 2007-08 banking and financial crisis.

Actually, the UK government has only received £35 billion back from the bank's bosses, which means the capitalists got it on the cheap by saving themselves £10.5 billion.

NatWest made £1.8 billion in profit in the first three months of 2025. A classic case of nationalising the losses and privatising the profits.

In total, the then Labour government spent £137 billion to nationalise or part-nationalise the banks. In return, the working class paid the price with a decade and a half of austerity as successive governments took an axe to public services.

Councils, including Birmingham City Council which is at war with its own bin workers, are treated differently from the banks. Local government is paying around £3.5 billion every year in debt repayments - 15% of their budgets.

If billions can be written off for a major bank, why can't councils have their debt written off?

When it was rescued in 2008, RBS could be counted as the biggest in the world. It had more than £1.63 trillion on its balance sheet.

Scotland's then first minister, Alex Salmond, encouraged the chief executive, Sir Fred Goodwin, to take over the Dutch bank ABN Amro in 2007; but it turned out to be riddled with toxic, mortgage-backed securities that contributed to RBS's collapse.



THE WUB/CC

RBS was within hours of having to shut down, so the Gordon Brown-led Labour government bailed it out in October 2008.

Was there an alternative, given the imminent collapse of the banking system?

A genuine workers' government would not bail out bankrupt private banks and companies and then hand them back to the private sector to continue ripping us off.

It would fully take the banks into public ownership and run them under democratic working-class control and management, with compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need. This would have allowed workers to access affordable loans and mortgages.

If public ownership of the banks was linked to the nationalisation of the top 150 companies that control the economy, a socialist plan of production for the benefit of the 99% would be entirely possible.

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French dockers block arms shipment to Israel

Israeli military blocks aid flotilla

EMILY LYNDON
CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

The Israeli state continues to act with impunity. Every day, the media report new instances of people in Gaza desperate for food forced to queue for food facing death and destruction. But there is international solidarity as well. French dockers and activists aboard the Madleen Gaza Flotilla are organising against the continuation of brutal attacks on Gaza.

French dock workers in Marseille refused to load 19 crates of machine gun parts headed for Haifa to be used by the Israeli military. Backed by their trade union federation, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), workers were able to stop the shipment. A statement by CGT general secretary Sophie Binet highlighted that it is unacceptable that CGT dockers should be the ones forced to uphold the principles of international law, calling on governments to immediately block all arms trades to the state of Israel. Following the events in Marseille, dockers in Genoa and Piraeus are also refusing to handle shipments destined to arm the Israeli military.

Freedom flotilla

On 1 June, the Madleen ship launched by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition departed Catania, Sicily, seen off by local activists in support of their aim to break the siege and provide vital aid needed in Gaza. The last attempt to deliver aid by the Gaza Freedom Flotilla was interrupted by drone attacks orchestrated by the Israeli military in May this year.

On board the ship were twelve international activists, including Greta Thunberg and a member of the European Parliament, dedicated to entering Gaza and provide life-saving aid to Palestinians including medicine, food and baby formula following the months-long blockade.

The activists on board knew that the aid they are carrying will not be

enough to reach all those who need it, stating that the mission is to bring international attention to the starvation and sickness, due to the lack of aid being allowed into the Gaza Strip. However, the Israeli navy boarded the ship, diverted it to the Israeli coast and deported those on board.

Pro-capitalist governments and international institutions have failed to uphold international law and hold the Israeli state accountable for war crimes. We cannot rely on such officials to protect our interests.

Workers and young people have fought back in Britain, defying the government to attend the hundreds-of-thousands-strong protests against the war over the last year and a half. We are fighting back against oppressive governments, war criminals and propaganda by using their collective power to challenge the consequences of capitalist rule.



DEFENCE SPENDING AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

No trust in Starmer's Labour or any capitalist politicians



WHAT WE THINK

Twelve new attack submarines, £15 billion of nuclear warheads, thousands of new long-range weapons. A "ten-times more lethal" army and a "next generation" RAF with new F-35 and Typhoon jets.

These promises from Keir Starmer's strategic defence review will leave hairs standing on end for many people who voted for a Labour government in the hopes of an end to the Tories' savagery at home and abroad. In an increasingly unstable world, the response of Starmer is to increase arms expenditure while making working-class people pay.

Starmer promises to boost military spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 - paid for by raiding international aid and other budgets - and to 3% by 2034, without saying where

that extra £17 billion would come from.

One group of people who will be rubbing their hands together is the arms industry bosses.

One example: Keir Starmer talks about "the brilliant workers and apprentices" in Govan shipyard in Glasgow. He doesn't mention the real gainers of any potential public investment in Govan - its owners, BAE Systems, which is a collection of American and other investment funds, such as Capital Group and BlackRock - the world's largest asset manager, mired in scandals.

U-turns

Starmer's government is under pressure, plummeting in the polls and looking at electoral gains for Reform. He feels compelled to U-turn on winter fuel allowances, and to trail 'boosts' to spending in schools, the NHS, and infrastructure. Although in reality, the pledged hike in the NHS budget, for example, is still less than the real average annual increase in NHS spending.

Nonetheless, there is a lesson here for the trade union leaders: imagine

how much more could be won if that pressure were organised into a mass movement involving nationwide industrial action and a political voice.

But it is also clear that the government intends any such concessions will be paid for by working-class people in some other way - cuts are "not ruled out". We already know of plans to cut government departments by 15%, including potentially a tenth of jobs - a literal decimation of civil service jobs.

And it is abundantly clear that these concessions will go nowhere towards repairing the damage of 14 years of Tory austerity: the utter crisis in local government, schools and post-16 education, and the NHS; the 20%+ loss in real wages of public sector workers; the £14 billion taken out of working-age benefits between 2011-2021.

Money for wars

Yet while money is tight when it comes to working-class people's lives, there is money for arms. When it comes to the winter fuel allowance or disability benefits, every time you turn on the TV or radio an interviewer



Birmingham bin workers marching against austerity MARK BEST



Keir Starmer visiting an aircraft carrier NUMBER10/CC

is asking, "But where will the money come from?" That question seems to disappear when it comes to defence spending.

Starmer claims that defence spending is "central to our economic growth". But on 6 June the Financial Times quoted a professor at the London Business School, Paolo Surico, who said that growth and productivity benefits would only happen through investing in research and development. Yet the plans in the defence strategy appear to include only £400 million annually for that.

Make no mistake, no matter the headlines, this is a capitalist government intent on defending the interests of the bosses, and that applies to international policy as much as it does at home. The minor concessions Starmer makes are in the hopes of maintaining his government's ability to do so.

The world is an increasingly volatile place riven with wars and tensions between powers, with extra instability injected by Trump. Given that, it is a sign of the depth of anger and mistrust in capitalist politicians that so many people are opposed to this planned increase in military spending.

In a YouGov poll published on 2 June, only 49% supported increased spending - dropping to just 24% of young people up to age 24. Only 29% of those surveyed supported cuts to public spending or tax increases to pay for it. The 'welfare not warfare' slogan is clearly widely supported.

Nonetheless, many workers - and likely especially those who work in the arms industry - will think we

only 29%
of people supported cuts or tax increases to pay for increased military spending

need the investment and the jobs. In a time of economic volatility, when there are enormous public sector cuts and when multiple industries are threatening cuts and closures, workers in the arms industries will be relieved that their jobs may not be on the line.

Union response

That view is part of what is behind statements made by unions that represent workers in those industries that welcome the increased spending.

It is correct for a union to defend jobs and pay, and to fight to retain skills. But it is a mistake to conclude that that means following behind the demands of warmongering capitalist governments. Organisations of the working class need their own independent position.

It is not necessary to extend or even maintain levels of military spending in order to retain or expand jobs and skills that currently exist in the arms industry.

The vulture capitalists that own these industries can no more be relied on to protect jobs than the bosses of industry in Port Talbot, Scunthorpe or Grangemouth, or the bosses of the debacle that is Thames Water.

Unions should be demanding democratic nationalisation. That would not only protect existing jobs and skills, but would also be the basis for a real debate about what is actually needed in society.

Lucas Plan
Next year it will be 50 years since the 'Lucas Plan' - the Workers' Alternative Plan drawn up by the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee. Lucas Aerospace was a significant part of the arms industry, but in 1976 bosses were threatening jobs.

In response, the elected shop stewards of twelve different unions representing different parts of the workforce combined into a



Unions should be demanding democratic nationalisation. That would not only protect existing jobs and skills, but would also be the basis for a real debate about what is actually needed in society

committee that represented the whole. Organising in this way prevented the management from playing off different groups of workers, such as manual and office, against each other.

As well as fighting to improve working terms and conditions, it was able to pool the expertise of workers across the whole workforce. They developed an alternative to jobs cuts, described today by then-members of the committee as "an orderly transition of production to socially useful goods and the use of democratically controlled technology for the benefit of society as a whole".

