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the Socialist

Issue 1329

10-16 July 2025

formerly **Militant**

Starmmer's cuts can be beat



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THE WORKING CLASS NEEDS OUR OWN PARTY



LEFT TO RIGHT: PAUL MATTSSON, PAUL MATTSSON, BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY & REEL NEWS/CC

TRADE UNIONS MUST LEAD



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

Zarah Sultana MP leaves Labour and announces 'co-founding a new party'



Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party mobilised thousands, like at this mass rally in Derby STEVE SCORE

WHAT NEXT IN THE FIGHT FOR A NEW WORKERS' PARTY?

SOCIALIST PARTY STATEMENT

Just a year into Starmer's rule and his 'huge parliamentary majority' has fallen apart. Elected with the lowest share of the electorate of any government since universal suffrage was introduced in 1918, this is a government with barely any support in society, attempting to do the bidding of the capitalist class – of the billionaires and the bond markets. No wonder it is hitting the rocks!

The government's humiliation over its attacks on disability benefits has shown that Labour austerity can be defeated and will have given confidence to all those battling pay restraint, privatisation and cuts. The National Shop Stewards Network conference, which took place on 5 July, brought together some of the key activists in those battles (See pages 8-9). But events have also driven home the urgent need for a new workers' party with a clear anti-war, anti-austerity, socialist programme. Such a party is vital to combat the right-populists of Reform.

It is therefore welcome that on 3 July 2025 Zarah Sultana MP announced that she was resigning from the Labour Party to, together with Jeremy Corbyn, "co-lead the founding of a new party, with other campaigners and activists across the country." Zarah has been

suspended from Labour for a year, for the 'crime' of voting against keeping the two-child benefit cap that has pushed 800,000 children into poverty. She has drawn the right conclusions – that the time has come to build something new. In response, Jeremy Corbyn has also put out a message that "the democratic foundations of a new party will soon take shape".

The potential support for a new party is clear. One recent opinion poll showed that – even before a party has been founded, 10% of people would vote for a Jeremy Corbyn-led party, and it would win among 18 to 24-year-olds with 32% of the vote. Those young people could not even vote when Corbyn was Labour leader, showing how the enthusiasm engendered by his anti-austerity election manifestos in 2017 and 2019 still reverberate in society. And there is no question that a new party would have the potential to quickly win much bigger sections of the working class and young people.

However, the obvious potential for a new party does not automatically mean a future launch will be successful. There have been several previous failed attempts at new left parties in Britain, including Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party and George Galloway's Respect Party – the latter despite some initial electoral gains. Clearly, the potential now

is much greater, but that does not mean greater success is guaranteed. A party that is 'top-down', without democratic structures, would not be able to hold the many workers and young people who are enthused by the idea of a new party.

Fighting in and for the trade unions

The issue here is not primarily of a 'left party' that only attempts to bring together existing left forces, but struggling to create a workers' party, which big sections of six million-plus workers already organised in the trade unions see as fighting for their interests.

There is no doubt that the majority of trade union leaders at this stage will continue to argue as hard as they can that trade unionists have to 'give Labour a chance', but they are already losing the argument. For example, at the University and College Union (UCU) congress this year a motion, initiated by Socialist Party members,

was passed calling on UCU members to stand in elections, linking up with other trade unionists, to fight for union policies. The motion also called for the UCU to invite Jeremy Corbyn, the Independents, and other pro-worker MPs to attend the UCU executive and discuss how they can support the union's campaigns.

Even now, before the formation of a new party, there is a putative bloc of 'pro-worker' MPs in parliament. One immediate measure that Jeremy Corbyn, Zarah Sultana and the others could take is to move – and campaign for – an early day motion in parliament demanding that the trade union voting thresholds and all other measures in the Tory 2016 anti-trade union act are repealed immediately. This government can act rapidly to proscribe pro-Palestine protesters, yet its manifesto pledge to repeal the trade union voting thresholds has been repeatedly delayed in an attempt to hamper unions' ability to fight Labour austerity measures. Such a motion would be a lever to step up pressure on Starmer's Labour and give confidence to trade

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TRADE UNIONISTS FOR A NEW PARTY *meeting!*

Monday 21 July 2025

18:30

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Register at <https://tinyurl.com/Register4TUNewPartyMeeting>

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unionists that a new party was going to fight in their interests.

