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the Socialist

Issue 1326

19-25 June 2025

formerly **Militant**

END CAPITALIST WARS

FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

Israeli state terror looms over the Middle East.

The Israeli state's calculated attack on Iran's political and military leaders, and nuclear scientists and facilities, is accompanied by hundreds of civilian casualties and further escalation to come.

And while the eyes of the world are drawn, in fear, to the front with Iran, brutal genocidal slaughter continues against Palestinians. More people desperate for food are shot dead in cold blood.

Benjamin Netanyahu's Israeli government is coldly executing its dangerous escalation. It does so with the backing of US and Western imperialism.

Trump's US administration signed off \$12 billion of military assistance to Israel in March and is considering using its own more powerful weapons against Iran. Mealy-mouthed words of opposition from other Western capitalist leaders attempt to distort reality. Keir Starmer's Labour government has continued to send arms to Israel.

Behind differences about how to avoid

provoking mass struggles and economic shocks, Western capitalist leaders are united in their support for the Israeli capitalist state for their geopolitical and profit interests in the Middle East.

Ultimately, the primary concern of the capitalist leaders in Israel, Iran, the US, Britain and elsewhere, is what is in the interests of the capitalist bosses, not the safety and wellbeing of ordinary people. As well as inflicting massive death and destruction on Iran, Netanyahu's offensive has done nothing to make ordinary Israelis safer. On the contrary, civilians have been killed by Iran's retaliatory strikes and tensions are stoked for future conflicts. Starmer's military spending increase too will only make the world a more dangerous place.

The capitalist system is in decline and crisis, with capitalist bosses and capitalist nation states competing for power and profit. The consequence is conflict and war.

It is also a system of exploitation and oppression. The consequence is class struggle.

In recent history, ordinary Israelis have

taken part in huge protests, including general strike action against the Netanyahu regime, Iran's theocratic regime has faced mass uprisings and strikes. The ruling capitalist classes' attempts to use war nationalism to cut across workers' struggle can have an effect, but only temporarily, and deepening the conditions that will provoke future eruptions.

For workers and young people in Britain, the task is to build mass struggle, including developing the huge anti-war protest movement, and taking steps towards a mass working-class political alternative to Starmer's Labour.

To end poverty and war means fighting for socialist change internationally, to take the wealth and resources out of the hands of the super-rich capitalist bosses so it can be put to use as part of a democratic plan to meet the needs of all.

If you want to help us in that struggle, join the Socialist Party today.

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

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

Bristol's sky-high rents: we need council housing and rent controls

ANNABEL GRIFFITHS
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Bristol has become the most expensive city to rent in outside of London. The average private rent is now £1,745 a month, according to Office for National Statistics figures.

It has become a rarity to speak to someone living in Bristol who hasn't encountered either rats living in their walls, or black mould in their home, despite paying eye-watering amounts for their rent. Private landlords are increasingly detached from their tenants and rarely seem to care. People are left feeling alone and helpless. Student housing is absolutely no better - with astronomical monthly rates, shockingly poor-quality standards and useless landlords.

Undoubtedly there is a serious housing crisis in Bristol. The number of households in temporary accommodation has more than doubled in the years since the pandemic and on any given night you will have 70 people at the very least sleeping on the streets, from data collected by Housing Matters.

Bristol elected a Green council last year, after years of the Labour Party running it. Residents hoped for an alternative to the shameful job that the Labour council was doing. Shortly after this election, the Greens put forward an outrageous £51 million cuts package, which included selling off 5,000 council houses, attacked council tax support and cut domestic



Bristol council housing LYDIASHININGBRIGHTLY/CC

abuse services. After public outrage and pressure, the Greens backtracked on a couple of proposals, including reducing the number of council houses to be sold.

Green cuts

But without a strategy on how to fight for the people of Bristol, this backtracking only kicked the can down the road. The Greens say they have 'no choice' but to make cuts, but we say they absolutely do have a choice: to oppose the cuts and build a real fightback against the government's council funding crisis. Refusing to implement the cuts and building a mass working-class campaign to demand the financial resources to fund our city.

That the Greens would rather implement cuts than fight to fund housing and services we need shows they are not a party with the interests of the working class at heart.

Socialist Party members fight for councils to stop the cuts, building a mass working-class campaign involving local unions and communities. In its 2024 General Election manifesto, the Green Party called for rent controls. What is to stop the Green Bristol council setting up a compulsory register of landlords, subjecting properties to regular inspection and enforcing repairs? Rents could be capped at an affordable rate too. To solve the housing crisis, the council could implement mass council house building and maintenance programmes. This could ensure good quality, secure and affordable housing for all.

Another decade of council tax hikes? No council tax rises! No cuts!



Campaigning in Bradford against council tax hike IAIN DALTON

KERI ANDREWS
ALDERSHOT AND NORTH HAMPSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

A 5% rise in council tax every year for a decade is baked into Labour's spending plans for local government, it emerged in the spending review.

Next year councils will raise a total over £50 billion, equivalent to £1,740 per household - if councils decide again to agree with the Labour government and make us pay more for less.

Councils can raise tax above the 5% cap if local referendums are held or a rise is approved by central government. This year, the government approved rises in Bradford (10%), Newham (9%), Windsor and Maidenhead (9%), Birmingham (7.5%), Somerset (7.5%), and Trafford (7.5%) - without referendums.

Increased revenue for councils should be assigned to essential public and social services. The reality is, however, that these services will continue to have funding cut. Councils saw central government funding slashed by Tory austerity in 2010. Since, accompanying huge cuts, councils have been plugging the gap by hiking taxes. In Hampshire, for example, Band D properties will pay £2,212.83 a year in 2025-26.

By the end of the next three years, council funding will still be well below what it was in 2010.

The Socialist Party has campaigned

against the ever-growing pressure on the working class to cover public funding voids and stood against all cuts. For example, our members supported protests in Bradford against the 10% council tax rise this Spring. Campaigning against that and cut-backs by the council forced a U-turn on cuts to school bus services.

Commenting on the spending review, Christina McAnea, Unison general secretary, said: "Extra cash will always be gratefully received by hard-pressed councils. But their financial situation is so dire, it'll take much more than £3.4 billion to put them back on track."

What she didn't say is that Unison local government group has a policy that councils should resist cuts by setting no-cuts budgets, and campaign for central government for funding.

We demand no council tax rises and no cuts. A council taking that approach, including mobilising support from the trade unions and working-class communities, would win huge support and could put huge pressure on Starmer's Labour government that is already being forced to do U-turns.

After 14 years of austerity, people have had enough. Rather than billions on military spending, funding should be going on local services. We need a new workers' party to stand against Starmer's Labour, demanding the super-rich is made to pay instead.

NHS 'spending'



NHS strikers in Nottingham, June 2025 GARY FREEMAN

Ambulance service worker: 'On the ground the NHS still faces cuts'

GARETH BROMHALL
GMB REP IN NHS

Reeves's recent spending review announcement has done little to change the situation on the ground in the NHS.

For GMB members in ambulance services and some health boards, a consultative ballot is being run on the 3.6% pay imposition; other unions are doing the same.

The mood from our members across contact centres and

ambulance stations in Wales, as we understand from the dialogue we've had, is overwhelmingly to reject. The anger is palpable.

Starmer, Streeking and Reeves are presiding over the further degradation of our NHS and we know that what's needed is: restorative pay for all staff, to make up for the loss we have had in the past 15 years, and real investment in infrastructure and systems under proper democratic workers' control and management, to ensure we have an NHS fit for purpose.

4% 'efficiency savings'

target is set by the government, this is more than four times the NHS's historical rate of productivity growth (0.9%)

3-4% rising costs

every year as a consequence of increasing needs, anything less results in a managed decline in services. A large proportion of the government's 3% increase will go towards much-needed pay rises for staff, and comes with obligations for 'reform' ie privatisation.

Crumbling hospitals

the NHS faced a capital spending backlog of £13.8 billion by the time the Tories departed. After a brief boost for capital spending announced in the autumn, the spending review leaves the capital budget flatlining from 2026.

Donate so we can get our socialist message out

CHRIS NEWBY
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

In a world full of turmoil, it is vital that we get out a clear socialist message as widely as possible. We do this through the posters, placards, and leaflets that we produce, and use on our regular Socialist Party campaign stalls.

But to produce this material, we need to raise finances. We have no rich backers, and rely on donations from people like you, who buy the Socialist.

In Tower Hamlets Socialist Party in east London, we plan our fundraising campaign several weeks before the start of the new 'fighting fund' quarter.

We have increased the amount of regular campaign activity, to reach a wider number of people, but also to give more of our members and supporters the opportunity to take part.

We sell the Socialist paper at our local hospital on a Thursday morning, at a local tube station early Friday evening, and a campaign stall on a Saturday lunchtime. We are hoping to add another weekly station Socialist paper sale on a Monday morning.

We regularly raise between £10 and £20 per week from these activities. We also plan extra fundraising

events to make sure we smash our target.

We had a successful 'radicals and revolutionaries' walk around Tower Hamlets, which raised £96, and a clothes party, together with Camden and Haringey Socialist Party, which raised over £150.

We really value the posters and leaflets that the Socialist Party produces. Our poster around the borough has been successful in advertising our local meetings and campaign activity.

Several people stop to buy our Socialist paper and donate to the fighting fund, because they have seen our posters. Several people have come to our regular meetings after seeing our posters. Some have joined the Socialist Party.

We are planning a Marx walk in central London, a BBQ, and a car boot sale, alongside our regular campaign stalls. We are also planning for a day-long campaign stalls at Queen Mary University freshers fair in September.

Can you help out on any of the local Socialist Party campaign activity in your area? Or is there any fundraising you can do to make sure the Socialist Party smashes our fighting fund target?



LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

AREA	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2025		30 JUNE 2025	
	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET		%
North West	2,126	1,200		177%
South West	2,728	2,100		130%
Wales	2,495	2,400		104%
East Midlands	2,005	2,050		98%
London	4,260	5,000		85%
Southern & SE	1,644	2,400		69%
West Midlands	1,631	2,700		60%
Northern	405	800		51%
Yorkshire	1,274	2,650		48%
Eastern	376	800	29%	
Other	2,658	2,400		111%
TOTAL	21,602	25,000		86%

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Why go to the National Shop Stewards Network conference?

MARCO TESEI
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The anger is out there and mounting. At the cruel attacks on pensioners and disabled people; at the continuing slashing of public services; at the thousands of looming job cuts in the NHS, the civil service, universities and elsewhere. At a Labour council in Birmingham – fully supported by a Labour government at Westminster – attempting to slash bin workers' wages by £8,000. For many, life is even worse than under the Tories!

My own sector, Further Education (FE), is on its knees: crumbling infrastructure, wages worth 35% less than fifteen years ago, unsustainable workloads because of understaffing. And a recent further cut, thank you Chancellor Reeves, of up to 6% to our adult education funding.

There's a real feeling that we're reaching a crisis point. Starmer is clearly hell-bent on protecting the bosses and their system in a context of global turmoil. But we, the workers in this system, cannot and will not endure any more squeezing to prop it all up for them. Enough!

What can we do? Simple: get organised to resist and fight back! We have our trade unions with six and a half million members. If we link up between branches and between unions, together we can resist Starmer and Reeves!

At the moment, in my workplace, University and College Union (UCU) branch reps are working hard to get members' votes out in a consultative ballot for national strike action in the autumn. We're also liaising with other FE colleges in building nationwide sector support for the fightback.

But we're aware much more is necessary. If we want to win against this government, we need to join forces with reps in other unions, as well as of course with the Birmingham bin worker strikers, to build a truly united, mass workers' offensive. We need to build towards a national all-union demonstration against austerity and war, and prepare for coordinated national strike action.

Reps, union members, young people - let's go to the NSSN conference!



Marco Tessei, UCU national exec, is attending NSSN conference

nationalshop
stewardsnetwork

SATURDAY 5 JULY, 11AM-4.30PM
CONWAY HALL, LONDON WC1R 4RL
Conference 2025

**PREPARING TO TAKE ON
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: Eddie Dempsey RMT General Secretary, Steve Gillan POA General Secretary, Steve Wright FBU General Secretary, Annoesjka Valent NAO 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

Blockading in support of Birmingham bin strike

WILLIAM DOWNS
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Supporters of the Birmingham bin strikers, including members of the Socialist Party, successfully carried out a blockade in the Tyseley area. Meeting discreetly in Small Heath, activists moved swiftly to block vehicles transporting waste into the nearby incinerator, and council bin lorries attempting to leave, causing

major disruption to council operations. The blockade was the first to target an external site still receiving or processing council waste during the ongoing strike.

This surprise action sent a strong message to Birmingham City Council that workers and communities will not tolerate the use of scab labour or backdoor strike-breaking tactics. The blockade demonstrated how coordinated solidarity action

can lift the mood of picket lines and increase pressure on the council.

There is real potential for similar actions across the city, following the successful blocking of crews working for scab company Tom White, owned by Coventry City Council. Local trade union branches could mobilise and get workers in other trade unions down to future blockades. Solidarity and escalation are essential to win this fight.



Unite protest, including Birmingham bin workers, demanding council funding outside Parliament JAMES IVENS

OSCAR PARRY
CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Unite the Union organised a protest outside parliament on 16 June as part of its Fair Funding Now campaign for local government. Council workers from across the UK attended, including a double-decker bus full of Birmingham bin workers, who have been taking all-out strike action for months against a Labour-run council.

The protest takes place as councils are in crisis after years of severe cuts to public services and jobs. UK local authorities were £122 billion in debt as of 2024. Meanwhile, the Local Government Association estimates that councils will still face a funding gap of up to £8 billion by 2028-29 and 43% of England's 317 councils are at risk of bankruptcy.

Labour

Socialist Party members at the protest gave out leaflets advertising the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference taking place on 5 July in Conway Hall, London, with the title: "Preparing to take on Starmer and the bosses". A running theme of the protest was massive anger at the Labour government. The Birmingham bin workers who spoke on the platform were quick to point out that Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner is backing Birmingham Labour council cutting services, including 600 jobs, raising council tax 25% over the next two years, and continuing to work with 'commissioners'

appointed by Tory Michael Gove, who can claim expenses of £1,100 a day while decimating public services.

The bin workers are on strike as the Labour council attempts to abolish a 'grade 3' role, which will lead to a pay cut of up to £8,000 for those workers affected, this was condemned as 'fire and rehire by any other name' from the platform.

'We're coming for you'

The general secretary of Unite, Sharon Graham, said: "If you are a hostile employer, expect Unite to come for you, no matter the colour of your rossette." Bin workers didn't mince their words though. "Keir Starmer is a wanker" was the most popular chant of the day, despite attempts by union organisers to offer more neutral alternatives. And almost everyone at the protest signed the petition launched by 25 current and former trade union national executive members from eleven unions titled: "Time for trade unions to take the lead in building a new working-class party" showing how this group of fighting workers isn't only angry but recognises the need for its own voice.

It is Unite official policy, long fought for by Socialist Party members in the union, to call on councils to set no-cuts budgets, using reserves to buy time to build a national campaign to demand more funding. The trade unions should be preparing now to stand their own candidates fighting against cuts and for fully funded services, including in the May 2026 council elections.



BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Call it austerity or not, it's cuts for us and money for the bosses

Socialist Party
WHAT WE THINK

What should workers make of Labour's 11 June Spending Review, this government's third 'fiscal event' in its less than year-long life?

Well, it wasn't exactly the same as what the Tories have been serving up since 2010, but it comes from the same cuts menu. As the right-wing capitalist thinktank the Institute for Fiscal Studies put it, on this occasion correctly, Rachel Reeves's speech "Did not appear to be a serious effort to provide any useful information to anybody". What speech in parliament by a capitalist politician is?

For workers everywhere, life under Starmer's Labour will, like it has since Labour came into office, feel like austerity.

Governmental department spending is set to grow slower in this parliament (2.3% in real terms from 2024-2030) than in the last one (3.6% from 2019-24), and those averages are skewed by Starmer's splurge on military spending. Eight government departments will have seen their budgets cut by the end of this parliament.

Responding immediately to the budget, the GMB union put out a statement in which its National Secretary said: "As ever, the proof will be in the pudding as to whether this is enough money - and if it ends up in the right places".

Smoke and mirrors

Unfortunately this, like statements from other union leaders in response, does not cut through Reeves's smoke and mirrors. From workers' perspective, it is not enough money and it will not end up in the right places (in our services and our pay packets). For the hundreds of thousands of workers in local government, the NHS and education, there will be further cuts, privatisation and redundancies.

According to the local government association, a cross-party organisation representing local councils: "All councils will remain under severe financial pressure. Many will continue to have to increase council tax bills to try and protect services but still need to make further cutbacks". Future attacks like those made by Birmingham Labour council to slash bin workers' pay by £8,000 a year are coming.

The Kings Fund, an independent think tank, said of Reeves's "injection of funding to get the NHS back on its feet", "It is hard to see how all the things she mentions - faster ambulance times, more GP appointments, adequate mental health services, and more - can be met by this settlement



Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer - this is cuts and austerity by Labour UK PARLIAMENT/MARIA UNGER/CC



Workers are fighting back - Nottingham hospital staff striking against job cuts GARY FREEMAN

alone, particularly when large parts of this additional funding will be absorbed by rising costs, such as the higher cost of medicines which are currently being negotiated, and staff pay deals."

The reality is that 3% for day-to-day NHS spending is well below the pre-2008 historical average of 4.3%, and comes attached to 'reforms' and productivity improvements - which in reality means further privatisation and attacks on workers' terms and conditions. NHS England has also been scrapped.

In education, the government talks about a 1.1% rise in per-pupil funding in schools, but only on the basis that pupil numbers are falling. Once the cost of expanding free school meals to all those whose parents claim Universal Credit is factored in, it is a real-terms freeze, when costs for schools are rising higher than inflation. To top it off there is a £5 billion shortfall in funding for children

with special educational needs and disabilities. There is nothing to address the huge financial crisis gripping universities where thousands already face redundancy.

To get a real assessment of in whose interests these Spending Review announcements were made, look at how the capitalists responded. Their main mouthpiece in the British press, the Financial Times (FT), was perfectly happy, so too were the capitalist markets.

Sick British capitalism

Government borrowing costs are on a par with where they were at the time of Liz Truss's budget, and the debt-to-GDP ratio of over 100% is up and set to grow further, reflecting the sickness of capitalism globally and the particular weaknesses of Britain. But the 'bond vigilantes' who came for Truss are, for now, prepared to accept Reeves's spending because of investors' confidence that Labour is

reliably governing in their interests and prepared to make the working class pay.

The FT welcomes "a much-needed package of over £100 billion in public investment" because of where that money is destined to end up.

For example, the government announced £39 billion investment in affordable housing over ten years. Does that mean hundreds of thousands of council homes to start to shrink the 1.3 million household-long council housing waiting lists? Absolutely not.

Inside Housing, a housing industry website, brought together over a dozen statements from big property developers, corporate housing associations and real estate bosses, all welcoming the money. Because that money will be given in grants to private developers to build, not genuinely affordable housing at 'social rent', but homes for rent at an unaffordable 80% of market rent as well

as 'shared-ownership' schemes. And, the kicker for the bosses, social rent will rise 1% above inflation every year for a decade.

That £39 billion is not going to address the housing crisis, bring down house prices or sky-high rents, it's going to the profiteering housing bosses.