The plan stands as a brilliant glimpse of what workers' democratic control and management could mean - how different the world could be. The products designed by skilled workers were for the benefit of ordinary people and the environment, not to make profits for a handful of super-rich individuals. Products designed in detail, many with working prototypes, included a heat exchange to provide cheap heating for elderly people, portable kidney machines, a hybrid car, wind turbines and solar cells.

The plan could not be implemented because the workers didn't control the company: in the end, you can't control what you don't own. This is why unions have to fight for nationalisation - but also for democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid to the old bosses only on the basis of proven need.

Can't trust bosses' politicians

However, some workers might also argue that the arms spending is necessary because we need to be kept safe.

But we cannot trust any of the capitalist politicians to do that. If we cannot trust Starmer to do something as simple as defend the pay of bin workers in Birmingham - in fact, it is a Labour council with a Labour government behind it, fighting with brutal measures to defeat these workers



If we can't trust Starmer to do something as simple as defend the pay of bin workers in Birmingham then how can we trust his government to save lives?

and enforce £8,000 pay cuts - then how can we trust his government to save lives?

Starmer stands alongside Trump and Netanyahu. Despite hopes to the contrary, arms exports to Israel have continued. It is workers' action that can stop them - Socialist Party members argue for the trade unions representing workers in arms and logistics industries to come together to decide actions that can be taken to help stop exports to the Israeli state machine. Starmer stands in the tradition of Tony Blair, who went to war in Iraq alongside US president Bush, inflicting an utter nightmare on Iraqis and vastly increasing the risks of terror attacks in the UK.

Capitalism means war, as competing powers fight each other for influence, power, resources and profit. The way to keep us safe is to challenge the interests of the capitalists and their political representatives, not to welcome their spending.

We have to fight to kick out the capitalist politicians, of all parties. The working class has to have its own party.

The programme of nationalisation with democratic workers' control and management will not be found in Starmer's Labour. We need a new workers' party that will fight for that - and that will break free from following the dictates of capitalism's wars.

Fight for socialism

Such a party would need a socialist programme - to take into public ownership the main parts of the economy, for it to be run democratically in the interests of the majority, based on planning and cooperation. That could appeal to working-class people across all national and ethnic lines, in Britain and internationally, against war, poverty, exploitation and capitalism.

For the unions to take steps to a new workers' party with socialist policies now would be a far greater check on Starmer's actions than simply hoping against hope that Starmer will get better with time; and it would be a serious step in the direction of building the mass movement necessary to win decent jobs and livelihoods for everyone and end the poverty, wars and climate destruction of capitalism.

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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:
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UNISON CONFERENCE: PREPARE TO STAND UP TO STARMER



Health Care Assistants went on strike in several areas in 2023 - here in Leicester STEVE SCORE

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN UNISON

As this year's public sector union Unison conference takes place, a Labour government has been in power barely a year yet is now even more unpopular than the previous Tory government.

The scale of the crisis engulfing our public services has never been more acute. Years of austerity, underfunding, and political attacks have hollowed out the NHS, schools and colleges, local government, and social care. Our pay is worth at least 20% less than it was in 2009 and inflation is making it worse.

Pay

Against this backdrop, a real-terms pay rise for public sector workers is not only fair, it's essential for the survival of the services that millions rely on.

Recruitment and retention are becoming impossible. The government talks about 'value for money', but there is no better investment than paying public sector workers fairly, because without them the services collapse. But with RPI inflation at 4.5% in April, this year's pay offers - 3.2% in local government and 3.6% in the NHS - are in reality pay cuts.

These pay offers must be rejected. Unison is absolutely right to demand an inflation-proof, properly funded pay rise across all sectors. But we must fight to achieve this. The strike action taken by many trade unionists, including ambulance and hospital workers in Unison in 2022, shows that striking works! Resident (formerly known as junior) doctors are once again balloting for strike action over pay.

We need national coordinated industrial action within our union and across unions for fully funded pay rises. And we need a serious industrial and political campaign for a £15-an-hour minimum wage now to end low pay, which is endemic amongst our members.

Local government on the brink

Local government has borne the brunt of austerity. According to the Institute for Government, council funding from central government was slashed by more than 50% between 2010 and 2020. Over 800 libraries have closed, more than 1,000 children's centres have shut, and vital youth, homelessness, and mental health services have been decimated. It has been estimated that over 600,000 council jobs have gone.

And the pain continues. Birmingham, Nottingham, Croydon, and Thurrock councils are among those that have effectively declared bankruptcy under Section 114 notices. More are expected to follow. The Local Government Association estimates a funding gap of £4 billion just to maintain current services. This is not about mismanagement, this is a systemic crisis driven by political choices to underfund public services and hand wealth to the already-rich.

We know the money is there - in 2024 the FTSE100 companies paid out £89 billion to their shareholders! But this Labour government refuses to tax the rich, choosing instead to make working people and the poor in society shoulder the burden.

Solidarity with Birmingham bin workers

Labour councils have passed on Tory cuts, hiding behind their austerity of fensive. Now there should be no excuses with Starmer's government in office. Yet the cuts continue.

Labour Birmingham City Council, the biggest in western Europe, is using brutal strike-breaking measures that Thatcher would be proud of to try and smash the heroic strike of Unite members on the bins against wage cuts of up to £8,000. And standing behind these vicious anti-union tactics are Starmer and 'Our Angie'

Rayner - deputy prime minister and former Unison NEC member.

The bin workers need the active solidarity of other union members, including Unison, across the region and beyond - and that especially should apply to Birmingham City Council Unison.

Local branches should not be left to fight the cuts on their own. The policy of Unison's Local Government Group is to fight for no-cuts budgets. The union should be leading national action to fight for the money needed in our public services and demand that Labour makes the rich pay.

NHS: From crisis to catastrophe

The NHS is in a deep and worsening crisis. In England alone, over 7.5 million people are waiting for hospital treatment - the highest number since records began. Staff are leaving in droves, with the NHS Workforce Plan estimating a shortage of 360,000 staff by 2037 if action isn't taken. Nurses, paramedics, cleaners, and support staff are all doing heroic work under impossible conditions.

But while the government insists there's 'no money', NHS trusts are being pushed into financial ruin. The Health Foundation recently warned that without urgent and sustained investment the NHS faces a funding shortfall of £38 billion by 2033-34. At the same time, billions are being siphoned into private health contracts, while staff wages have fallen dramatically in real terms and jobs are being cut.

We need to fight Labour's continued privatisation by stealth of the NHS. We need to fight for the resources and funding needed to pay health workers what they deserve and ensure a fully funded NHS that provides quality health care 'from the cradle to the grave.'

Socialist policies

This crisis is the result of a capitalist system that prioritises profit over people. Tweaks and half-measures won't fix it. We need socialist policies to end the crisis in public services.

We say: Tax the super-rich and big corporations to fund our services; reverse privatisation and restore public ownership in health, energy, transport and care. Nationalise the banks and major industries, so that wealth is democratically planned and used for social need, not private greed.

Now, more than ever, we need bold leadership, united industrial action, and a political movement that puts socialist policies at its heart.

A political voice for workers

From refusing to back striking workers to watering down commitments on workers' rights and public ownership, attacking disabled peoples' benefits, scapegoating migrant workers and supporting a genocidal war in Gaza - Starmer's Labour is not the party we need. Starmer lines up with Trump and Netanyahu, and in the next breath launches his austerity offensive against working-class people, including vicious cuts to public services.

The union movement must have a programme that unites resistance, and fights for socialist policies like democratic public ownership and investment in jobs and services. But it's crystal clear that this programme won't be found in Labour - we need a new workers' party.

We need a proper debate among all members about what our union should do to achieve genuine political representation - not just leave the debate to those who pay into Labour Link and the Labour Party (a minority of union members and getting smaller).

Unison should only support political candidates who support us. We need to build up a group of MPs in parliament who genuinely champion the union's policies. Unison members should stand as workers' candidates in elections wherever possible. Unison should be discussing with other trade unions how we achieve the new workers' party we need.

- As we go to press, we are awaiting the results of the elections to Unison's National Executive Council, in which seven Socialist Party members stood as candidates.

Socialist Party fringe meeting

Stand up to Starmer

Wednesday 18th June, 5.30pm (or end of conference)

Suite 1, Leonardo Hotel, 31 Keele Warf, L3 4FN

Hear from:

- April Ashley, Unison NEC member
- Greg Marshall, Broxtowe Alliance councillor
- Ellie Waple, NEC candidate and trans rights campaigner
- Hannah Sell, Socialist Party general secretary

Come to NSSF conference

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) says

This year's NSSN conference takes place exactly one year since Starmer formed his Labour government. Yet we still face job cuts, there is no respite from the public sector funding crisis, and privatisation is being ramped up in our NHS. Workers fighting back still face Tory limits on the right to strike.