Of course, it is possible that – if and when a new party is launched – some trade union leaders, particularly from the non-affiliated trade unions, declare their support. That would be welcome but will not in itself create the kind of party that is needed, any more than the then-PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka's support for Respect did, for example. But union leaders encouraging a debate throughout their membership on the need for the workers' movement to build its own party would be a significant step forward, as would steps to organise a cross-union conference to discuss it.

For a federal structure

It will also be crucial that any structure for a new party gives trade unions a collective voice, under the democratic control of union members. Not to do so will, correctly, lead to some of the most fighting trade unionists hesitate about joining. That was the case with Bob Crow, the late general secretary of the

Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT), who in 2010 co-founded the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) alongside the Socialist Party and others. His central reason for opposing his union participating in Respect in the previous period was that the RMT – with around 80,000 workers in its ranks – would have had no say over party decision making. Some kind of 'One Member One Vote' structure may superficially appear the most democratic approach, but that is not the case. In fact, the introduction of One Member One Vote in the Labour Party, which severely undermined trade union power in the party, was essential to Labour's transformation into New Labour.

In its earliest days, the Labour Party had an extremely federal structure, with no individual membership until 1918. The first Labour MPs stood on behalf of their own trade union and socialist organisations, on the basis that they would work together in parliament once elected. On a much smaller scale, TUSC has now been bringing together different forces to contest elections for fifteen years as a result of its federal 'umbrella' approach. Today, a broadly similar

approach is needed for a new party, allowing individual members, but also both the different organisations that are already fighting for a workers' voice in the electoral field – including the various groupings of left independent and local councillors – and future forces that could be won to a new party, to collaborate together while maintaining their own identities and programmes. In addition to trade union organisations, there are all kinds of other groups of campaigners – on Palestine, climate, disabled activists, trans rights campaigners, Black Lives Matter and more – who could be won to a new party on that basis.

Some may argue that a federal approach would be an obstacle to building a fighting party that is involved in struggle, but the opposite is true. For example, in the 1980s the Socialist Party – then Militant – played a leading role in the mass struggle of Liverpool City Council against the Thatcher government. The District Labour Party was the key body via which the course of the struggle was decided at each stage. It had 400 or so delegates from unions, ward Labour parties and so on – there as representative delegates, not accidental individuals – it was a kind of parliament of the workers' movement. The creation of a party able to play that role in the many struggles ahead would be a tremendous step forward in increasing the unity and cohesion of the working class.

Others may argue that a top-down, centralised, approach is needed for electoral success, but that is also untrue. There are many lessons to be learned from the different new left parties that developed in other European countries in the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2007-09. Perhaps the starkest are the lessons of Greece. Syriza – the Coalition of the Radical Left – went from being a minor party to winning 26% of the vote in 2012, and it did so as a loose, federal 'coalition'. After that – prior to winning the general election in 2015 – it was centralised with a top-down structure which meant the President only faced election every three years. This did not happen in order to win the general election, however, but rather because Syriza was clearly on course



Protest outside Parliament against cuts to disabled people's benefits PAUL MATSSON

to win the general election. It was part of a desperate attempt by the capitalist class to try and ensure a Syriza government would not challenge their interests in office. In the event, tragically, the heroic Greek working class were betrayed by the Syriza government, which ended up implementing vicious austerity.

For a socialist programme

This raises a final, vital point. What is needed is not just to build a workers' party with a mass base, but to build one with a programme and leadership capable of leading a successful struggle for socialism. The Socialist Party argues that will require decisive measures, such as nationalising the major corporations and banks, under democratic workers' control. There are bound to be different ideas within a new party on these crucial issues, and there may be some who want to attempt to avoid discussion on them and therefore do not want freedom for different political trends to argue for their programme as part of a new party. Such an approach could lead – as with Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party – to a new initiative being stillborn, and it is also utopian. Faced with the many tactical and strategic questions that will face a party that is serious about fighting in the interests of the working class, discussion and debate on the way forward at each stage are inevitable. Any serious steps towards creating a party within which the working class can begin such debates, however, would be an important step forward.