The same model of 'public-private partnership' runs through all of Labour's investment plans, which are also actually increasing at a slower rate than under the last Tory government. It's the same model that has led to vast sums being spent on HS2, boosting the profits of private investors; likewise the spiralling costs of the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station now set to be repeated at Sizewell C in Suffolk.

Rachel Reeves says she is "Laser-focused on kickstarting economic growth". But 24 hours after her statement in the House of Commons, it was revealed that the economy shrank by 0.3% in April; unemployment is rising too.

Reeves's borrowing is predicated on projections for economic growth from the Office for Budget Responsibility. It has made 21 since 2010 that we know the outcome of, all but one were overly optimistic. The extremely modest growth predictions, by historical standards, are unlikely to be met, and that is without any economic shocks, which British capitalism is especially vulnerable to in an increasingly volatile world. For example, the effects of rising oil prices following an escalation of conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Iran.

Status quo spending

For the working class, this spending review is not good. But it is as good as it is going to get without a fight. Even with future crises set aside, this spending is frontloaded until April 2026 after which "things get tighter" (IFS). So, for example, there is no funding there in future years to begin to address the decades-long real terms cuts to the pay of workers in the health service and education.

Socialist Party members in the trade unions are fighting for Labour's inadequate and largely unfunded pay offers to be rejected and for strike ballots on pay to be linked to the question of funding. Unquestionably, sections of the trade union leaders will want to use Labour's spending headlines to try to avoid going into battle against the government. Equally, members know, especially in public services, what reality is. As well, unintentionally, Labour's big-spender headlines, can spur workers to demand their share.

Britain was ravaged by Tory austerity for over a decade, during which public services were trashed and workers' share of the wealth in society shrunk. As a consequence, the Tories were smashed. That status quo remains. As a consequence, Labour will face the same working-class anger.

Austerity or not, this Labour government is a capitalist one in a period of capitalist crisis, and so it is continuing to make the working class pay while a minority of super-rich capitalist bosses enrich themselves. Socialist change is needed, and a mass working-class political opposition to Starmer's Labour as part of the fight for it.

Right win Unison NEC – A socialist, fighting programme is needed more than ever as massive battles loom

HUGO PIERRE
FORMER UNISON NEC MEMBER

This year's Unison National Executive Council (NEC) elections result will be seen as a setback for many activists who want to see Unison start a fightback against Keir Starmer's Labour government. Starmer's spending plans will continue Tory austerity, leading to more cuts and job losses, especially in public services where Unison members pay a key role.

In the 2021 elections, members kicked out the right wing that had dominated Unison since its inception, and that had failed to fight a decade of savage Tory austerity. A majority was won by the 'Time For Real Change' grouping (TFRC), which for the last two years was held narrowly. Now the right has won back control of the NEC.

The union machine, and the general secretary Christina McAnea, are backers of Starmer's Labour. Socialist Party members warned from the start that they would remain an obstacle to members taking action which TFRC would have to confront.

We argued for a serious fighting programme to build up members' confidence to fight after years of right-wing leadership, in all sectors of the union. That would have to include standing up to Labour councils passing on Tory cuts and instead demand no-cuts budgets, and building a national campaign against cuts, privatisation and job losses instead of leaving branches to fight alone.

However, while the TFRC-led NEC has made some changes that have brought some more members into action, it has not been sufficient to renew the base of the union.

Members need to see a fight

The battle at the top of the union between the general secretary and the TFRC-led NEC unfortunately was mainly restricted to internal and democratic matters that, while important, were never the top priority for members. On the issues that members were most concerned about – the devastation of local government funding, the crisis in the NHS, the 20%+ loss in real pay – there appeared to be little difference between the TFRC and the general secretary.

Campaigns to fight for migrant workers' rights and for re-banding of groups of healthcare assistants have been taken up patchily across the union. But members in the vast majority of sectors did not win ballot turnout levels high enough to take action during the 2022-23 strike wave, to fight for pay restoration back to 2010 levels during the cost-of-living crisis.

Some of the unions that fought, where members experienced the effectiveness of national strike action, saw an increase in their activist layer as well as general membership. The only group of Unison members in action was ambulance workers; consolidated by mass action of nurses, junior doctors and consultants, health workers won a significant pay rise.



In this year's NEC elections, the Socialist Party made an electoral agreement with TFRC as part of a united left challenge to the right wing, while standing on our programme centred on militant industrial action and the need for a pro-worker political alternative to Starmer's Labour.

Socialist Party candidates

Seven Socialist Party members stood as NEC candidates, and two were elected, one more than last time, with Jim McFarlane (Scotland general seat) rejoining April Ashley (Black members' female seat).

Scotland has seen significant strike action on pay in local government. Jim played a major role in mobilising for this, and opposed the leadership calling off action when more could have been won. This led to the defeat of all but one of the pro-McAnea 'Members Together' candidates.

April was 8,000 votes ahead of the other candidates. There were some very close results, with Eve Miller only losing out by 150 votes in the West Midlands reserved seat.

The majority of our members standing in the election were new activists to the union and their election addresses reflected a new layer of younger activists articulating the anger of young people in work and a programme to fight for change. One was Ellie Waple, a proud trans woman who was attacked in the right-wing press for standing in a women's seat following the Supreme Court ruling.

TFRC, however, only regained 25 seats out of 32 they held previously. The right-wing grouping 'Members Together', plus so-called independents who vote as a bloc with the right wing, gained enough to give them an overall majority on the NEC.

The Socialist Party backed an independent socialist candidate, James Robinson, in the North West. Three others were elected from the slate he stood on, as members expressed

their frustration at the TFRC leadership. No right-wing candidates stood there as they would have been roundly defeated.

The overall result, based on possibly the lowest national turnout for the elections of 4.8%, shows a widespread disillusionment in the union's ability to fight campaigns, even among the activist layer. No doubt there is also a layer of members hoping, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that Labour will deliver enough to stave off a major crisis in health, local government and the other public and private services the union organises in.

This victory for 'Members Together', which was not without significant losses on their side, will prove hollow over the coming period, as the crisis in public services intensifies and members look for a way to fight back.

The general secretary election, due to take place before the end of this year, will be another testing ground for where our union is going. In the last two elections, the winner has not polled over 50% of the vote.

A bold campaign as a call to action for Unison members to organise and take on Starmer's Labour could energise new layers within the union. Explaining a strategy which would include fighting for pay restoration and a minimum of £15 an hour, for needs budgets in local councils and full funding from Starmer's Labour, a fully funded NHS free from privatisation, and nationalisation of the utilities, would raise confidence that we could win. The call for a trade union-based new mass working-class party would also get an echo amongst the most conscious layer that could drive such a campaign to victory.

Young socialists report from Unison Local Government Conference

SAM CHURCH AND SAFFY HILL-CHAMBERS
YOUNG MEMBER DELEGATES FROM SURREY
COUNTY UNISON BRANCH, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Unison's Local Government Conference was attended by up to 20 Socialist Party members, who were the ones offering a genuine alternative to the issues facing local government across the debates, and conference was receptive to the concrete alternatives put forward.

In her speech, Unison general secretary Christina McAnea said that the Labour government "gets" local government and that there is "no magic wand" to fix funding for local services.

What we need is socialist policies, not imaginary magic solutions! Local government needs funding and staffing. The money is there – the rich are getting richer – what we need is councillors and MPs from the working class and trade unions who will fight to represent the needs of the people instead of the rich and big business.

Angie Waller from Kirklees told conference we need local campaigns against cuts. We need no-cuts budgets and a national fight by the union too, to win the funding.

Socialist Party members Brian Debus from Hackney, and April Ashley, recently re-elected onto Unison's NEC, highlighted the current strike action being undertaken by the Birmingham bin workers. They also pointed to the strike-breaking action that is being carried out by the Labour council with the government and Deputy Prime Minister and former Unison NEC member Angela Rayner behind them – to support and applause from the conference floor. Unison members must build solidarity.

Brian also intervened on a motion on pay to state that claims should be in with employers by November,

with balloting for strike action in mid-January if no reply has been received, "so members believe we're serious about pay". The current process means workers are not getting an offer from the employers until after the claim should be resolved, with strike ballots only happening six months after the fact!

Unison still backs the Labour Party despite the Labour government's failure to deliver for working-class people, including its flagship pledges such as the promise of a National Care Service. Our delegates are calling out this catastrophe and proposing alternatives. Sam Church from Surrey, on the subject of AI's impact on local government workers, said: "The only true way to protect jobs is to have a true workers' party in government."

Saffy Hill-Chambers called for a mass demonstration – unions have to lead the fight against austerity and against attacks on migrant workers. Catherine Clarke from Southampton spoke passionately about the need to include outsourced school caterers and cleaners in any new national negotiating body. National Executive Council (NEC) candidate Ellie Waple spoke on trans rights.

The mood for change at Local Government Conference was strong, with Socialist Party members leading the charge, and setting the stage for National Delegate Conference (which began as we went to press).



RMT AGM: Fighting strategy needed to smash pay restraint Fight for socialist nationalisation

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN THE RMT

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the RMT transport union meets as Starmer's Labour government nears its first anniversary in office. However, economic power remains in the hands of the bosses, and it's clear that Starmer's starting point is to represent their interests, not those of workers.

Some may try to point to the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR) as contrary evidence to this assessment. But the RMT must face up to the reality of what this means. Delegates will be correctly considering the implications of GBR for our members' jobs, pay and conditions, as individual Train Operating Companies (TOCs) are absorbed into public ownership and Network Rail becomes part of a new national railway company.

RMT has campaigned for a nationalised railway and socialists welcome the end of the firms which have done little more than suck profits out of the system. However, profitable freight operations and parasitic rolling stock leasing companies remain in private hands.

And if the TOCs aren't nationalised on a socialist basis, with democratic workers' control and management, as part of an integrated publicly owned transport network, they will still be run in the interests of the capitalists, at the expense of rail workers and the wider working-class transport users.