This will be a conference that brings together trade union fighters from strikes and workplaces across the country, to discuss both how we can build the fight in each of our unions, and how we can campaign for coordination.

Building solidarity with the heroic striking Birmingham bin workers is a key task for the trade union movement, including linking up council workers nationally. Those workers are defending jobs and fighting massive pay cuts from a Labour council that is using every means at its disposal to attack the strike - backed by Starmer's Labour government.

We will also discuss the essential role of the union movement in cutting across the racist division of the populist and far right, that only strengthens the bosses. Make the super-rich pay, not the workers!

Why young workers are going to NSSN conference



JAY COWARD
EQUITY MEMBER

The pandemic gave working-class people the chance to realise just what 'normal' was disrupted and what 'normal' we were being shoved back into. It was followed by a strike wave the likes of which we haven't seen for decades. Overseas we witness a Palestinian genocide, American police brutality and more, that our government lends its support to.

Labour has taken power over the Tories and nothing has changed, the Greens and Reform exist offering no concrete way forward for the working class, and we have decades of Tory austerity to reverse.

From all this an answer has been made clear. The unions need to mount a real fightback. And that needs to include discussing a new political option that comes from the working class. The Socialist Party has long advocated for a new mass workers' party led by trade unions, for the trade unions to take a more bold, fighting, unified stance against austerity. Not just fighting it in fragments but winning against it in entirety.

And what better chance is there to build that, than a conference of working-class fighters? That is why I most definitely will be in attendance at this year's NSSN conference.



REES MELVILLE
TRAINEE TEACHER

As a trainee teacher, I'm experiencing first-hand how brutal the education system has become, not just for students, but for staff at every level. I'm working full-time on placement, unpaid, surviving on a student loan, while being pushed to perform the duties of a fully qualified teacher. Many trainees are isolated in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) with poor conditions and little support. Mentors are overworked, and curriculum training is threadbare. This crisis is no accident; it's the result of years of cuts and privatisation.

I'll be attending this year's NSSN conference to draw on the experience of union reps across all sectors, to better understand how we can link the fight for workers' rights with the broader political struggle for real representation. In a period where public services are under attack, Starmer's Labour offers no serious alternative. He has walked back on promises to repeal anti-union laws and scrap zero-hour contracts, while backing academeisation in education. That's why the NSSN conference is vital, in fighting to coordinate action, build solidarity with strikes, and plan a united response to the next wave of attacks on the working class.

Our unions mustn't wait for another betrayal from Labour; we need a fighting programme now!

Solidarity with Hackney sixth form strikers, defending education that enthuses students

CLARE DOYLE
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Teachers in the National Education Union (NEU) at 'BSix' college in Hackney have had enough! They are on all-out strike from Thursday 12 June until 30 June or "as long as it takes" for the management to drop its vicious restructuring plan.

Anger has been accumulating since the sixth form college was taken over last year by Hackney City Colleges (HCC). It has been treated more like a business venture than an opportunity to give students a chance of achieving things in life that even they did not think were possible.

It was clear, at a packed meeting on 5 June, that the staff of BSix have

widespread support from students, parents and the local population. Speaker after speaker spoke of the tremendous encouragement students have had to study and go on to higher education and fulfilling careers.

The new managers are operating the college "like a boot camp," one speaker said. They want to cut over 40 staff, delete A-level courses, and reduce safeguarding roles and vital support services for students. They plan to scrap things like their "Turing Scheme Trips" and other projects that stimulate the students' thirst for knowledge of the world around them.

Recently the HCC management cancelled a Black history conference that teachers had been

putting considerable effort into. Knowing how important this issue is in an area with a large Black and Asian population, the teachers defiantly went ahead and held the event in a location they organised themselves!

One young Black speaker at the meeting said she had been getting nowhere in the local academy. History there was "Cold War, Cold War and more Cold War!" When she got into BSix, history was "colonialism, reparations and things that actually made me interested in politics". She left BSix with three A-Levels, got an apprenticeship at the BBC, a degree at Cambridge, and is now studying to be a lawyer!

As one young speaker put it, "Through learning you experience a

kind of 'liberation', 'emancipation'. Yet HCC is running BSix like a business - regimenting and disciplining for its own interests and not those of the students.

Kevin Courtney - local parent and one-time general secretary of the NEU - recalled hearing Tony Benn speak powerfully about what's needed in education, and more recently local MP Jeremy Corbyn. Socialist Party members spoke about the totally inadequate approach of the present Labour government, acting as it does in the interests of big companies and not workers and their children.

Long may BSix maintain its reputation for enthusing as well as educating young people! For a full and rapid victory in the strike!

nationalshop
stewardsnetwork

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Conference 2025

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STARMER AND THE BOSSES**

**VICTORY TO THE BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS
- AND ALL STRIKERS AGAINST LABOUR ATTACKS**

**ORGANISE AGAINST DIVISION.
MAKE THE RICH PAY, NOT WORKERS!**

Bring a delegation from your union branch

Confirmed speakers so far: Steve Gillan POA General Secretary, Steve Wright FBU General Secretary, Annoesjka Valent NAPO National Official, Ed Harlow NEU Vice-President, Fiona Brittle PCS NEC (personal capacity), Ian Hodson BFAWU President, Unite Birmingham Bin Striker, Rob Williams NSSN Chair

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THE OBITUARY THE GUARDIAN WOULDN'T PRINT

HANNAH SELL

SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The Guardian newspaper on Saturday 24 May 2025 printed an obituary for Peter Taaffe. It began by stating, accurately, that in the 1980s Peter Taaffe “was famous in political circles, and Labour Party grandees shivered at the sound of his name”.

Fear of the shivers of ‘Labour Party grandees’ appears to have been a central factor in the Guardian’s refusal to publish the first obituary for Peter that they received, four weeks earlier, on 28 April 2025. The Guardian had approached an individual Socialist Party member to write an obituary. He proposed that I write instead. Guardian obituaries agreed to that suggestion, but in the event did not feel that they could publish the resulting draft, by myself and Tony Saunois, as it was considered not to be a sufficiently balanced account.

We are nonetheless publishing the obituary here, to let readers judge for themselves. And because the whole incident is another illustration of the role of the capitalist media in general, and the Guardian in particular, which claims to produce “fearless investigative journalism - giving a voice to the powerless and holding power to account” and to be “entirely free from political and commercial influence”.

One excuse they would probably give for their decision not to publish is that the Guardian’s readership is a big general one, many of whom would have little recollection or knowledge of Peter Taaffe. To describe him as “towering”, for example, as we did in our obituary, would not mean much to them. We of course would have been happy to replace ‘towering’ with another description. Yet it is also a fact that the Guardian obituaries column frequently praises subjects from a particular field, such as a violin authenticator whose “expertise was

unmatched”, or a “superb actor” who was nonetheless “little known to the general public”.

And the obituary finally printed, authored by someone not sympathetic to us, concedes that Peter was “famous” in “political circles” at least. So, it seems, it is okay for the Guardian’s big general readership to read praise for figures of whom they know nothing, provided they are not leading Marxists.

In particular, it was beyond the bounds to publish a favourable obituary of a Marxist who played a key role in movements that shook the capitalist class, and which are burned into the memories of those Labour leaders who disgracefully came to the capitalists’ aid by attacking those movements.



An open debate on who had the best approach forty years ago could only enrich the pages of the Guardian.

This, however, would be anathema to the Guardian

That includes, especially, those ‘shivering Labour Party grandees’ who were in the forefront of attacking Liverpool City Council. No doubt they would not accept our description of Neil Kinnock’s 1985 Labour Party conference speech as “infamous”, for example. But if that was so again we would have been okay with deleting the word ‘infamous’, or making other minor textual changes, if we had been asked. Moreover we would have been very happy to debate the issues around the struggle of Liverpool council, and anything else for that

matter, in the pages of the Guardian.

And if the Guardian’s obituaries department were concerned about how ‘balanced’ our obituary was on these points, why did they not at least carry out any of the checking for factual accuracy that they claim is the norm before publication? They could have begun by reading Neil Kinnock’s 1985 speech to the Labour Party conference, available in The Penguin Book of Modern Speeches, published in 2017 (suggesting that it is well-known, even if the Guardian couldn’t accept our ‘infamous’ description).

We called it infamous because in it, Kinnock launched a broadside against Liverpool council including explicitly referring to the alleged casualties of the Liverpool struggle being those “whose jobs are destroyed, whose services are crushed, whose living standards are pushed down to deeper depths of insecurity and misery”. This was the complete opposite of the truth about what happened in Liverpool, where, as we explain in Peter’s obituary, not one single person was made redundant and public services were dramatically improved.