• Originally published on Friday 4 July at socialistparty.org.uk

Suggested reading at socialismtoday.org

- **Corbyn, the left and the fight for a new mass workers' party** May 2023
- **What happened to the Socialist Alliance?** November 2001 and November 2003
- **Learning the lessons of Syriza** May 2025



Zarah Sultana MP speaking in support of the nurses' strike in 2023 REEL NEWS/CC



Gordon Brown at the UN RICCARDO SANI/CC

World's ex-leaders worry about inequality

The only answer is to fight for socialism

SAM SMITHSON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Over 40 world leaders, including former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, have called for a “powerful shift” in world economic policy “to address rising threats of poverty, disparity and environmental breakdown,” in reaction to the news that the next fifty years could see the emergence of the world’s first trillionaires while the majority of the world face destitution. In an open letter sent by the Club de Madrid group, a conference of former Prime Ministers and Presidents, they correctly identify that the world’s economic model is “outdated,” and that, “trillions of dollars exist for financing development – but too much public money is captured by private power,” calling for taxation on high-net-worth individuals.

We welcome this apparent damascene conversion by Mr Brown and his fellow Club de Madrid pro-capitalist leaders, who, while in power, did little to assist the working class and the millions who live in abject poverty globally. Their careers have instead done far more to bolster the profits of the very capitalists who are on track to become trillionaires. Gordon Brown was prime minister when the banks were bailed out to the tune of £137 billion to save their system from collapsing in 2007-08.

The letter, unsurprisingly, fails to take into consideration that the levels of inequality are an inherent

condition of the capitalist system. Capitalism concentrates wealth in the hands of a very small minority of uber-wealthy individuals and corporations. Poverty and inequality are not accidents of the system, they are how it functions. People all around the world are furious at their living conditions, and that anger won’t be dampened by utopian appeals for the bosses to be nicer. The policies suggested in this letter, like the calling for higher taxation on multi-national corporations, will be watered down or ignored by the capitalist classes around the globe unless they have the power of working-class people breathing down their necks, as it would mean a reduction in their profits.

How do we end inequality?

A serious programme to deal with the obscene wealth at one end, and poverty for the masses at the other, would need to have the democratic restructuring of society under the control of the working class central to it. The surpluses of large corporations could go to nationalised services, such as medical programmes that would provide care for all and large-scale housing projects that would ensure everyone has shelter, instead of the back pockets of the rich as mega-profits. As the anger and inequality grows, the need for a socialist alternative will also.

One of Club de Madrid’s main causes for concern is the looming climate crisis, which threatens

even the capitalist status quo. It is the world’s poorest who will be most affected by the consequences of climate change, but again, the only actual solutions lay in the removal of the profit motive of large corporations who pollute the planet at the expense of the rest of us. We could start by bringing the large energy companies and the banks into democratic public ownership, shifting production and investment into green energy alternatives; making the bosses, not working-class and poor people pay.

Capitalism has no answers and neither do the politicians who defend that system. No matter what the Club de Madrid leaders think, the only people who can solve inequality are the working class. If you want to fight for a world without billionaires or even trillionaires then you should join the Socialist Party to fight for real socialist change and so no one has to live in poverty.

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London’s Met Police more likely to criminalise Black children

Fight back against racist policing

TJ DINIZ MOTA
LEEDS AND WEST YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

London’s police frequently serve not as they claim to be protectors of all communities, but as enforcers of inequality, especially for Black and other minority residents. Black children aged 10-17 who are stopped and arrested by the Met Police are around 15% less likely than their white peers to be offered diversion programmes – mentoring or counselling that can prevent early criminalisation – even after accounting for offence type and prior history, according to a report by the Youth Endowment Fund. In knife-crime cases, just 17% of Black children were diverted, compared with 35% of white children. This goes beyond coincidence; it’s structural inequity.