As the Covid pandemic and soaring inflation becomes a distant memory, our wages continue to lag behind where we should be.

It is concerning that we have just agreed a pay deal with Network Rail (NR) which meets RPI inflation yet has been partly paid for through productivity.

The referendum was put out



RMT members on strike in 2022. NICK HART

without a recommendation and showed a small majority in favour of acceptance.

Had the National Executive Committee (NEC) decided to put the offer out with a recommendation to reject, alongside a fighting strategy to win, the outcome could have been very different.

A passive 'make your own mind up' approach has been apparent in several recent NR pay referendums and many members are wondering why the leadership is reluctant to give a lead. If members do not feel there is a fighting strategy from the leadership, is it any wonder some vote to accept a poor offer?

The result of the NR referendum has implications beyond our NR members and sets a low benchmark for our pay talks with the TOCs, London Underground and other employers.

RMT must fight attempts by the Labour government to attack our jobs, pay and conditions in order to

cut spending and satisfy the bond markets.

When our members rightly reject any pay offer from an employer which requires us to give up terms and conditions, those employers will point to the NR deal and ask how we can justify rejection since we agreed to it at NR.

RMT must set out a strategy of fighting for inflation-proof pay deals for our members and build a campaign to win. Members will only vote for something better if they see a leadership with a winning strategy and which is prepared to fight the bosses for it.

Bob Crow's approach

When Mick Lynch announced his retirement six months ago, Socialist Party members in the RMT said: "The election of a new general secretary comes at a critical time, as RMT members and the wider working class face up to the reality of a pro-capitalist Labour government

attempting to force through even more austerity."

With a new general secretary, Eddie Dempsey, in place for three months, this AGM is now an opportunity to prepare for the fight ahead, including the crucial discussion of how we can reverse the steps back we have taken from the approach of former general secretary, the late Bob Crow.

The recent U-turns by the Labour government are measly but they have been forced out of Starmer by the anger of working-class people. The unions, and the RMT in particular, must take the lead in building an industrial and political opposition to this big business government.

The RMT has a strong record of leading on working-class political representation. Our forebears founded the Labour Party over 120 years ago to fight for a socialist alternative to the Liberal Party. Under Bob Crow's leadership, the RMT became the first trade union to play a leading

role in offering a working-class political alternative to Labour, with No2EU in 2009 and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) from 2010 to 2022.

Then, in both Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership elections, we were the second biggest donors to his leadership campaign, behind only the 1.4 million-strong Unite. However, Jeremy Corbyn has been driven out of Labour and the pro-capitalist wing are more firmly in the driving seat than ever. We need a new workers' party.

Half a million people signed up to Enough is Enough when it was launched by Mick Lynch and Dave Ward of the Communications Workers Union in 2022, many hoping it was a step to a new party. Unfortunately that opportunity was lost.

But with Starmer's attacks on the working class and plunging popularity, and the increase in votes for Reform UK, we now need to give the lead in forming a new workers' party based on militant trade unionism, internationalism, solidarity and socialism. We should begin with calling in the members of our Parliamentary Campaign Group, along with the other independents and suspended Labour MPs, to ensure we establish a bloc of MPs in parliament that will fight for our policies.

● RMT AGM fringe meeting hosted by RMT LU Engineering and Piccadilly and District branches

The RMT and political representation – why we need a new workers' party

Wednesday 25 June, during the lunchbreak
Admiral Woods pub, Waterloo St, G2 6BZ

Schools on strike: 'No one should work longer for no extra pay'

Education workers in 14 schools in the Outwood Grange Multi-Academy Trust (OGMAT) are in dispute. Iain Dalton visited the picket line of National Education Union (NEU) members at Outwood Academy, Hemsworth, on their second day of strike action on 10 June.

The Trust wants to lengthen the working day by half an hour. Management says this is in order to comply with government guidelines on the length of the school day, but NEU strikers explained these guidelines aren't adhered to by many schools.

Whilst parents have had letters saying the extra time will be used to provide additional lessons, the reality is that this will become extra tutor group time at the start of the day. As one teacher on the picket line put it:

"This seems to have been drawn up by someone in a boardroom with no experience of teaching. No workers should be expected to work longer for no extra pay, but it's even more frustrating when you can't see a benefit to our students either".

Members of teaching union NAS-UWT (who have been on strike at five schools in the Trust) have also been balloted for action at the school in Hemsworth.

The strikers were joined by Jacob Williamson and Stan Bates, independent councillors suspended from the Labour Party for voting against cuts in Wakefield.

● Socialist Party members have supported NEU members on strike in several schools in the Outwood MAT, and others around the country, including London East Alternative Provision (LEAP) in Tower Hamlets, East London, striking against teacher redundancies, and Leytonstone School in Waltham Forest fighting loss of support staff pay.



IAIN DALTON

Join the fightback

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Socialist Party members campaign for fighting, democratic trade unions, wherever possible working alongside others, to campaign for the industrial and political strategies workers need

● Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
● or call 020 8988 8777
● or text your name and postcode to 07958 032071
to find out more today!

SHAHAR BENHORIN, SOCIALIST STRUGGLE MOVEMENT, ISRAEL-PALESTINE
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON 13 JUNE 2025

The government of death, of Netanyahu and the far right, has declared total war on Iran, opening a new phase of extreme aggravation in regional confrontation - a further destructive turning point, with decisive material and political backing from the Trump administration, and with support from the establishment 'opposition' in Israel's Knesset [parliament].

The unprecedented military offensive show of force, initiated by the region's sole nuclear power in the early hours of 13 June at night, has so far focused on striking parts of Iran's nuclear programme infrastructure and military installations - including assassinations of the senior command, among them the chief of staff and the commander of the Revolutionary Guards - while also not hesitating to target civilian sites. Residential buildings have been bombed, and members of Iran's scientific cadre have been executed in an act of state terrorism. While Tehran's two limited missile barrages launched towards the State of Israel in April and October 2024 ostensibly focused on military targets, it may now attempt to 'equalise' costs by directing fire at the civilian population.

This is part of the catastrophic military campaign launched by Netanyahu's government - following the surprise attack led by Hamas on 7 October 2023 - with massive support from the Israeli ruling class, backed by Western governments, to coldly exploit a historic opportunity to reshape the region in line with a horrific vision of the Israeli rule of capital and occupation in the spirit of the far right.



Globally, what is needed now is the advancement of a struggle with a strong and clear voice against the deteriorating of the region deeper into the spiral of blood and the fantasies of Trump and the Israeli far right

The objective of the extensive offensive is not merely to disrupt Iran's nuclear programme to strip a rival regional power of potential military capabilities. Rather, in a generalised manner, to also complete an ongoing move since 7 October to alter the regional balance of power. That, fundamentally, in pursuit of regional hegemony, the normalisation of occupation and the brutal repression of the Palestinians, improving business for Israeli capital and particularly the arms industry, and demonstrating ability to serve as a 'forward outpost' for western imperialist interests in the region.

While both sides in this confrontation are reactionary regimes, each serving a narrow oligarchy, with neither playing any progressive role in the interests of the masses in the region, this is not a symmetrical conflict. Rather, it is aggression

from the government of death, of Israeli capitalism - the most dangerous force in the regional system at present - backed by the world's strongest imperialist power, with the most reactionary global influence.

Netanyahu, accustomed to manipulative rhetoric that desecrates the memory of the Jewish Holocaust, declared that the offensive against Iran was nothing less than an act to prevent a "second Holocaust". Meanwhile, mass atrocities, including crimes of ethnic cleansing and genocide, are intensifying in Gaza under the guise of 'security' demagoguery in the service of occupation and colonial settlements, flagrantly also trampling the lives of hostages but also the future of the region. The military campaign led by Netanyahu's gang was never designed at any stage to make the region 'safer' nor is it capable. On the contrary.

Chain reaction danger

Regardless of the scale of retaliatory actions carried out by the Iranian regime and its allies in the 'Axis of Resistance', however weakened the axis may be, the event is unfolding, and its full consequences could still escalate into a series of regional and global shocks - including accelerating a crisis in the global economy. Forces of the Iranian regime and its allies may target energy facilities and other infrastructure in the region, potentially even blockading the Strait of Hormuz. The US military and various forces in the region may yet intervene directly. There could be further extensive harm to the civilian population in Iran, further horrors inflicted against Palestinians amid the regional turmoil, harm to Israeli civilians, and even worldwide associated attacks may occur against Jewish and other people.

The Israeli government has employed tactics similar to those it used in its attack on Lebanon to weaken Hezbollah militarily, however, this time, the target is a state, and on a massive scale. The Iranian regime cannot afford not to respond forcefully to such a strategic blow, especially following the setbacks suffered by the 'Axis of Resistance' under its leadership since September 2024. It risks appearing powerless, fuelling internal divisions, and facing an escalation of assertive challenges in local and regional power struggles - potentially reaching existential threats. Pressure on the regime to 'take revenge' is set to be immense.

The fact that Hezbollah in Lebanon, still recovering from a significant organisational setback, has so far limited its response to condemning Israeli aggression does not necessarily mean it will not later take part in some form of retaliation. Hezbollah still has the capability to inflict heavier infrastructural damage compared with the isolated Houthis missile strikes, although it is likely that its leadership currently fears the military and political costs involved.

The Israeli offensive has never been intended nor capable of fully eliminating Iran's nuclear programme. The research centre in Isfahan was hit, but the extent of the destruction at Natanz

- Iran's largest uranium enrichment facility - remains unclear, as does the impact on the parallel enrichment facility in Fordow, which is carved into a mountain. In any case, from a technical standpoint, even severe damage may ultimately result in no more

NO TO THE ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

- **The Netanyahu-Trump gang is expanding regional conflagration in service of the occupation and the rule of capital**
- **Advance broad protest, refusal, and strike action with the call: No to the Israel-Iran war, an end to the war of extermination in Gaza, overthrow Israel's 'government of death' - yes to a cross-border struggle for equality, welfare, and personal security, no to the rule of capital, occupation, and imperialism**



than a disruption lasting a few years in the development of the nuclear programme.