At the same time, Kinnock used his speech to praise those Labour councillors who made “very unpalatable, totally undesirable” and “hellish choices”, by which he meant adopting his preferred ‘strategy’ of the ‘dented shield’ - reluctant cooperation with the cuts to local authority funding from the Tory central government, rather than mobilising a mass struggle to demand the cuts were reversed. That ‘strategy’ has now been followed by Labour councils for another forty years, resulting in the calamitous state of council services today.

An open debate on who had the best approach forty years ago could only enrich the pages of the Guardian. This, however, would be anathema to a publication which has always been guilty of what Leon Trotsky described in an article ‘Historical Objectiveness’



(April 1933) as “hypocritical ‘impartiality’”, the “blunting of sharp edges”, “conciliatory moralising”, and looking back on past class struggles and saying they can be avoided in the future if only “the private owners will be more generous, and the hungry people more moderate”.

This approach attempts to disguise the Guardian’s essential defence of the existing order. Trotsky once said of the Times, then a more serious capitalist paper than it is today, that it told the truth nine times out of ten, the better to lie on the crucial tenth occasion when its vital class interests were at stake. The same could have been said of the Guardian throughout its history.

Supporting capitalism

It has long nurtured a reputation as a more liberal ‘left-leaning’ paper, but when ‘push has come to shove’ has supported the maintenance of the capitalist system. In the 1926 general strike, while the Manchester Guardian tried to maintain its liberal reputation by opposing aspects of the government’s Emergency Powers Act, it nonetheless backed the capitalist class using the army and navy to break the strike.

In fact a century earlier, in 1821, the Manchester Guardian was founded by

a cotton mill owner, and was openly deeply hostile to the workers’ movement. Hence it was described in 1836 by the working-class Manchester and Salford Advertiser as “the foul prostitute and dirty parasite of the worst portion of the mill-owners”.

Still, historically the Guardian has been more willing than it is today to stand by its maxim that ‘facts are sacred’. In July 1931 Trotsky even wrote a letter to it thanking it for being “the sole newspaper in whose pages there has appeared an authentic interview with me about the five-year plan and the importance of collaboration between England and Russia.” As Peter Taaffe analysed in an excellent review article for Socialism Today “The Media Lie Factory” (Issue 117, April 2008), there is far less room in modern capitalism, however, for the probing investigative journalism which existed, within limits, in the past, and all varieties of capitalist newspapers today are dominated by ‘churnalism’, the reproduction of repetitious, unchecked stories usually in the service of political spin and naked profit.

The Guardian is no exception to this trend. Over the last decade in particular, it has played a particularly pernicious role in publishing the political spin of the Starmerites as they sought

to crush Jeremy Corbyn. In the 2015 Labour leadership election in which Corbyn was first elected, reflecting a mass surge in support for his anti-austerity programme, a Guardian poll on 24 July 2015 showed that 78% of its readers backed Corbyn for leader. Research by the Guardian’s consumer insight team at the end of July found that, of the newspaper’s core UK readership, 51% said Corbyn was their choice for leader, while 7% supported Yvette Cooper.

The Guardian nonetheless called for a vote for Cooper, whilst opening its pages to a desperate attempt to cut across the momentum for Corbyn. Novara Media report that, over just two days - 22 and 23 July 2015 - as the leadership election was at its height, articles with the following headlines appeared on the front of the Guardian website: “Blair urges Labour not to wrap itself in a Jeremy Corbyn comfort blanket”; “Think before you vote for Jeremy Corbyn”; “Labour can come back from the brink, but it seems to lack the will to do so”; “Blair: I wouldn’t want to win on an old fashioned leftist platform.” Over the same two days it ran opinion pieces hostile to Corbyn from Anne Perkins, Suzanne Moore, Polly Toynbee, Tim Bale, Martin Kettle, Michael White, Anne Perkins (again), and Anne

Perkins (yet again). There was not a single pro-Corbyn column.

Having failed to stop Corbyn being elected, the Guardian spent the following five years acting as a platform for the Labour right wing as it, backed to the hilt by the capitalist class, sought to crush Corbynism. Today it runs some columns criticising the brutal austerity being implemented by the pro-capitalist Starmer government, but it has played an important role in its coming to power.

Democratic control

The Starmer government poses sharply the urgent need for the working class to build a new party to represent its interests. The small incident of the Guardian’s refusal to print this obituary emphasises why one of the demands of such a party should be the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, along with radio, TV and social media platforms. This would allow access to such facilities to be under genuine democratic control, with political parties’ coverage being allocated on a democratic basis, such as in proportion to the popular vote at elections. It also points to the necessity of building a powerful workers’ and socialist press as a real alternative to the capitalist media in all of its guises.

Supporting the Militant-led Liverpool City Council PHOTO: PHILIP GORDON

Peter Taaffe, who has died at 83 after a long illness, was a towering figure in the Marxist movement in Britain and internationally. His deep grasp of Marxist theory however had nothing in common with ‘armchair’ intellectuals. He was able to put socialist ideas into the day-to-day language of working-class people, and apply them in practice with flair, skill and flexibility.

Peter always emphasised that an organisation is built by a team, rather than one individual, but he nonetheless played a decisive role in the development of the Militant, now the Socialist Party. In 2018 we got a glimpse of how fearful the establishment was of Militant with the release of Margaret Thatcher’s Cabinet Papers. They included a letter signed by her discussing a list of union conference delegates who had backed a Militant-sponsored resolution!

Peter was born in Birkenhead to a poor working-class family in April 1942, one of five children. He did not go to university and worked for Liverpool council after leaving school. Having explored different options, he joined Socialist Fight, a small Trotskyist group largely comprised of workers. Peter quickly became central to transforming the organisation.

In 1964 the Militant newspaper was launched, and Peter as its editor moved to London. Herculean efforts were required. At one stage, as he would recount, he slept under the desk in the office. ‘Wages’ were paid intermittently - if enough money had been raised.

From these unpromising beginnings, Militant became the biggest Trotskyist organisation in Europe, with 8,000 supporters by the mid-1980s. From the start it saw the struggle for socialism as an international one, and Peter was central to finding co-thinkers in other countries, travelling widely to do so. The Committee for a Workers’ International was launched in 1974.

In Britain, through the support we had won in the Labour Party, three Militant supporters - Pat Wall in Bradford, Dave Nellist in Coventry, and Terry Fields in Liverpool - were elected as Labour MPs, all of whom only took a worker’s wage. A predominantly working-class organisation, we twice led struggles that defeated the Thatcher government.

From 1983-1987 Militant supporters were at the forefront of the battle of Liverpool City Council. As Peter described in his 1988 book, ‘Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight’, the council was opposed by Labour’s leadership as well as the Tories, but had widespread support in the population. City-wide strike action took place to back its stand, with 50,000 taking to the streets in support.

As a result Margaret Thatcher retreated and conceded £60 million more to the council, with The Times thundering that “municipal militancy is vindicated” (11 July 1984). During the Militant-era 5,000 award-winning council houses were built, all with gardens, plus new nurseries, colleges and leisure centres. And, contrary to Neil Kinnock’s infamous Labour conference speech, no-one was made redundant but the council workforce was expanded on trade union rates of pay. No wonder that in the 1987 general election Liverpool defied the national trend and swung to Labour.

Militant, under Peter’s leadership, scored a second victory against Thatcher, when we led the mass movement against the poll tax with, at its peak, eighteen million non-payers. The tax was scrapped and Thatcher resigned - ‘the iron lady’ was turned into iron filings’ - as Peter would put it.

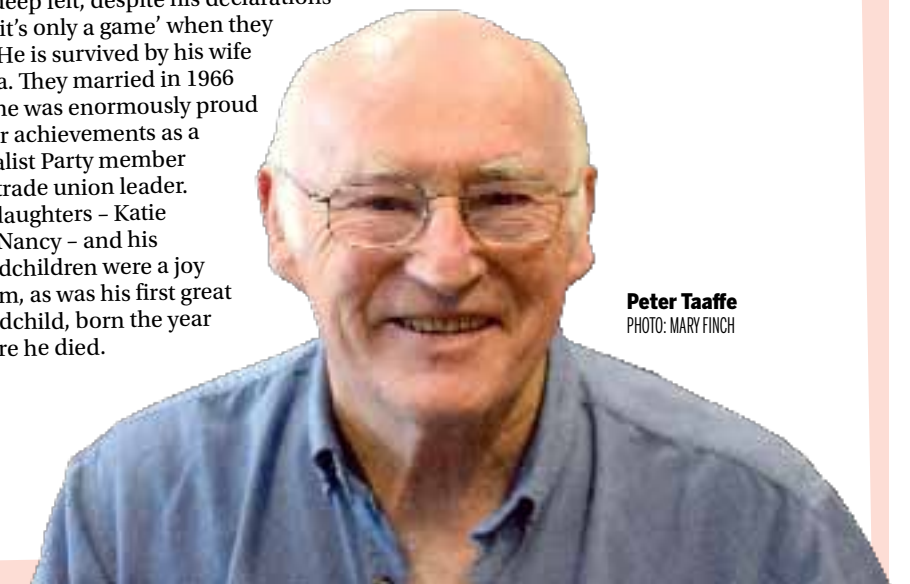
Militant’s success, combined with the move to the right of the Labour leadership, led to an increased determination to drive us out of the party. In 1983 the paper’s editorial board, including Peter, were the first to be expelled. In 1993 we launched Militant Labour, now the Socialist Party, as an independent organisation of which Peter was general secretary until 2020.