Stop-and-search powers exacerbate the problem. Black people in London are stopped about 5.5 times more than white people; Asian people about 1.4 times more. And yet, when white Londoners are searched, crime is more often detected – 30.5% lead to further action, versus 26.7% for Black people. These tactics do little to reduce crime – increases of 10% in searches, correlate with less than a 2% drop in drug offences. Meanwhile, youth of colour are framed as ‘dangerous’ and subjected to over-policing, especially in poorer working-class areas of London.

Child Q

Case in point: ‘Child Q,’ a 15-year-old Black schoolgirl in Hackney was strip-searched in a school medical room without an appropriate adult during her period over an unfounded suspicion of cannabis possession. Two officers were eventually dismissed for gross misconduct, but her trauma – and broader community distrust – still stand as testament to systemic failure.

And the Met is rolling out more invasive surveillance in Black and

Black people in London are stopped by police 5.5 times more than white people

minority neighbourhoods around the city with facial-recognition cameras. It’s no surprise that diverse Croydon is the borough where permanent facial-recognition cameras are being deployed first. Although they claim false positives are rare, watchdog groups disagree and, upon deeper investigation, find otherwise. Given the facts and the Met’s history, how can we trust its claims and that it won’t be fooled by these overstatements and the saviour rhetoric. It would be a step forward to see a shift from reactive treatment to predictive and preventative care in many areas of our health service. And introducing health centres in areas with the lowest life expectancy could reduce health inequalities.

But without the proper resourcing of all these facilities, and pay and conditions that can attract and retain workers, the plan is doomed to fail.

There are clear issues in the published plan:

Performance pressures

The plan gives leaders and managers new freedoms, including the power to undertake performance appraisals. This is supposedly to reward high-performing staff but would also give managers the power to act decisively where they identify ‘underperformance’. This would mean reduced job security and added performance-related stress to NHS workers already overworked and underpaid.

Increased workload in community settings

The shift from hospitals to neighbourhood health centres could end up stretching existing staff thinner, especially if recruitment doesn’t keep pace with demand. GPs warn that expanding services without matching investment could overwhelm practices. Some have already said that the plan looks to be “disastrous” for GPs, as restructuring is not combined with additional funding.

Fewer staff by 2035

Despite promises of better training and career development, the plan anticipates fewer NHS staff than projected in previous workforce plans. This could mean heavier workloads and slower career progression for existing workers.

We need a fully funded NHS which removes the profit motive entirely from healthcare. Health funding that ends up being wasted by ending up as profits for private health companies or paying off expensive PFI (Private Finance Initiative) schemes could be used to expand health services and make use of advances in technology. The big pharmaceutical companies, private health vultures and medical supply companies should be nationalised under democratic workers’ control and management. A socialist healthcare system would prioritise human need over corporate profit. It would ensure that all GPs and healthcare workers have secure, well-paid jobs with manageable workloads, allowing them to focus on providing the best possible care.



Black Lives Matter protesters in 2020 JUDY BEISHON

NHS 10 Year Plan: we need more funding not more privatisation

SAMANTHA ERIN
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

On 3 July, the Labour government published its 10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future. The plan highlights that “the choice for the NHS is stark: reform or die.” It also says that the plan will take a new course and reimagines the NHS through “transformational change that will guarantee its sustainability for generations to come”.

However, people shouldn’t be fooled by these overstatements and the saviour rhetoric. It would be a step forward to see a shift from reactive treatment to predictive and preventative care in many areas of our health service. And introducing health centres in areas with the lowest life expectancy could reduce health inequalities.

But without the proper resourcing of all these facilities, and pay and conditions that can attract and retain workers, the plan is doomed to fail.

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MARY FINCH

Starmer sets SEND funding in crosshairs for cuts

Starmer has emerged from one debacle trying to force through cuts that would hit some of the most vulnerable in society, bruised but ready to try again! And this time its children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that face the axe.

£6 billion of SEND spending is set to be put on councils’ budget sheets in March 2026 and, after a decade and a half of cuts and no fight back from councillors, council finances are already shaky.

The options considered by Labour education minister Bridget Philipson? They’re not considering investing to bring schools and services out of the private sector and end the money wasted that winds up as profits. Like with the disability benefits cuts, they want to attack eligibility, which will impact thousands of children. But like with the attempted disability cuts, a mass movement with the trade unions, including those representing education workers, can fight back against these cruel cuts.