One of the pretexts used by the Israeli regime in its propaganda to justify the offensive, framed as a "preemptive strike", is the claim regarding an acceleration of the development of Iranian weapons systems relevant to producing a nuclear bomb, despite no clear evidence being presented to support this assertion. Moreover, it is evident that planning for the offensive in various aspects, which involves forces on the ground in Iran itself, had been ongoing for a long time regardless.

To begin with, previous phases of the Israeli military campaign, particularly the assassination of Hezbollah's senior leadership, spurred a wing of the Iranian regime that views a military nuclear programme as a strategic defence mechanism against military aggression. Netanyahu

Tehran following Israeli strikes
PHOTO: ANASH MEDIA/CC

himself admitted that he had originally ordered preparations for the offensive as early as November 2024, just weeks after the assassination of Nasrallah, claiming: "It was clear to me, as well as to others, that with the breaking of the Iranian axis - which was one base for Israel's destruction - Iran would rapidly advance its nuclear programme". Now, this offensive is pushing the Iranian regime more forcefully to refine its efforts to restore capabilities and ultimately achieve such an objective.

Netanyahu's appeal to the masses in Iran with the hypocritical claim that the war is only against the regime oppressing them, could just as easily have been made, also hypocritically, by the Iranian regime to those living under Israeli rule around last year's missile barrages towards the State of Israel. However, Netanyahu's 'bear hug' towards the masses in Iran

reflects opposite aspirations to those expressed in the mass uprising of 2022 in Iran, or within recent labour struggles and social protests - including the truck drivers' strike in dozens of cities in the days prior to the offensive regarding wages and the cost of living.

Symbolically, on the day preceding the offensive, Netanyahu hosted Argentine President Javier Milei, an enemy of workers and the poor. Netanyahu's bear hug to the public in Iran represents the ambition of the Israeli ruling class for regime change in Iran, to replace the current rival dictatorship with one more friendly to its interests - akin to the dictatorial monarchy of the Shah, which was originally overthrown in a revolution in 1979, before the counter-revolutionary Khomeinist takeover.

Although the offensive may undermine the political stability of the

Tehran regime, in fact, as the state of emergency allows the Israeli government of death to 'put on hold' local protests against it, in Iran it provides the regime with a political opportunity to rally support against external aggression and even intensify incitement and crackdowns on local voices of protest.

International pressures

The extraordinary resolution passed by representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany - with a Chinese-Russian opposition - at the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), just one day before the Israeli offensive, condemned Tehran for alleged violations

of nuclear oversight commitments, providing the Israeli government with additional propaganda justification to launch its offensive - although the Israeli military system had already been placed on alert awaiting orders as of 9 June.

Unlike the tactical rounds of attacks carried out by the Israeli regime on Iranian territory in April and October 2024, the initiation of a broad offensive, which risks spiralling into an uncontrollable regional military escalation, while picking praise from Trump, has attracted colder responses from other 'Western' powers. In fact, Trump himself sought to publicly downplay Washington's responsibility for the offensive, as he is taking into account potential retaliatory actions against US military bases in the region and against other US imperialist interests, including expectations from Arab regimes. Simultaneously, the British government distanced itself from any involvement, hinting that it would not assist this time in thwarting an Iranian counteroffensive.

The Jordanian monarchy intercepted part of the drone barrage launched towards Israel, ostensibly out of concern for potential falls within its territory, yet it condemned Israeli aggression. The Egyptian regime also issued a condemnation. Although the central pro-US Arab regimes in the region are interested in weakening Tehran's power, they are nonetheless concerned about the regional and domestic ramifications of a military spiral.

Tehran's lack of an immediate response in the initial phase, including the absence of air defence, not only reflected the impact of the early Israeli bombing in Iran on 26 October but also revealed an element of surprise. This was despite a US intelligence report earlier in the year warning that an attack was likely within the first half of 2025, and despite Trump issuing a two-month ultimatum in an attempt to coerce a deal from Tehran - which now, more than before, would amount to a transparent capitulation agreement. The US administration may yet be dragged into direct intervention in the conflict, but, unlike Netanyahu, it is still playing with the idea that the military offensive could be used as leverage to extract concessions from Tehran.

Trump, who originally violated the previous nuclear agreement brokered under US sponsorship, also collaborated in a media deception ahead of the Israeli offensive - pretending that negotiations between Washington and Tehran would resume on Sunday. Even when the administration initially 'vetoed' an Israeli offensive plan in May, preferring to seek a deal with Tehran due to concerns over escalating complications, it simultaneously delivered a massive airlift of heavy weaponry, previously withheld under Biden's administration, thus aiding the Israeli regime's practical preparations for the military offensive scenario.

It should be noted that in any case, agreements such as the nuclear deal signed during the Obama administration in 2015 primarily represent an attempt by global imperialist powers to impose a diplomatic framework of (unequal) rules on dangerous power struggles between regional forces. From the outset, such agreements do not resolve the fundamental factors driving these conflicts that, in themselves, fuel a hazardous arms race.

The 'opposition' - and the need for struggle

The crisis within Netanyahu's ruling coalition a short while before the offensive, centred around legislation for drafting ultra-Orthodox Jews into the military to reinforce the war of extermination and occupation, was resolved through a combination of the understanding by all coalition parties that public resentment towards the government could translate into a serious electoral blow, and their understanding that the military campaign could also allow them to reap political benefits from images of 'military successes'.

However, the offensive has only just begun, and it remains unclear how much, and for how long, they will be able to cultivate support based on such superficial impressions. The loyal alignment of the establishment Israeli 'opposition' - led by Yair Golan, Yair Lapid, and Benny Gantz - in once again praising a dramatic military move by the government of death underscores that this is not merely a narrow political manoeuvre to 'save Netanyahu'.

Rather, it is a geo-strategic move aligned with broader ambitions within the Israeli ruling class. Yet, even they will eventually distance themselves from their de facto political support for the government as the offensive becomes more entangled or as time passes.

Under the cover of the offensive, the Israeli government of death has tightened the siege on the West Bank while, within the Green Line, it has initiated a new phase of bans on gatherings and the freezing of protest events. The leadership of the general Histadrut trade union federation, much like the establishment opposition parties, has once again aligned itself with the government of death, and for war at the expense of the future of working people from all communities.

We are in a volatile phase, and it remains unclear how the coming days and weeks will unfold. But locally, as globally, what is needed now is the advancement of a struggle with a strong and clear voice against the deteriorating of the region deeper into the spiral of blood and the fantasies of Trump and the Israeli far right.

- **Yes to building a broad protest movement, protest refusal against the war machine, and strike actions**
- **Organise a democratic, cross-community protest movement led by ordinary working people, with no involvement of capitalists, generals, or establishment parties' politicians**
- **No to the Israel-Iran war, an end to the war of extermination in Gaza, overthrow the 'government of death' - and all its policies**
- **Against the hubris of a murderous gang trampling the future of all of us with deceiving murderous wars, mass atrocities, and suffocating austerity, there's a need to strengthen the cross-border struggle to stop the war machine and fight for equality, welfare, and personal security**
- **No to the rule of capital, occupation, and imperialism, yes to socialist transformation in the region**

Lessons from the Glasgow equal pay fight

How working-class unity and fighting trade unions delivered

Birmingham City Council is trying to slash bin workers' pay by up to £8,000, re-grading their roles. Workers in Unite have been on all-out strike since May in response. The Labour council blames, among other things, the cost of settling equal pay claims for its financial difficulties. In Brighton, the GMB reports £30 million worth of equal pay claims against the Labour council.

In 2018, a two-day strike of 8,000 workers, including solidarity action from bin workers refusing to cross picket lines, won around £550 million from the council. A further £300 million was paid out in 2023 after workers threatened more strikes.

Socialist Party Scotland member **Brian Smith**, who was Glasgow City Union Branch Secretary from 2009-2024, revisits lessons from the Glasgow struggle

In 2006, Glasgow City Council, then Labour controlled, implemented a new job evaluation scheme and pay system in an effort to meet the aims of a national single status agreement between local government trade unions and council employers. This national agreement was a framework to eliminate unequal pay between male and female-dominated jobs across Scotland's 32 councils and associated organisations, however councils could choose not to use the recommended national job evaluation scheme and there was no suggested national pay system. These were two of the main weaknesses in the single status agreement approved by the trade unions in 1999.

The Glasgow Council leadership decided to implement a uniquely amended version of a job evaluation scheme used by London councils, and an equally unusual pay structure. These decisions were driven by the wish to keep costs down and not deliver equal pay, and an arrogance that Glasgow was somehow different from other Scottish councils due to its size.

Between 2007 and 2017, there were 18 Unison formal strike ballots across the council, with 15 related to job evaluation and/or the pay structure. Some were resolved without the need for action, however 11 saw strike action take place. Some strikes involved large groups; others saw small numbers taking action. Some strikes lasted weeks or months; others a few days. In total, over 3,000



Unison members took strike action at some point during this period, the majority women.

At the same time as the implementation of these pay arrangements, the council also set up a number of arms-length organisations supposedly to enhance some services' ability to bid for contracts out with the council, without falling foul of EU competition rules.

One of these was Cordia, a council-owned company that saw thousands of female workers Tupe-transferred in services such as home care, cleaning and catering. The primary reason for Cordia was to try and minimise any future equal pay claims by artificially moving female-dominated manual jobs 'further away' in employment terms from male manual jobs in cleansing and roads, so reducing the scope for legal comparisons.