Despite his huge role in the 1980s however, probably Peter’s most important contribution came later. Always ready to reappraise based on events, in the 1980s he recognised the possibility of capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe. When Stalinism collapsed he was one of the few to quickly foresee the consequences and to prepare our organisation for the deluge of capitalist triumphalism that followed, understanding that this would be temporary, that the fundamental strength of the working class remained intact, and that the inability of capitalism to take society forward would lead to a new generation beginning to draw socialist conclusions. And it is proving so.

With Labour’s changed character Peter was among the first to recognise that the question of the trade union movement beginning to build a new party was posed. However, when under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, a brief chance arose to transform Labour, Peter put forward a programme to do so and proposed the Socialist Party affiliate to the Labour Party to join the fight.

Always brimming with energy, with ideas bursting out of him, Peter nonetheless did not have a shred of personal arrogance. He knew how to listen and was skilled in helping working-class young people to develop their talents, including ourselves who both worked alongside him for decades.

Nor was his energy for politics alone. His passion for football and his beloved Everton was deep felt, despite his declarations that ‘it’s only a game’ when they lost. He is survived by his wife Linda. They married in 1966 and he was enormously proud of her achievements as a Socialist Party member and trade union leader. His daughters - Katie and Nancy - and his grandchildren were a joy to him, as was his first great grandchild, born the year before he died.



Peter Taaffe
PHOTO: MARY FINCH

Neil Kinnock (left) who helped pave the way for Blairism in the Labour Party made an infamous attack on Liverpool’s Militant-led council at the 1985 Labour Party conference

PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION/CC



RESISTANCE STIRS AGAINST TRUMP IN US

The following is a shortened edit of an article by **S.J. Dickie**, published by the Independent Socialist Group, the Socialist Party's co-thinkers in the US, before events erupted in LA.

Four months into the second Donald Trump presidency, larger protests against Trump's attacks on immigrants, women, and the LGBTQ+ community are developing. Trump's rapid-fire executive actions are meant to intimidate and spread fear. People across the US are angry, exhausted, overwhelmed, and struggling to keep up with the news cycle.

Still, resistance is stirring. Millions came out for the 'Hands Off!' rallies that were organised in hundreds of cities nationwide on 5 April and 19 April. These protests were called in response to a myriad of issues, including Trump's flagrantly racist crackdowns by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) on migrants and revocation of student visas, his destructive mass federal layoffs, his attacks on transgender rights, and his annihilation of healthcare accessibility and social services.

The 'Hands Off!' protests include many working people looking for an alternative to Trumpism. These protests are a positive development, but to successfully fight back against Trump's attacks and the system he represents, these protests need to be the start of a new mass movement.

The attacks coming from the Trump White House and his clique of billionaire backers are the latest escalation of capitalism's long-standing tactics to sow division among the working class. He uses fearmongering against trans people, for example, to draw attention away from his cuts to social services and failure to address the cost-of-living crisis, pitting workers against each other to prevent united working-class organising.

The Trump administration is now defining one's sex as "an individual's immutable biological classification as either male or female" and removing recognition of gender identity. The executive order is dubiously titled 'Defending Women'.

Trump does not care about protecting women. Among other misogynistic moves, Trump has committed to enforcing the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funds from being used for abortion. The Biden administration left this open for attack by refusing to codify abortion rights into federal law while the Democrats were in charge of both Congress and the White House.

To further stoke fear and sow division, the Trump administration has accelerated the repression of Palestinian rights activists, initiated by the Biden administration. US immigration authorities have cracked down on several international students who have taken part in anti-genocide protests or spoken out in defence of Palestinians in Gaza.

Trump has issued an executive order to limit "wasteful" diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities



April protests against Trump
PHOTOS: BPMVSP/CC AND THE WHITE HOUSE/CC

in government and by government contractors and grant recipients. This will allegedly restore "merit-based opportunity," the implication being that good, hard-working white men have lost opportunities to women, people of colour, gay and trans people, and people with disabilities – people who did not "deserve" them. This is an attempt to stoke distrust and resentment among different sections of the working class.

Cost of living

The cost of living – housing, healthcare, debt, education – keeps rising as wages stagnate. Climate disasters continue to ravage communities around the world. Attacks on DEI and mass layoffs cause chaos in working people's lives. While these issues predate Trump, he and the other capitalists he represents will continue to watch the world burn if they stand to make a profit. As such, fighting against Trump needs to be a step toward fighting against the capitalist system as a whole.

In 2020, millions of Americans voted for the Democratic Party as a vote against Trumpism and the far right. But instead of following through on popular campaign promises to close border camps and end the funding of Trump's border wall, implement the Equality Act to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination, to cancel student debt, codify Roe, and implement a Green New Deal, the Democrats continued many of Trump's policies. The Democratic Party urged a peaceful transfer of power

and confined itself to performative 'fights' against Trump in the courts, refusing to build mass protests in the streets.

If anything, the Democrats consistently seize opportunities to channel energy from social movements away from independent politics and toward voting blue.

The Women's March in Washington, DC was one of the largest single-day protests in US history, with over 470,000 people in attendance – yet nothing really changed. When they left the march, protesters had no programme to follow but to fall in line with the Democrats. 'Progressive' Democrats like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have tried to capture the anger against Trump but are not using this energy to build a political organisation by and for working people.

Working-class mass movements of the past have made significant gains, and those tactics and strategies need to be taken up once again if workers want material solutions to the attacks on LGBTQ and women's rights. The key is to use mass demonstrations and strikes in a sustained, coordinated mass movement that's tied to an independent working-class political party.

The United Auto Workers union led a six week-long strike in 2023

against all three major car manufacturers in the US, winning pay rises. Its members have been some of those on the frontlines of the pro-Palestine protests. It could be mobilising its members – not only those on college campuses but in other workplaces as well – in defence against ICE raids, harassment by management, discrimination, restrictions on abortion and reproductive rights, and the gutting of many federal programmes and services which LGBTQ+, women, and immigrants especially benefit from.

At Columbia University and the University of California system, unions have coordinated rallies and even strikes in defence of pro-Palestinian protesters. It'll take not just one or a few unions but the larger labor movement and wider working class to beat back Trump's policies. A workers' party is a key piece to solving the puzzle of how to unite us as working people across social movements and the labour movement.

Capitalism stokes the 'us versus them' sentiment that is weaponised against our most vulnerable groups while Trump and his gang of billionaires profit. Our struggles as workers – gay and trans workers, racialized workers, immigrant workers, disabled workers – are linked by the economic structure of capitalism.

Laws against job discrimination mean nothing when the standard is 'at-will' hiring and firing. Women and the LGBTQ+ community see lower wages than their straight, cis-gendered male counterparts. 40% are employed in the lowest-paying sectors, such as hospitality, education, and retail – jobs that often don't receive medical benefits or paid leave. Trans women, in particular, make \$0.60 for every \$1.00 that the average worker in the US makes. Medical discrimination runs rampant in our for-profit healthcare system, in which insurance is tied to employment, and out-of-pocket costs further hinder access to care, whether one is insured or not.

This oppression is built into the capitalist system: discrepancies in wages and benefits are explicitly used to create a race to the bottom. Capitalism spins the lie that good jobs are finite resources that workers must compete to earn. The right aims to divide and conquer the working class by picking off vulnerable sections, turning others against them with hateful rhetoric, and blaming these sections for the suffering of others.

The United States lacks an independent workers' party. We must connect our struggles and unite against the ruling class. We need a socialist programme to end oppression. We need a workers' party to take housing, energy, healthcare, and transportation under democratic public ownership, and ensure that all people have what they need. A workers' party would have to ensure that its leaders were accountable to its membership. When enough workers choose independent, left working-class politics over the corporate duopoly, Trump and the far-right won't stand a chance.



Los Angeles resists Trump's immigration crackdown

TOM BALDWIN
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Los Angeles has become the centre of resistance to Donald Trump's brutal crackdown on immigrants. As the Socialist goes to press, there have been four days of mass protests with demonstrations now spreading to other cities.

These erupted in response to raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Massive numbers of migrants have been scooped up and reportedly detained in inhumane conditions, including the refusal of food and drink for over 12 hours. Raids on workplaces in largely Hispanic areas saw people come out in large numbers to try and prevent detentions. These then coalesced into bigger protests.