MINISTERIE VAN BUITENLANDSE ZAKEN/CC

Let’s fight to make Labour scrap the two-child benefit cap

JOE WOOLFALL
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Despite rumours that Labour was considering lifting the two-child benefit cap (the Tory-imposed cap which prevents parents from claiming Universal Credit or child tax credit for more than two children), reports are now claiming these plans are ‘dead’. This is seen as the ‘price’ for the concessions on welfare benefit cuts as Rachel Reeves would feel compelled to make deeper cuts elsewhere to afford the £3.4 billion a year it would cost to scrap the cap and keep ‘the markets’ on side.

Child poverty is a massive issue now, and scrapping the two-child benefit cap would instantly lift 250,000 children out of poverty. A government which stood up for the working class and the poorest in our society would see the reversal of this cruel Tory legislation as a no-brainer. For Starmer and co, voting to scrap the cap was enough to kick MPs out of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

But we have seen how quickly money becomes available when Trump demanded Starmer and other European leaders raise ‘defence’

spending. The priorities of the pro-capitalist Labour government are made clear: more money for war but not for ending child poverty. Reeves and Starmer refuse to take the wealth off the super rich to help people shows that they stand for the bosses.

The government claims that, with the recent U-turn on PIP and other welfare benefits for disabled people, they cannot afford to help children out of poverty. But the external pressure from disability campaigners, trade unionists and others, forced the government to partially reverse their vicious austerity plans. In truth, the revolt of Labour politicians was primarily because of the pressure exerted on them by their constituents.

The welfare cuts debacle shows how weak the Labour government really is. Campaigners, along with the working class and the poorest in our society would see the reversal of this cruel Tory legislation as a no-brainer. For Starmer and co, voting to scrap the cap was enough to kick MPs out of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

But we have seen how quickly money becomes available when Trump demanded Starmer and other European leaders raise ‘defence’

now, it will only increase if the crisis of working-class political representation is addressed with a new mass party that can democratically represent us.

BANKER'S GREED OR PEOPLE'S NEEDS
Cut Bonuses Not Benefits



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CWU conference backs leadership's restructuring plans, but union can still be built with a fighting programme

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN CWU

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) held a special restructuring conference in June to approve the cost-saving restructuring plans proposed by the National Executive Committee (NEC), after losing 33,000 members since 2019.

Close vote

Branches submitted several amendments and there was lots of debate, particularly around the NEC's plan to move to two-yearly general conferences and make changes to regional structures, including having one officer cover two regions. Some of the votes were quite close - a branch motion to keep assistant regional secretaries had to be decided by a card vote.

Despite this, the NEC's position of opposing all but one branch policy motion and two branch rule changes was the outcome of the conference. The NEC strongly argued that, in order to remain a stand-alone union, branches must accept their proposed changes, given the serious cuts already made at HQ, losing half (64) of the staff in recent years.

While Socialist Party members agreed with the need to reduce spending, we made it clear that

it shouldn't be at the cost of lay-member democracy. Our members opposed the move to two-yearly conferences. The NEC had failed to get this agreed on its previous two attempts, but succeeded this year.

Since restructuring began, our members have argued that we need a fighting political and industrial strategy to save the union. It was only at an online meeting the Monday before conference that the NEC explained their new organising strategy. The plans for member-led organising campaigns are a step in the right direction, so is a strong push into the unrecognised workplaces in communication industries.

Job cuts

However, the union must also fight to improve pay and conditions in the CWU's core businesses: Royal Mail, BT, and the Post Office. These businesses have reduced their workforces, despite billions in profits since privatisation. They are threatening to continue this with BT announcing that 55,000 jobs are to be axed by 2030, due to automation.

CWU is also working with Royal Mail on changes to the six-day posting requirements (the Universal Service Obligation), changes which the

owners argue are necessary to compete with gig economy firms like Evri. Ultimately, capitalist market competition will work to worsen the service and drive down workers' pay and conditions.

Whose side are you on?