Terms and conditions attack

Cordia also attacked the workforce's terms and conditions over the years with cuts in overtime rates, public holidays and national pay rises not being applied to shift allowances. The council's plan fell apart in the longer term due to an employment tribunal win for the equal pay claimants in 2014 which showed that Cordia was still really part of the council - with comparisons to male-dominated jobs in other council services justified - and a political campaign, led by the trade unions, that saw Cordia wound-up in 2018 and all the workers transferred back to the council.

In 2012, Unison membership was only 600 in Cordia and an organising and recruitment campaign was launched by the local socialist-led Glasgow City Unison branch. By 2018, the Unison membership had

grown to over 2,300. Combined with the historical GMB membership it meant that the vast majority of the near 7,000 Cordia workforce was now unionised.

Over the years, many union members had gone to the private solicitors Action4Equality (led by Stefan Cross) for assistance and legal representation in their individual equal pay claims. Many had felt let down by the legal advice provided by their trade unions around 2006-07, particularly those in Cordia. Several Action4Equality claimants started a Facebook page as a communication and organising tool. Unison began to lodge individual claims again around 2008. The GMB and Unite began similar processes in the years that followed. It is important to acknowledge the key role played by Action4Equality in the fight for equal pay compensation in Glasgow.

In mid-2017, the Court of Session ruled that the council's pay structure did not comply with equal pay law. The council was going to have to pay out compensation for years of pay discrimination - now the issues were to who, how much and when.

By this time, the legal teams of Action4Equality and Unison had been working together for a number of years. The joint lawyers team and the local trade union branches now needed to work even closer in an 'inside and outside the room' approach if an acceptable outcome was to be secured.

Members across the three trade unions wanted a united campaign, bringing together claimants irrespective of who their legal representatives were. Members' meetings were held to build the campaign. Claimants

were encouraged to take on organising and speaking roles at protests, demos and lobbies of the council in late 2017 and early 2018. By May 2018, it was clear that the council, then a Scottish National Party (SNP) administration, was not willing to table an acceptable package of compensation payments and the trade unions moved to organise strike ballots.

The Unison ballot in Cordia returned a 99% vote for strike, in education it was 90%. The GMB achieved similar results. Over 5,000 Unison members would now take strike action alongside 3,000 GMB members.

The strike on 23-24 October 2018 was a profound experience for all involved. An opportunity to strike for equality - a strike where the result could deliver a crushing blow to a pay system which had systematically discriminated against women workers and win back millions of pounds in stolen wages.

The council is now using the nationally recommended job evaluation scheme to assess all jobs and negotiations on a new pay system are ongoing.

Over the years, the trade unions' position on the new arrangements is that they must deliver equal pay and fair pay for all. Those who have been discriminated against for decades must get proper pay increases. There should be no levelling down of other workers' wages in an attempt to deliver bargain basement equality - no robbing Peter to pay Pauline, so to speak.

Equal pay and fair pay cannot be done on the cheap. The fight for significant, additional annual funding into the wage bill is one for all workers, all trade unionists.

The lessons of Glasgow's equal pay struggle is that by mobilising the fighting capacity of trade union members in determined action victories can be won that benefit all workers.

Two-day strike

The two-day strike was one of the largest on equal pay ever and was covered by both national and international media. The strike forced the council to table an acceptable

package of compensation payments. Around £550 million was won for over 12,000 claimants. It was one of the single, largest redistributions of wealth Glasgow has ever seen.

The trade unions now had to ensure that the council introduced a new equality-proofed job evaluation scheme and pay system which would eliminate unequal pay moving forward. Due to the Covid pandemic and other issues on the council side this work was delayed and a further £300 million was paid out in compensation payments in 2023. But only after the trade unions had to again ballot thousands of members for strike action to force the council to maintain the 2018 approach for all claimants.

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Campaigning for a fighting union that stands up to Starmer at GMB Congress

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN GMB

Over 300 delegates gathered in Brighton on 7 June for general union GMB's annual decision-making congress.

Taking place during the first 12 months of a Labour government, the congress agenda didn't look much different from agendas under the Tory government. Delegates were still debating motions opposing public sector cuts and anti-strike legislation, condemning anti-migrant policies and benefit cuts, and demanding the government tax the obscene levels of wealth in our society.

But perhaps because it is still in the early stages of the Labour government, overall there was less anger expressed at these attacks compared to some previous congresses. That is the tone set by the Starmer-supporting leadership. There was a high number of first-time delegates and a lack of debate, and many motions were withdrawn in favour of 'special reports' from the Central Executive Committee (CEC).

Congress opened with a report from general secretary Gary Smith. He started with his usual emphasis on how he has turned GMB from failing into a "campaigning" and "growing" union.

As one of the UK's two main 'general' unions, GMB has members across both private and public sectors, from NHS, school support staff and local councils, to retail sector, gig platform workers, and workers in the defence, nuclear and energy sectors. Smith highlighted some of the many wins and campaigns across these sectors.

He welcomed Labour's Employment Rights Bill - "the most positive worker legislation in 50 years" - and boasted of the central role that GMB has played in delivering it. This despite the fact that the Tory anti-trade union legislation - including the draconian ballot turnout thresholds - is still in place!

But the mood of members meant that even Smith had to acknowledge



PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

Labour attacks on the working class, and said that "Labour don't always make it easy to rally to their banner. We have to recognise that mistakes have been made".

But the only political alternative to Labour in the GMB leadership's eyes is Reform. And Reform was in some ways the spectre haunting congress, with emergency motions on defending the local government pension scheme against attacks from newly elected Reform councillors, and a national strategy passed on fighting racism and the far right.

But the leadership's only solution to Labour's attacks on workers and the rise of Reform is to demand of Starmer and Reeves, "You have to listen to us, because not listening to us leads to Reform". The general

secretary said, "We need to fight to get workers' voices at the heart of decision-making" in the coming period. But no clear plan was set out as to how to achieve this. Socialist Party material argued that the unions need to launch a new party to represent workers' interests.

There were harsh criticisms of Labour from a handful of delegates. A Southern region delegate was cheered when he said the Labour government was "on warning" and that the CEC report didn't reflect the anger towards Labour from many Southern region delegates. Before congress they had debated a motion to disaffiliate from Labour.

Smith's focus was on "rebuilding the economy" and "bringing good jobs home", and this theme

was continued by Labour chancellor Rachel Reeves when she addressed congress, ahead of her Spending Review announcements.

GMB is one of the safest union congresses for a Labour minister, and she received a standing ovation from the majority of delegates. In fact, two Labour Party members expressed surprise (and relief!) that she hadn't been heckled.

A lot of this positive reception was down to Reeves highlighting the £113 billion investment in the Spending Review. Much of this investment is in areas where GMB has members. The anxiety and misery of GMB members, especially in previous industrial heartlands, was powerfully articulated by delegates throughout the week. It was to this desperation for secure, well-paid jobs in demoralised communities that Reeves's announcements were designed to appeal.

In particular, she focused on defence, shipbuilding and aerospace industries: "Investing in the defence of our UK, with good union jobs". She also announced the "biggest roll out of nuclear energy since 1988", with 10,000 jobs and 1,500 apprentices. GMB members in these sectors applauded enthusiastically.

A motion supported by Socialist Party members to fight for a just transition to climate jobs was withdrawn by the region in favour of yet another CEC report, but it is notable that in recent years there is a growing number of motions supporting a just transition. It is only through fighting for socialist nationalisation and democratic control that members' fears about jobs in these sectors can be answered.

Despite the applause for Reeves and the pro-Labour message from the top of the union, the coming year will face GMB members with unprecedented challenges - not least in Brighton itself. During the congress, hundreds of members marched through Brighton in support of a £30 million equal pay claim against the Labour council.

The Socialist Party held a meeting which attracted a small number of left GMB activists and we had an excellent discussion about how we can build a fighting GMB. Socialist Party members in GMB will continue to push for a democratic, socialist broad left to hold the leadership to account and campaign for a fighting union with a clear national strategy to defeat Starmer's austerity.

Bakers' union delegates discuss fighting Labour's austerity

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Just under a year since the election of the Starmer government and delegates at the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) conference were still waiting to see change.

The conference opened to striking Birmingham bin worker Mike Masters talking about their experience of fighting the Labour council's union busting tactics over the last five months. Rather than bin workers suffering £8,000 annual pay cuts, he said: "Let the fat cats pay with the pay rise they gave themselves." He pointed out that "All this is happening under the eyes of Keir Starmer, Angela Rayner and the Labour Party".

Following this, union president Ian Hodson used his speech to lay into the Labour government for their austerity policies, leaving the

door open for the likes of Reform by stoking division among the working class. He said: "We must start to organise a political party and a party of our own".

At the fringe meeting organised by the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), delegates were unanimous in their agreement that a new mass workers' party had to be built by the working class and trade unions. They said Labour takes trade unionists' money and then forces them onto the picket line! Some delegates raised about coordinating

rule-change motions to trade unions.

The attendance at the fringe meeting was higher than in previous years. Former victimised Tesco warehouse Usdaw rep, Max McGee, explained what the NSSN stood for, and that the upcoming conference is an opportunity for trade unionists to come together to discuss building the fight against Starmer's attacks. He reminded delegates that the NSSN had fought along with the BFAWU for £10-an-hour minimum wage and then £15, both of which ended up being adopted as TUC policy. The NSSN also builds solidarity with workers in dispute such as the Birmingham bin workers.



Bakers' union president Ian Hodson speaking at NSSN conference in 2024 PHOTO: SEMAN

Hull trade unionists debate steps for new party



HULL AND DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL

MIKE HIRST
HULL SOCIALIST PARTY

Hull and District Trades Union Council, including Socialist Party members, convened a meeting to discuss the political representation of the working class, and to begin the task of forming a new workers' party.

35 people attended, including two councillors who had recently left the Labour Party, due to its continued attacks on the working class, and its pro-war position.

It was acknowledged by those attending that, after the defeat of Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour Party, and its subsequent takeover by Keir Starmer, there is a void that is being filled by Reform.