Protesters faced down repression from militarised police, including tear gas and hundreds of rubber bullets. Trump's administration has escalated this by mobilising thousands of National Guards, and now even the Marines.

This is the first time in 60 years the National Guard has been deployed in a US state without the request of the governor and has revealed some of

the splits within the US ruling class. California governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, called Trump deranged and dictatorial. The state has sued the federal government alleging an overstepping of powers. In response, Trump has threatened Newsom's arrest.

Trump is trying to play to a section of his supporters by appearing to be tough on immigration and law and order. One in three residents of Los Angeles County are immigrants and undocumented migrants play an important role in industries like hospitality and the manufacture of clothing.

The workers' movement must stand up to Trump's anti-immigrant agenda in the interests of the working class, not employers. David Huerta, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in California, was hospitalised and arrested while observing one of the demonstrations. Other unions have spoken out to support him, opposing the government's attacks on trade unions and scapegoating of immigrants. Following his release on bail, Huerta said: "This fight is ours, it's our community's, but it belongs to everyone. We all have to fight for them."



California National Guard in Los Angeles during the protests PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Leeds stall shows appetite for action against Trump's visit



TJ on the Notre Dame stall PHOTO: YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

TJ DINIZ MOTA
LEEDS SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students set up a campaign stall outside Notre Dame Sixth Form College in Leeds on 3 June, as part of our national effort to build for youth walkouts against Trump's upcoming second state visit to the UK.

The level of engagement we had was a real indication of the potential for mass action. Staff at the college voiced strong support, sharing our anger that someone like Trump, whose record is soaked in racism, sexism and pro-billionaire policies,

a second state visit. Both expressed a desire to stay involved and have agreed to attend upcoming meetings. There is a feeling of political homelessness amongst the youth.

Encouragingly, our materials even reached staff at the university. One younger staff member reached out after seeing a poster and is keen to help build the walkout campaign with us.

What this shows is that there is potential for resistance to Trump and everything he represents – but it needs to be organised. Anger is not in short supply, what's needed is a strategy and structure for turning that into collective action. That's what Socialist Students is trying to provide, and this stall was another step in that direction.



We're calling on all Socialist Students groups and anti-Trump youth to do the same

We are coordinating this walkout not just in protest, but to offer international solidarity. Socialism is the only system capable of replacing division with unity, exploitation with cooperation, and repression with liberation.

Next steps are being discussed in Leeds – whether it's public meetings, joint campus stalls, or further action. We're calling on all Socialist Students groups and anti-Trump youth to do the same: set up stalls, talk to students, build links with staff, and fight to make this walkout campaign as big and visible as possible. Attacks on the working class in one nation equate to an attack on the working class everywhere.

Building a walkout against Trump at my college

EMRE HAKAN SEYHUN
DONCASTER SOCIALIST STUDENTS

I have been organising at my college for a walkout and protest when Donald Trump visits, most likely in September. When handing out Socialist Students leaflets, a lot of students were very interested in hearing more, and all but three of them took a leaflet.

Over the span of an afternoon and a morning I handed out over 70 leaflets and am proud to say 13 people have signed up by visiting the Socialist

Students website and also wanting to hear more from Socialist Students.

When guillotining some new leaflets a member of staff asked me what the leaflet was about. I went to my tutor to ask for permission, he said that I probably wouldn't be able to hand out literature within college premises. After my lesson my tutor took me to the principal to talk about this. I received no disciplinary action but rather 'rules', such as not handing leaflets out within the college premises but places like outside the Co-op were okay. She was very friendly about it and did say she was "not trying to squash anything".

I'm very happy with the response from students and over the next couple of weeks will be in the process of setting up a meeting and creating a community of like-minded individuals to campaign further.

How can you protest Trump's visit?

Organise a meeting at your school, college or uni

- Discuss with your friends and classmates - invite them to a meeting, it could be in a classroom, cafeteria or even a local cafe
- Make a social media graphic to share, posters to put up, and leaflets to distribute to get people along

Organise a protest on Day X

- Once we know the date of Trump's visit to parliament, put out a time and place for the protest
- Bring a megaphone and banners, make up some chants, and invite some speakers to explain why they are protesting

Join Socialist Students

- Be part of an organisation fighting for socialist change at schools, colleges and unis all over the country

Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join or call **020 8988 8761** or text your name and school, college or uni to **07515 921699**

JOIN socialist students





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.

- 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.

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Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

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Socialist Party at Oxford Pride



Spirit and solidarity at Oxford Pride

HANNAH CHAPMAN

OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

Thousands marched at Oxford Pride on Saturday 7 June. As the parade rounded the corner towards our campaign stall, bright flags, outfits and faces lit up the street as far as I could see. Despite the sham of the Supreme Court ruling being weaponised against transgender people looming large in the consciousness of many attending, today, people were out to celebrate.

The celebratory mood, however, did not mean people were averse to discussing the political realities facing them. We made it clear that we were here to put forward socialist ideas, selling our newspapers, while fighting for queer liberation and collecting money for the Birmingham bin workers' strike fund. Encouragingly, most of the people we talked to were eager to express solidarity with words and donations, already aware of the need for organised

working-class action and solidarity. Not everyone was immediately aware of the details surrounding the ongoing bin strikes; when it was explained they usually became supportive very quickly. We were able to raise £162.58.

Unfortunately, the political spirit of the attendees we spoke to has not been reflected by the Oxford Pride organisers who demanded that the event be strictly apolitical – despite being partly funded by companies supporting the genocide in Gaza and including the police on the march.

The solidarity between the miners and the queer rights activists in the 1980s – as depicted in the film *Pride* – is an inspiration for us all. It is disappointing that the organisers of Oxford Pride do not understand the need for political action and solidarity at an event celebrating queer liberation. Fortunately, the community I witnessed at this march was one hungry for change and willing to fight for it.

SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

June issue includes...

- Peter Taaffe, 1942-2025 - a special commemorative issue
- Articles on Liverpool, poll tax, Thatcher, and Corbynism
- socialismtoday.org/subscribe / **020 8988 8777**
- Paper subscription £3 a month, e-subscription £2.50



Scotland: Hamilton by-election – damning indictment of Labour and SNP



PHILIP STOTT
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Labour won the Scottish Parliament seat of Hamilton, Larkhall, and Stonehouse from the Scottish National Party (SNP) in a by-election on 5 June. Its majority over the SNP was 600. Reform UK came third, a further 900 votes behind. The by-election was called after the death of the sitting SNP MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament).

This was no endorsement of Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar, far less prime minister Keir Starmer. In truth, Labour did even worse than the last time this seat was fought in the 2021 Scottish parliament election.

Labour's share of the vote was down just over 2% in the Hamilton constituency. In the Scottish Parliament election that year, Labour ended up in third place behind the Tories. Compared to the share of the vote in the Westminster election last year in that area, Labour's support fell from 50% to 31.6%.

Vanished is the "mile wide but inch deep" support from the July 2024 Westminster general election, in which Scottish Labour won 37 of the 57 Scottish MPs. It evaporated in the glare of Labour's onslaught on the poor and attacks on public services since Starmer became prime minister.

That Labour managed to defeat the SNP in Hamilton says much more about the brutal reality of SNP rule

at Holyrood over the past 18 years. Cuts, worsening queues for NHS treatment, and a failure to stand up to the Tories, and now Starmer, saw the SNP lose 17% in vote share compared to 2021.

There is no SNP recovery, despite the hatred towards Starmer, who did not visit the constituency once during the campaign. Many of the minority who did vote took the opportunity to pass a verdict on almost two decades of SNP rule.

There is a massive political vacuum in working-class areas of Scotland, and a disgust towards the capitalist political establishment. This was primarily reflected in the 56% who did not vote. Of those that did, just over 7,000 voted for the Reform UK candidate, who polled 26%, just 1,500 votes behind the winning Labour candidate.

Reform makes gains

This was Reform's best result in a Scottish election, and on a par with the recent 26% it won in a council by-election in Clydebank in May. Although it's worth bearing in mind that Reform only won the support of 11% of those entitled to vote.

Rising support for Reform and its right populism poses a real danger for the workers' movement. They at times echo working-class concerns, for example on winter fuel payments and the two-child benefit cap.

But Reform's vote is a desperate attempt by sections of the working class to find a political vehicle for their interests. And the best way

to ensure the defeat of Reform is to build an authoritative left alternative in the shape of a mass workers' party.

The trade union movement in particular must turn to that task. The Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) did not stand a candidate in this by-election in order to avoid a clash with the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) who did stand. The SSP received a modest 1% vote, coming seventh out of 11 candidates.

Working-class alternative essential

What is crystal clear following the by-election is that the need for a working-class, socialist, and trade union electoral alternative is even more urgent. Socialist Party Scotland, Scottish TUSC, and others, including trade union branches, Collective Scotland, etc, have called a conference on 4 October in Glasgow to help prepare that challenge.