That's why we've called for a political campaign to renationalise these businesses. The CWU should call on MPs - including Jeremy Corbyn, the independents, suspended Labour MPs and the 49 who rebelled on welfare cuts - to move a motion for renationalisation in parliament. The CWU got Royal Mail nationalisation voted into Labour's policy at the party conference in 2022, yet the union leadership didn't demand this when employers justified worsened conditions with the threat of insolvency. Instead, they accepted the private equity takeover!

Our members will continue to push for the CWU to work with other unions in creating a new mass workers' party that can fight for nationalisation and the interests of union members. At the least, the union should open its political strategy so that it can support candidates that align with the union regardless of if they are in or outside of the Labour Party.

Tens of thousands of posties in CWU protesting outside Parliament during their 2022-2023 strike SOCIALIST PARTY



● Resident doctors vote to strike

"It's time for Wes Streeting to find a credible path to pay restoration. Failing that, we'll be calling for a strike of resident doctors [formerly known as junior doctors] across England, with

dates to follow", the British Medical Association (BMA) has said. More than 90% voted to strike on a 55% turnout.

Doctors in England and Wales

were awarded a 5.4% pay increase by the government. RPI inflation is currently at 4.3%, the BMA argues the pay rise is not enough to repair years of real-terms cuts.



Unite striking with UCU at Liverpool uni last month LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialists set the tone at Unite policy conference

KEVIN PARSLAW

DELEGATE TO UNITE POLICY CONFERENCE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

With general secretary Sharon Graham to speak on 9 July and key debates on Palestine and funding happening after this issue of the Socialist goes to press, early debates at the 2025 Unite the Union policy conference centred on industrial and social policy.

One of several Socialist Party and Unite Broad Left (UBL) members who spoke, Nancy Taaffe, delegate from the London and Eastern Not for Profit sector, moved a resolution calling for urgent repeal of the anti-trade union laws, including the Tory turnout thresholds. The motion, she said, "reflects our anger on the delay to the Employment Rights Bill. The delay is a joke but no one's laughing. We need to link to a party that fights for us." Nancy later spoke in the debate on pensions, calling for the nationalisation of pension funds.

NHS

Len Hockey moved the Barts Trust branch motion on the NHS, which outlined how cuts in the service and unremitting privatisation was ruining our health service. The huge increase of wealth for those on the 'Rich List' contrasted with the 40% real-terms pay cut for health workers since 2010.

The 'continuity' politics of underfunding the NHS is not a mistake or miscalculation by the Starmer government, but a deliberate policy for all public services. Many delegates criticised the Labour government for not carrying out the promised 'change'.

Len made the point that, despite

the change to the resolution demanded by the Standing Orders Committee, which removed reference to Unite working with Jeremy Corbyn and all supportive MPs of whichever party or none, his branch stands for unrelenting socialist policies to end the crisis facing working people.

Continuity politics was also a feature of the debate on housing, where Ian Clements of the Unite LE1111 Housing Branch said that Thatcherite policies continued in housing, relying on the 'market' to provide homes, which are mainly expensive or unaffordable to most workers. He also mentioned that Zohran Mamdani, who won the Democratic primary for New York mayor, promised rent controls. Housing associations can also be very anti-union, he said, with attacks on reps at some.

Welfare state

Eileen Hunter from the West Midlands Health RISC (Regional Industrial Sector Committee), moved the motion opposing attacks on the welfare state. "The welfare state should be from the cradle to the grave, not just the cradle and the grave."

Unite Broad Left supporter Oisín Mulholland - who led rent strikes at Swansea University during Covid - had also spoken in the housing debate, called for Unite to back the calls for universal free higher education.

Socialists have begun the conference by showing the way forward for a fighting Unite. There will be bigger battles during the week over how to fight capitalism domestically and internationally, but the first day has given a positive start to the conference.

UCU FE members must prepare now for national action in the autumn

University and College Union (UCU) Further Education Committee (FEC) met on 4 July. This was an urgent sequel to UCU Congress in May, where the separate sector conferences of both higher education (HE) and further education (FE) overwhelmingly resolved to prepare for national coordinated strike action in the autumn in England.