Capitalist parties. Where's ours?

The ruling capitalist class now have multiple parties to represent their interests. The working class requires one which will act in our interests.

Socialist Party members said that the formation of a new workers' party must have the working class at its core. This would include the organisations of the working class – trade unions – along with community campaigners, organisers, and activists.

The problems we face – decimation of our NHS, lack of affordable housing, attacks on our education system, and the rising cost of living – stem from capitalism. A system that lives off the wealth created by the labour of working-class people. We see less and less of that wealth, as it

is siphoned off for the profits of big business and super-rich.

A new workers' party would need a socialist programme, based on the needs and aspirations of working-class communities to challenge capitalism, including renationalisation of our NHS, utilities, rail, and the top 150 companies that dominate our economy, under democratic workers' control and management.

Greens

Two Green Party members attended the meeting. They proposed that they could play a role in being the new "left party".

However, it was highlighted at the meeting that the Green Party does not have a socialist programme, is wedded to capitalism, and has not been formed from a mass working-class base. Further, it has a record of succumbing to the pressures of capitalism, and has imposed cuts to services and attacked workers where it has councillors, such as in Brighton and Sheffield.

There was agreement in the meeting, that in order to tackle the issues we face, we need a new party – a place campaigners and community organisers could tackle societal issues by organising alongside striking workers, trade unionists, and other activists.

A follow-up meeting is being convened in the near future. With reported interest from members of other trades union councils in Yorkshire, we could start to see the green shoots of a new workers' party emerging.



Former Unite the Union general secretary, Len McCluskey, signs the petition calling on the unions to take the lead in forming new party

Hundreds meet in Liverpool to discuss political alternative Unions must take lead forming new workers' party

CONOR ANTHONY O'NEILL
LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Over 500 people packed into the Liner Hotel in Liverpool, with others streaming online, for the 'Doing Politics Differently' rally on 14 June, organised by the Liverpool Community Independents and other affiliated groups.

Corbyn

Many in attendance were hoping that speaker Jeremy Corbyn would announce steps forward towards a new party. Disappointingly for many however, Jeremy made no such direct announcement, instead hinting at potential future plans saying that "a new democratic, left wing socialist party would be formed in some time" and calling upon independent groups and socialists to unite.

As a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate in the upcoming Blundellsands ward by-election, using the 'Independent trade union and socialist candidate' descriptor, I was allowed a platform to speak at the end of the event and from the stage. I raised the need for the workers' movement to play a central role in any potential new mass party,

explaining that the Birmingham bin strike and the Livv housing dispute, amongst other struggles, have proven the potential that organised working-class unity offers, and that, despite all the talk on the day of grassroots movements, the biggest grassroots movement was of course the six million-strong trade unions.

Who is signing up?

My points were well received by the crowd. As a result, we managed to get a number of prominent individuals and activists to sign and back the petition calling on the trade unions to take the lead in forming a new working-class party, including most notably former Unite the Union general secretary Len McCluskey who, during his contribution, called for similar demands that the unions should take a lead on a new electoral formation and that Jeremy Corbyn should lead it.

Jeremy himself was also asked to sign the petition by myself and another Socialist Party member Joe Woolfall. He replied saying he would "look into it later". Jeremy still has popular support for the anti-austerity stance he took as Labour leader, particularly among young people.

A call from him, backing the unions taking steps towards founding a new, democratic workers' party would be a great step.

As I said in my address "The establishment has plenty of its own parties... It's about damn time the working class has its own party too!"

SIGN THE PETITION

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

• www.change.org/TradeUnions-LaunchANewParty



Resist attempt to ban politics from Pride

OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY STATEMENT

Pride is political – it always has been, and more than ever continues to be so.

In the UK today, LGBTQ+ issues are being weaponised in attempts to divide our class, and weaken our ability to fight for our rights. The recent Supreme Court ruling against trans rights – that does nothing to end the oppression women face in society – is one example of this. It once again proves that minority rights are not secure in a society which relies on scapegoating to preserve the rule of the privileged elite.

It is correct that parties which don't support LGBTQ+ rights should be challenged. But blanket bans on all parties cut off discussion about how we fight for LGBTQ+ rights and identities, and the public services we need. And banning Labour and the Tories means they have an excuse to avoid the anger they would rightly face at Pride events.

Unite to fight

The Oxford branch of the Socialist Party was at Oxford Pride to raise the need for unity between the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and the fight for workers' rights. Now is the time LGBTQ+ workers and young people need to deepen ties with other workers' struggles. Pride events are an opportunity to discuss how we can fight back, especially as Keir Starmer's Labour cuts public services – cuts which will affect the LGBTQ+ community at least as much as everybody else.

It is disappointing that the organisers of Oxford Pride do not support this, while at the same time allowing a presence on the march from the police – who have a well-documented



HELEN PATTISON

history of violently suppressing protests from the LGBTQ+ community – and from companies that are continuing to profit from low pay of their workers, misogynist advertising, and Israeli state terror in Gaza.

The extremely positive response to our presence, and the solidarity shown by those attending the event

towards the Birmingham bin workers, shows that attempting to keep politics out of Pride does not represent the views of most of the LGBTQ+ community.

Birmingham bins

Birmingham bin workers are facing up to an £8,000 pay cut. Their battle

against a Labour council – and the Labour government which supports the cut – has taken on national significance in the eyes of many workers, who see the success of that dispute as vital in the national struggle against austerity.

The Socialist Party has a long and proud tradition of supporting the

struggle for LGBTQ+ rights – participating in Pride events at the inception of the Pride movement, mobilising community defence of early Mardi Gras events in Leicester from the far right, for example. And organising and supporting protests against all attempts to reverse gains won by the LGBTQ+ community.

Today we champion the struggle in the trade unions for LGBTQ+ rights, and for the need to oppose all forms of austerity, that for 15 years have decimated public services that LGBTQ+ people rely on. Key to challenging the austerity and attacks on LGBTQ+ rights is the building of a new mass party of the working class to provide a genuine alternative to Labour, the Tories, Reform, and all those who seek to divide us. We stand for a socialist alternative to the austerity, war, and division of capitalism, and against LGBTQ+phobia and all forms of oppression – and for unity of the working class in struggle to fight for it.

Democratic decision?

We would question how the decision to ban all parties was made – who was consulted, who voted for it? What strategy is put forward by those who want to limit the ability of our Pride to be political?

It is disappointing to see Oxford Pride stray into division at a time when the LGBTQ+ community, and workers more broadly, should be standing together. We believe the discussion on the way forwards politically must continue to be held among LGBTQ+ workers and young people.

We would welcome Oxford Pride organising a public debate, with representatives from different political organisations, trade unions, campaigns, and youth organisations in the city, on what strategy and programme are needed to fight for LGBTQ+ rights, with the genuine involvement of members of that community and the working class.

Protesters unite against Ealing Labour council

HELEN PATTISON
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

At the lobby of Ealing Labour council, there were three main reasons people were protesting.

Firstly, against the closure of children's centres, secondly against Labour's continued support for war on Gaza, and finally because of issues between the council and the National Education Union (NEU) over pay and access to paid religious leave.

That all these different issues needed protesting about, outside the same council meeting, perfectly sums up the problem facing this government and local Labour councils.

'Turn in grave'

It was also really good when Tony, a member of transport union RMT and the Socialist Party, got up to say that his union had played a role

in founding the Labour Party. But that the union members who helped build a political voice for the working class over 100 years ago, would be "turning in their graves" at the likes of Keir Starmer.

Huge applause for new party

This got huge applause, especially when Tony linked it to the need today for trade unions to once again play an active role in launching a new political voice for working-class people. People signed the petition calling for these steps, as well as another petition asking if people would consider being part of an electoral challenge in May 2026.

The lobby also won a small reprieve. The number of children's centres planned for closure was reduced by the council.

But with no new money, this will only mean even more stretched services. So the fight must go on.

Message to Leicester Labour MP and council We will not let you make cuts

STEVE SCORE
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Two weeks after a meeting of trade unionists and campaigners agreed to set up Leicestershire Anti-Cuts Alliance, and defying the threat of a council fine for using amplification, we held our first protest on 14 June.

Over 50 people turned up in the city centre to hear speakers focusing on disability benefit cuts. Labour's work and pensions secretary Liz Kendall is a Leicester MP.

I chaired the rally, saying: "This battle is about uniting those affected by benefit cuts, those impacted by cuts in services, both national and local, with workers whose jobs are under threat because of cuts. When just 50 families have as much wealth as half the population, don't tell us there's no money for services and benefits. We need to build a movement bringing everyone together, in which the trade unions can play a crucial role."

Abi Broomfield, disability campaigner, said: "A million people could lose their Personal Independence Payments (PIP), including me. These cuts are going to kill disabled people. "After 15 years of Tory austerity, which saw hundreds of thousands of disabled people die, Labour and Liz Kendall have decided to punch down on our community. We won't give in, and we won't tolerate these cuts."

Independent MP

Independent Leicester MP Shockat Adam said: "Why is it that four out of ten people in the sixth richest country in the world live in poverty? When a Labour government cuts £5 billion from the welfare budget, but has a target of military spending of £60 billion. Warfare over welfare is a political choice."

Activists from the trades union council, the National Education Union (NEU), Unite Community, and campaigners fighting to save their libraries and community centres

threatened by Leicester's Labour council, also spoke.

Socialist Party member Heather Rawling spoke, describing the battle against the attack on democratic rights to campaign and protest, with Leicester Labour council banning stall tables, banners, and amplification. The protest was in defiance of all these restrictions, and police and city wardens were not able to intervene.

The Socialist Party had a campaign stall at the demo, alongside other groups. When we set up a table earlier in the day, we were told to take it down.

It seems the authorities have the confidence to stop us when there are only a few people there. But not when we are there in large numbers.