We'd urge all those who want to see such an alternative to get in touch and help build it.

• Holyrood 2026 – For a working-class, trade union, and socialist alternative

- Saturday 4 October, 1pm, Renfield Centre, Bath Street, Glasgow

Committee for a Workers' International
FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD
socialistworld.net

Barbourne Works, Worcester Living unsafe for years, now homeless

MARK DAVIES
WORCESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Following a fire risk assessment, the residents of a block of flats, Barbourne Works, in Worcester, were given only an hour to pick up what possessions they could, before being evacuated at 9pm to a local sports centre hall. All 60 residents found alternative accommodation that night. But there is no indication when the necessary remedial work will take place that will allow the residents to return.

20 years

Firefighters identified defects dating back 20 years, defects introduced when the building was converted into flats. These defects involve cladding made of aluminium composite and timber – both are flammable.

Residents are justifiably frustrated with the sudden, significant, and likely lengthy disruption to their lives. But they are also rightful in being angry that they've unknowingly been living in unsafe, potentially life-threatening conditions for many years.

The property is managed by FirstPort. The company claims to cater to the needs of their customers' homes. Surely those needs involve, as a top priority, the home being safe from the risk of fire.

This situation is part of the continued ongoing cladding scandal, exposed by the Grenfell Tower disaster. The government and the construction industry has failed to address it.

£36 million profit

Instead, the company is part of a group that made £36 million profit. FirstPort, and others like it, are ripping residents off, raising service charges.

Property management companies like FirstPort should be brought into public ownership, with no compensation for the fat cats. The Labour government should fund local authorities and fire services to carry out immediate inspections and remedial safety work.

Building management responsibilities could be performed by properly resourced councils, in the interest of our communities and our safety, rather than profit.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

- Send your news, views and criticism, in not more than 150 words, to editors@socialistparty.org.uk
- We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. For legal reasons, we need your full name, address and phone number - but confidentiality will be respected if requested

THE SOCIALIST INBOX

• Cop an ear to Holding The Line

I have been listening to the 15-minute programmes on BBC Radio 4 entitled 'Holding The Line'.

The shows are based on a book, from factual accounts of women involved in the 1983/84 miners' strike in America. The copper miners went on strike and the women in the community, who had never taken action before in their lives, found themselves at the forefront of the strike with picketing, raising money and keeping their families together against the greed of the company owners of the copper mine in the Arizona region.

I would urge all to either listen (catch up on BBC Sounds) or read the book. I for one had no idea that a strike of miners was taking place, at exactly the same time as coal miners in Britain were on strike. Things seemed to be even more difficult in the US as their housing was through the company together with healthcare and then they were hit by a devastating flood.

RUTHIE MCNALLY
WORCESTER

• Pensioners support £15 an hour

Regarding what the minimum wage should be, £15 an hour, as an immediate campaign, would be supported by pensioners.

It is clearly understood by those in the National Pensioners' Convention, most of whom are retired trade unionists, that people cannot afford to live on the state pension at its current level. Given the current triple lock arrangements, £15 an hour for workers would increase pensions.

We should see to it that we do not let workers and pensioners be divided by the establishment. Your feature in the Socialist was very informative and the arguments in favour of £15 an hour very clear.

ADRIAN RIMINGTON
CHESTERFIELD PENSIONERS CONVENTION

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



People's Assembly Against Austerity

Missed opportunity to fight Labour austerity

SOFIA PANDOLFI
SOUTH WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party and Socialist Students members participated in the People's Assembly Against Austerity demonstration in London on 7 June.

The march opposed cuts and austerity implemented by the Labour government. It advocated for greater funding of public services, calling for "welfare, not warfare".

Trump
Socialist Students urged a response to Donald Trump's future visit to Britain. We're calling for walkouts from schools, colleges, and universities, as a way to stand in solidarity with young people and workers internationally.

The small turnout for the demonstration highlighted that the organisers of People's Assembly lack the ability to mobilise, despite being

backed by several trade unions. It shows that the fight against Labour austerity must be led by the unions themselves. A weekend demonstration, organised by the trade union movement in its own name, would be a step forward.

New workers' party

The official organisers of the demo did not call for the urgent need for political representation of the working class. Regardless, the Socialist Party received a positive response calling for this during the protest.

Many people agreed that Labour has proved it does not care for the needs of the majority of society. Through our petition, we called for the need for a new mass workers' party, and the trade unions to take the lead in creating an alternative to the capitalist interests of the main parties.



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	\$ RECEIVED	\$ TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2025	DEADLINE: 30 JUNE 2025
North West	1,766	1,200		147%
South West	2,573	2,100		123%
Wales	2,424	2,400		101%
East Midlands	1,851	2,050		90%
London	4,042	5,000		81%
Southern & SE	1,508	2,400		63%
West Midlands	1,571	2,700		58%
Northern	395	800		49%
Yorkshire	1,268	2,650		48%
Eastern	376	1,300		29%
Other	1,790	2,400		75%
TOTAL	19,566	25,000		78%

Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

• Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate or call 020 8988 8777
• or make cheques payable to Socialist Party,
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



Housing – baby death sparks protest



Protesting outside Notting Hill Genesis. PAUL KERSHAW

PAUL KERSHAW
UNITE THE UNION HOUSING WORKERS BRANCH CHAIR

Akram Mohamed died at four months old in a damp mould-ridden housing association flat. His parents spoke to demonstrators outside Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) head office on 6 June.

'Unfit for human habitation'

An independent report found that NHG had failed in its duty to ensure the property was "fit for human habitation." It found mould in every room, and that defective extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom were "causing excessive airborne moisture."

Protesters expressed their solidarity with the family, and profound condolences.

The parents said Akram struggled with the conditions. They explained that nobody would stay in the flat, because of the conditions. But no one from NHG helped, despite repeated requests for repairs. As Mrs Mohamed

said: "If they just fixed those issues, maybe he had a chance to live."

Other residents described their frustrating struggles to get NHG to do basic repairs. Sometimes delays stretched over months and years.

Took over their life

They described how poor living conditions come to dominate their lives, and impact on mental health. The lack of response that Akram's parents encountered was echoed in the experiences of many protesters.

The protest was jointly organised by Unite the Union housing workers' branch (LE1111) and SHAC (Social Housing Action Campaign). Unite organises workers in a number of housing associations.

Our union members often express frustration that they are pressured to address dampness and mould in the quickest and cheapest way possible, rather than addressing underlying causes. Often, outside contractors – who have no long-term commitment to the service – are used for cheapness.

Numerous speakers said they felt that NHG could no longer be seen as a charity. It had become a money-orientated business.

The mood was serious as protesters marked the death of a baby. But there was a positive sense that they had come together, and would not let NHG off the hook.

Other NHG residents should contact SHAC to get involved in future campaigns.

Shut

The head office was shut on the day of the protest, and there was a notice saying this was because of repairs. Many felt the real reason was to avoid their tenants and residents!

Journalists covering the event commented that they would have to be very careful in reporting the event, as NHG had threatened legal action. Residents felt this typified the approach of bosses at NHG.

• See 'Poor housing a source of simmering anger' at socialistparty.org.uk

Little Owls, Leeds - Our campaign saved four nurseries from Labour privatisation

IAIN DALTON
SAVE LITTLE OWLS NURSERY CAMPAIGNER AND LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Parents from the Save Little Owls nurseries campaign now know that four of the twelve nurseries threatened with privatisation by the Labour council will remain with the local authority. This brings the total number of nurseries the council will definitely retain to 13, out of 21 remaining nursery settings across the city. What else can we save from privatisation?

Workers and parents

Our campaign brought together parents with council trade unionists to demonstrate outside the council chamber, and march outside threatened nurseries. The saved nurseries include Hunslet St Mary's, where our campaign ran a lively demonstration, just ahead of last year's

local elections. I and other parents were interviewed on ITV. Quarry Mount, Parklands, and Hawksworth Wood have also been saved from privatisation.

After initially proposing to close or privatise 15 nurseries last year, this year the Labour council is consulting on 40% cuts to children's centres. Some children's centres are co-located with nurseries.

When consulting on nurseries – a secretive 'market-testing' exercise – the council told parents that there were no proposed changes to children's centres. This reinforces how little trust parents have in a council that is unprepared to stand up and fight for services, not to make more cuts in the future.

This year, we had a clear example of how disastrous private ownership of nurseries can be. Leafield House nursery closed down without

warning in February, after it was reported that children there could be "exposed to a risk of harm". This nursery had been rated in the top 20 out of over 1,000 in Yorkshire, and charged £87 a day in nursery fees.

We've won twice

Our campaign has forced the council back twice. First, delaying the closure of three nurseries from May, until the end of the school year, and now keeping four nurseries retained by the council.