Motivating this decision was Labour's continued refusal to tackle the funding crisis that is devastating the whole of the post-16 education sector. The announcement of £160 million additional post-16 education funding the day before UCU congress, although inadequate and coming alongside cuts to the adult skills fund, showed that the government is aware of the anger among our members and is wary of facing industrial action.

The FE employers' body, the Association of Colleges, has yet to make a recommendation on pay for this year, which continues to fall relative to school teachers. More and more good staff leave the profession. UCU's main demands include a 10% pay rise to begin to close the pay gap, and a binding national bargaining framework to ensure any improvements in pay and working conditions are implemented in all colleges, not just some.

Members' willingness to fight was demonstrated by the FE indicative ballot, which closed with 86% voting 'yes' to strike action in the autumn.

So implementing FE sector conference decisions and the will of our members was the central task for the FEC.

Differences on the FEC

Comparisons with the 'Respect FE' campaign of 2023, the last time UCU held an indicative ballot in FE, are likely to be made. That ballot was launched in March 2023, at a time when doctors, nurses, teachers and UCU HE workers were all out on strike against the Tory government. This year's indicative ballot has taken place in the first year of Starmer's Labour government with workers increasingly becoming aware that this government is not going to deliver, but at this stage only at the beginnings of steps towards national action. It is therefore really significant that the indicative ballot achieved a similar percentage of members voting 'yes'.

Whatever the turnout, members are not less bothered about low pay than they were two years ago. But the 'Respect FE' campaign was replaced with the 'New deal for FE' campaign in spring 2024. This campaign has so far lacked national coordination and leadership. It has involved a deliberate strategy of individual branches being left to pursue local claims, a step back from the national coordination of 2022-23. Temporary support was won for this strategy when members were hopeful that the imminent Labour government would deliver for members.



UCU during 2022-2023 strike wave

Consequently, 2024 saw the fewest pay disputes in FE for a number of years, and these were not coordinated. But there is widespread anger and a sense that local bargaining has not been successful.

It is clear that there are differences at the FEC between those who want to fight for members and provide

maximum support to branches so they can participate in coordinated action, and some who, backed by unelected officials, want to delay and retreat on democratic decisions, until an arbitrary time when the union is deemed 'ready'.

Yes, it is important to have a serious campaign to prepare members,

give confidence and organise for as big a turnout as possible to get over the Tory turnout thresholds that are disgracefully still in place under this Labour government. But it is clear now that the New Deal for FE strategy so far has not given a strong lead and has not improved the organisational capacity of branches - it has done nothing to make the union 'ballot ready'.

Build a campaign

But reps and members should be confident. Starmer and Reeves's government is weak, buckling on so many fronts, and can be pushed to make concessions if the unions apply pressure.

Socialist activists need to fight to hold firm and keep the dispute as coordinated and national as much as possible, during a time when branches could be under pressure to settle their local pay negotiations during the summer and early autumn, or are excluded on other bases.

We are pushing for maximum support for branches to get them over the turnout threshold, including pushing for stronger branches to help support less-developed ones, and for NEC members to arrange to speak at branch meetings.

We are also campaigning for the congress motion for a national demonstration on the autumn around Budget Day to be implemented. That would bring together all branches, whether formally in dispute or not, to build support for our demands and maximise pressure on the government.

● *In a move that will make preparations more difficult, members of the FEC have been told they can only report to UCU members that the ballot will open in the autumn, and no other detail will be shared before the new academic year. Socialist Party members on the FEC argue that members should be informed of the detail and a serious campaign begin as soon as possible.*

PCS fights for recognition at civil service pensions administrator Demand Labour government brings the contract in-house

STEVE ION
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

On 7 July, a solid and determined picket of PCS members at pensions administrator MyCSP in Liverpool launched the start of a six-week strike. The campaign is for full trade union recognition, and involves members in Liverpool and Cheadle Hulme.

MyCSP currently administers 1.7 million civil service pension scheme members. PCS members carry out a range of roles including pension administration, telephone staff, team leaders and senior managers.

We want our rights

These members demand the right to negotiate better terms and conditions as they transfer to Capita, the company which has won the contract from MyCSP.