• Leicestershire Anti-Cuts Alliance: "Debate" with Liz Kendall on the disability cut - Sunday 22 June, 2pm, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester



Anti-immigrant rioting in Northern Ireland

For workers' unity against racism and sectarianism!

STATEMENT BY MILITANT LEFT (CWI IRELAND)

The County Antrim town of Ballymena and elsewhere in Northern Ireland have witnessed five nights of serious rioting, with targeted attacks against immigrants and ethnic minorities. Immigrants were forced out of their homes. Terrified ethnic minorities have resorted to putting stickers on the front doors in a desperate bid to distinguish themselves and avoid being attacked.

On 10 June, rioters threw masonry and petrol bombs at the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), who responded with plastic bullets and water cannons. Smaller racist gatherings took place elsewhere in the North.

On 11 June a leisure centre in Larne which was providing emergency shelter for families was attacked.

Militant Left strongly condemns these appalling racist attacks and calls for the unity of working-class people in Ballymena against all attempts to foster division.

The violent disturbances began following reports of the arrest of two teenagers charged with alleged sexual assault on another teenager in the Ballymena area.

Militant Left condemns all sexual violence. Gender-based violence is at crisis levels. Around 98% of women in the North report having experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime. There has been an increase in reports of violence and harassment against women, record low prosecutions for rape, and huge backlogs of cases waiting to be heard in court. Cuts to legal aid and finance for women's shelters, for example, have seen huge increases in violence against women in every setting.

A vigil by local people took place in Ballymena on 10 June, which was reportedly peaceful. It appears that a split off from the protest attacked the homes of Romanian people. Homes



Padraig Mulholland spoke at the anti-racist protest in Belfast on 14 June putting forward the case for trade union stewarding of demonstrations and protection of neighbourhoods and the need for socialism

were burnt out and immigrants were moved out of the area by the police.

Anti-immigrant sentiment whipped up

These horrendous events did not take place in a vacuum. Anti-immigrant and racist propaganda, and agitation by far-right and populist right groups and parties, including on social media, has undoubtedly played a part in these outrageous scenes. Moreover, sections of the right-wing media and politicians are increasingly cultivating anti-immigrant sentiment to divert attention away from the real causes of social and economic crisis afflicting working-class

communities. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's recent speech, where he referred to people in the UK feeling like "strangers," was clearly playing to populist right anti-immigrant sentiments.

Militant Left supporters in the trade unions in the North are calling for the trade union movement to intervene urgently into this dangerously escalating situation; for mass action to foster the unity of working-class people against racism and all forms of division.

We welcome the counter-protest called on 11 June in Magherafelt town, in Mid Ulster, against the provocations of the far right 'concerned parents', and the anti-racist protest in Belfast on 14 June.

While it is welcome that the

Northern Irish Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions issued a statement condemning the racist attacks on Ballymena, the text falls short of what is needed. The populist right and racists are scapegoating immigrants and ethnic minorities for the crisis in housing, health and infrastructure. Immigrants are falsely blamed for the bosses' attacks on wages and conditions.

Nor can we rely on the state, as the NIC-ICTU statement implies, to counter racist attacks and the far-right protests. The presence of the PSNI did not prevent the burning out of immigrant families in Ballymena. And the police and other state agencies in the North have a long history of repression and deep alienation from big sections of society. Trade

unions, such as NIPSA, have been to the forefront in organising counter-protests against the far right in Belfast city centre in recent months, including organising stewarding.

Role of organised workers' movement

The organised workers' movement in the North must urge workers not to be split along racist or ethnic lines, just as workers courageously united against sectarianism dividing communities many times in the past. The Ballymena area has a proud tradition of workers coming together in shows of class solidarity across the sectarian divisions. Ballymena Trades Union Council played an important role a few years ago to cut across rising tensions following targeting and deliberate misinformation about local migrant workers by racists.

Militant Left's predecessors in the area, the Ballymena Labour and Trade Union Group/Young Socialists and Militant newspaper supporters, played a key role in similar actions during the 'Troubles', when mass working-class action was needed in the workplaces and communities to stop a slide towards all-out sectarian conflict. Such demonstrations of class unity are urgently needed again in Ballymena and wider afield!

The trade union movement must also call for massive investment in social housing, the health service (Northern Ireland has the longest NHS waiting lines in the UK), for local youth services in working-class areas, properly funded education, and quality apprenticeships. As we approach the annual 'marching season', sectarian tensions will inevitably worsen. In the absence of the workers' movement putting its stamp on developments, there is a real danger of escalating racist and sectarian violence.

Militant Left stands for the mass action by the organised workers' movement against all forms of poisonous division and for the socialist transformation of society. This would see the needs of the majority met, not the greed of the billionaires, eradicating poverty and want, and all forms of racism, sectarianism and discrimination.

Millions march against Trump

Millions of people took to the streets in the US on 14 June, tens of thousands marched in thousands of cities and towns in 'No Kings' demos, protesting against Donald Trump's presidency.

They came at the end of a week of protests against immigration (ICE) raids in Los Angeles, including protests in solidarity nationwide, in which Trump sent in the National Guard and Marines. California's Democrat establishment politicians haven't spoken out in opposition, including using the courts to try to overturn Trump's actions, exposing the deep splits within the US ruling capitalist class.

Even before the over one-million-strong 'Hands Off' protests on 5 April, and now these even bigger protests, there had been three times as many protests by the end of March 2025 than there were in 2017, during Trump's first term.

Trump's authoritarian actions are provoking struggle, in which the trade unions and workers' movement should put itself central, fighting for a mass working-class political alternative.

US trade unions respond to ICE raids



A No Kings protest in Seattle on 14 June

All eyes have been turned towards Los Angeles as ICE raids have kindled mass protests across the city. Amid the burgeoning turmoil sparking in L.A., the image of David Huerta, an arrested union leader, pervaded demonstrations. Huerta's union, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), represents 45,000 service workers in California. He was arrested as an observer of an anti-ICE protest on the 6 June. Huerta was immediately hospitalised after being pushed to the ground by federal agents. He now faces federal charges with a maximum sentence of six years in federal prison.

Huerta's arrest comes at a time when the Trump administration casts a dark shadow over workers' movements. The SEIU has already seen four members or leaders, who are legal residents, detained by the Trump administration. The purpose of these ICE raids is to try to provoke fear among the working class, a significant proportion of which are migrants, including by repressing the workers' movement.

Importantly, trade unions across the US responded to Huerta's arrest with solidarity statements and by organising rallies in 200 cities.

Manny Pastreich, a union branch leader of the SEIU, told The Guardian in New York City: "Everything we hold dear is under attack. Unions, workers, freedom, immigrant communities, healthcare, the constitution, our union brothers and sisters. We must fight back. We reject these attacks on our communities and demand the immediate release of our union brother David Huerta."

Around 15% of trade union members in the US are immigrants, rising to around a quarter in California. Many of the ICE raids have taken place in workplaces. The workers' movement has a central role to play mobilising workers and communities in defense against raids, and also linking struggles of all workers facing attacks from the Trump administration.

It is this extreme example of immigration intolerance that should encourage UK workers to reflect on the Labour Party's crackdown on immigration. Nearly a fifth of all workers are foreign-born. Migrant workers, most notably, make up 32% of care workers in England. Starmer

is threatening further restrictions on these workers' visas.

These transatlantic restrictions on immigrant workers reveal the true hope of these governments. For it's not about protecting citizens; it's about scapegoating immigrants to disenfranchise workers.

One demonstration sign from LA put it best: "Billionaires are the real enemy. NOT immigrants."

JAMIE SPEKA
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY



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 privaters. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.

- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.

- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.

- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.
- The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely

affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence – where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced and unrecycled waste.
- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any loss of jobs, pay or conditions.
- A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned

transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.
- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards are set by consumers, small farmers, and all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties.
- For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right

to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.

- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.

- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party,

based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
 - Take the wealth off the super-rich!
- For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under

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STOP LABOUR'S CRUEL BENEFIT CUTS



ADAM HARMSWORTH
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Starmer's Labour government is preparing its attacks on disability benefits. Hundreds of thousands of disabled people who currently receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP) will have it taken away entirely, and over a million people will lose some benefits.

For weeks, disability rights campaigners have been protesting, writing to newspapers, and pleading with MPs to stop the Welfare Reform

Bill. Work and Pensions secretary Liz Kendall has in response tried to give reassurances that the cuts really aren't that bad. But the government's own impact assessment says 250,000 people will be pushed into poverty. No surprise, the cuts will be taking an average of £4,500 a year from some of those that need it most.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer have doubled down on the attacks, saying there will be no U-turns. But they are clearly worried. Recently, some 170 MPs were reported to be planning to oppose it and dozens of Labour MPs have

openly done so, likely the biggest rebellion in Labour's year of government so far.

In response, Labour has made small concessions, in particular that those losing PIP will receive it for 13 weeks after being found ineligible. Poole's Labour MP Neil Duncan-Jordan responded simply: "Poverty delayed is still poverty".

Labour is balancing the anger of the working class, many who know someone struggling with the torturous benefits system and disability support, against the interests of the bosses and bankers who would

rather keep their profits at the expense of the rest of us.

Labour has already been forced into U-turns, it can be pushed back again. Unions should take the lead alongside disability rights groups to organise mass opposition. This should include a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity as a launchpad for sustained trade union action.

There is enough money in our society to ensure the needs of disabled people can be met, from lifelong support out of work, to genuine assistance in work, and enough money

to live without fear of poverty.

Some disabled people, demonised by the government and right-wing press, have said they are made to feel like imposters. Let's be clear - the only imposter is the party that carries the name 'Labour' while attacking the working class, including disabled people. The majority of Labour MPs still cannot be convinced to openly oppose the cruel attacks. We need a new party that will fight for disabled people and the entire working class, with socialist policies that will take money off the rich to help the poor, not the other way round.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 14-15



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