The remaining eight nurseries under threat of privatisation are currently undergoing a tendering process by the council. The council has pledged that these nurseries will stay open, even if a suitable tender is not submitted. The Save Little Owls Nurseries campaign will be keenly following the outcome, and discussing our next steps.

Poland election: Ruling liberal capitalist parties rejected

RÓZA KWIECINSKA

On 1 June 2025, Poles elected a new president. To the surprise of many, the winner was Karol Nawrocki, a previously unknown and unrecognisable figure. He received 50.89% of the vote in the second round, representing the largest right-wing party, PiS (Law and Justice), which lost the parliamentary elections in 2023.

2023 was a significant year for Poland. Voter turnout reached 74.4%. Many voters were motivated by a desire to remove the PiS government, which had been in power for eight years. Although PiS received the most votes (35.38%), it was unable to form a coalition government.

A coalition of four different parties was formed instead, led by Donald Tusk from the largest one KO (Civic Coalition).

This background is important to understand what happened in this year's presidential election. It wasn't that Nawrocki won – it's that the ruling camp and KO lost.



Seeing electoral support for right forces grow, liberal capitalist parties are repeating their policies. Instead of cutting across support for right-wing forces, it has the opposite effect

A year and a half ago, the new government promised change – change in abortion laws (one of the main reasons people voted in 2023), a fight against nepotism, improvements to the healthcare system, environmental protection, and the restoration of the rule of law.

None of that happened. They used the excuse that any laws concerning, for example, civil unions or abortion liberalisation would be vetoed by then-president Andrzej Duda, also from the right-wing PiS party. In reality, they didn't even try to propose such legislation.

The coalition, formed by four pro-capitalist parties, has been continuously arguing, unable to agree even on minor issues, such as making 24 December a public holiday (which was eventually passed after lengthy debate).

The government promised better housing policy but instead proposed subsidies for developers, saying nothing about council housing. Soon, they began filling all positions previously held by PiS loyalists with their own people. They revealed the true



The 2020 protests to liberalise abortion were among the events that have changed the situation in Poland. SILAR/CC

face of liberal governments and the capitalist class – and that's why they lost the presidential election.

One of Poland's most recognisable politicians lost to a man previously unknown, accused in the past of being a hooligan, a pimp, and involved in several other controversies. This reflects how deeply disappointed Poles are with the current government.

No confidence

Following the election results, Donald Tusk filed a motion for a vote of confidence in his government. To win it, the Council of Ministers needs a simple majority – at least 231 votes. The ruling coalition has 242 MPs. If the vote fails, the prime minister is obliged to resign and submit their resignation to the president.

Recently in Germany, we witnessed the collapse of the traffic light coalition, where the government was incapable of formulating a unified policy. Although there's no indication of such a collapse in Poland yet, considering the state of the current government, it's not impossible that it could follow the same path.

There, too, it was the far-right AfD that benefited from the collapse.

In the first round of the Polish presidential election, Sławomir Mentzen from the far-right party Konfederacja was placed third. His campaign slogans included "Stop Leftist Ideology", "No to Polish Troops in Ukraine", and "Low and Simple Taxes".

In fourth place, likely the biggest surprise of the election, was Grzegorz Braun – an extreme nationalist and anti-Semite receiving 6%.

Combined with Nawrocki's victory, right-wing parties received 50% of the vote in the first round. As we see across many European countries, the electoral support for the right is rising. This is a direct result of ruling liberal capitalist parties failing to deliver meaningful change.



With a new generation coming of age, interest in the left is slowly growing

Increasingly, seeing electoral support for right forces grow, liberal capitalist parties are beginning to repeat their policies. For example, in March, the Polish government temporarily suspended the right of migrants to enter from Belarus. However, far from the intended effect of cutting across support for right-wing forces, it has the opposite effect.

While the two major parties in Poland are still holding on, these elections demonstrate a deepening polarisation. Like in the UK, where the protest vote benefited Nigel Farage's Reform UK, in Poland too, the

winners were the right-wing parties positioning themselves as 'anti-establishment'. Their success shows the urgent need for a party that truly represents working-class people.

The elections revealed what Polish voters are most concerned about: affordable homes and decent paying jobs, proper health care and education, and war with Russia. We also saw the issues on which the right whip up voters' fears, such as illegal immigration.

No solutions

However, the right-wing parties offer no solutions, just as the liberal capitalist ones don't. None have any genuine interest in improving the lives of working-class people.

Left-wing parties have struggled to grow and make electoral gains, there has been no viable socialist alternative. Poland's post-Stalinist history and the influence of the catholic church have been factors. However, with a new generation coming of age, interest in the left is slowly growing.

In the first round of this year's presidential elections, among voters aged 18–29, the most popular candidate was Mentzen from the far-right Confederation, with 36.1% support.

Second was Adrian Zandberg, with 19.7% of young voters' support. Zandberg received around 5% of the overall vote – a stable result. He did not endorse either candidate in the second round.

He ran as the candidate of Razem

("Together") currently the furthest left party in Poland. Until recently, Razem was part of The Lewica ("The Left") coalition, which is also part of the current liberal capitalist government.

After the 2023 elections, Razem chose to remain in the coalition but not to join the government. It was offered ministerial positions but no budget to fulfil its key promises, such as building council housing. Its decision to refuse government positions sparked controversy – it was the first time it had a chance to hold power, and it didn't take it.

However, it was a principled decision not to take positions just for the sake of power which allowed Razem to criticise the government from the left. By leaving "the Left" they parted ways with the ruling government. Zandberg has also announced that Razem's five MPs will vote against Donald Tusk's vote of confidence.

The problem for the left in Poland is that it appeals more to young, liberal people from larger cities, for whom issues regarding LGBTQ+ rights or abortion are more important than social, housing, or workers' issues. Of course, this is not to discredit these social problems. Poland is a country whose legislation treats LGBTQ+ individuals the worst in the entire European Union, and the fight for abortion rights has been ongoing for many years. However, equality views should go hand in hand with a genuine desire to change the system.



The elections revealed what Polish voters are most concerned about: affordable homes and decent paying jobs, proper health care and education, and war with Russia

Razem has a chance to do that. Zandberg focused his campaign on healthcare (calling for 8% of GDP to be spent on it), the housing crisis, and respect for minorities in Poland. It needs to build a base of support among the working class by clearly presenting a programme that can and deliver for the working class.

In recent German elections, we witnessed the rise of AfD, but also significant gains for the left party Die Linke, which gained over two million more votes than in the previous federal election in 2021. This shows a growing support for left politics.

The next general election in Poland will be held in 2027. For now, a right-wing coalition of PiS and Confederation seems the most likely scenario. Razem has two years to focus on campaigning and class struggle.

If trade unions, migrant organisations, and other social and protest movements unite to resist the government's inevitable attacks, both in workplaces and on the streets, they could lay the foundation for a new mass political force. Razem has the potential to help, but only if it roots itself in workers' and youth struggles and commits to a bold, socialist programme of action.

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

Solidarity with workers and youth in California

WALK OUT AGAINST TRUMP



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

SOCIALIST STUDENTS STATEMENT

Socialist Students stands in solidarity with workers and young people in the US, facing down President Donald Trump's state repression. We are organising students at schools, colleges and unis to walk out against Trump on Day X - the day Trump visits parliament, on the invitation of Starmer and the king.

Protests have erupted in Los Angeles, California against the deportation of migrants, under the orders of Trump, by immigration authority ICE. The Trump administration has sent in the National Guard, a

military force, to put down protests. Workers and young people have faced tear gas, rubber bullets and explosives from state forces.

Hypocritically, both Trump and Democratic Governor of California Gavin Newsom have called for an end to violence, while forces under their instructions carry out acts of brutality.

During the protests, David Huerta, President of California's largest trade union, the Service Employees International Union California (SEIU), was arrested. The union is currently organising a strike of 55,000 LA county workers.

Trump and other capitalist

politicians want to cut across a united working-class fightback. With nothing positive to offer working-class and young people, Trump's policies are aimed at whipping up division - carrying out cuts and attacking the rights of women, trans people, migrants and others.

These events show that his attacks will provoke protests, in the US and internationally.

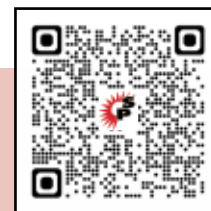
When Trump comes to visit Britain, we are ready to show we stand with the working class in the US and internationally, not with Starmer's Labour government rolling out the red carpet for him.

It's important we start organising

and building for the walkouts now so that, the moment Trump steps foot in Britain, we can have a united show of strength. To get involved and help us prepare for the walkouts, get involved and join Socialist

Students. Help us build a socialist alternative to capitalist chaos.

• **Read more on pages 10-11**



Join the walkout on Day X

JOIN socialist students

- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8761**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07515 921699**

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 12



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