The transfer takes place on 1 December. Although being transferred under TUPE - regulations which protect rights when workers are transferred between employers - the old and new employers are using the pre-transfer period to try to reduce terms and conditions and effectively derecognise the union. Conditions continue to be eroded even for those on legacy (pre-privatisation) contracts as ex-civil servants.

The majority of staff at MyCSP are only paid the living wage, but may receive a share of annual dividends as the company charges government departments for services. Members have been told the dividends will no longer apply after TUPE. However, even when the dividends did apply, they were expected to work above and beyond simply to justify earning the dividend.

MyCSP currently refuses to formally recognise PCS for collective bargaining or otherwise, so has excluded the union during this transfer. The company has set up a more pliable employee representation to try to cut across the union.

Backfired

So far this has backfired - members continue to join the union and have voted overwhelmingly for action! As the support for the dispute grows, this adds to the further pressure on the employer.

Members are determined and confident that they will achieve recognition, which will put them in a stronger position when they enter negotiations with incoming employer Capita. Their work is highly specialised, and action should be felt by the employer quite quickly.



PCS pension administrators on strike STEVE ION

I spoke to one member on the picket line who agreed that, alongside continued pressure on MyCSP, this dispute could be settled by the union demanding to meet with Starmer's Labour government ministers,

to put pressure on them to bring the contract in-house and recognise the union.

● Solidarity and messages of support to adam@pcs.org.uk

NSSN CONFERENCE 2025: PREPARING TO TAKE ON STARMER AND THE BOSSES



The conference of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) met on 5 July, bringing together trade unionists from around the country at a crucial time. A video showed photo after photo of NSSN banners and supporters on picket lines and protests. In the hall were striking workers, trade union reps and leaders, NHS and education workers, civil servants, workers in the private sector; young people at their first conference and movement veterans.

Helen Pattison, Socialist Party Executive Committee, reports.

'Starmer can be forced to retreat - now the workers' movement must take the lead'

In opening the conference, NSSN chair **Rob Williams** reminded us that last year, NSSN conference took place during the general election. The Tories were weeks away from being ousted from power, that was clear. That's why the discussion last year focused on the need to fight for a workers' manifesto. Similarly, the bakers' union BFAWU had put out their aptly named "Bakers' Dozen" manifesto, listing demands on the next government.

But a year on, this Labour government has gone on the offensive against the working class, including its most vulnerable sections. Labour may have won a sizeable majority in parliament, but events have shown it can still be rocked by crisis. Starmer, Kendall and co. "wanted to celebrate their year in office by inflicting vicious welfare reform, billions of pounds of cuts, against some of the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities". But they had suffered a massive setback, forced to U-turn on big sections of their welfare reform bill.

"The fight against that bill must continue but the biggest lesson from last week is that Starmer and his government can be forced to retreat.

Now, the trade unions, representing millions of workers, must lead that struggle."

Katrine Williams, chairing the conference, explained how Cardiff Trades Council's motion to the national Trades Council conference, against attacks on disability benefits, will be going to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in September. It says that the TUC should call a mass demonstration against the austerity Starmer's government is delivering. The NSSN encouraged all attendees to take a model motion which repeats this call, and for a lobby outside the TUC in Brighton on Sunday 7 September, to put pressure on the TUC to take these next vital steps.

In fact, the theme of the day was that now is the time for the workers' movement to take a lead on the many issues facing the working class. And there are many issues: from the whipping up of racism and division, the welfare attacks, the Supreme Court ruling being used against trans rights and the huge alienation from politics felt by millions.

The workers' movement can't take a back seat on these questions, it must take a lead.



Left to right: Ian Hodson, Steve Gillan, Katrine Williams, Rob Williams, Steve Wright, Fiona Brittle, Paula Peters PAUL MATTSSON



Onay Kasab, left, introduces Birmingham and Sheffield bin strikers ERIC SEGAL

Strike solidarity

The largest group of striking workers represented were bin workers from Birmingham and Sheffield. They were joined by the inspiring **Caroline**, a striking Gloucestershire phlebomist: "For years we have been asking for our pay banding to be reviewed," in recognition of their skilled work. But when they were denied yet again, she said they drew the conclusion "that the only way that we were ever going to get anywhere... was to join a union." Now all the 'magnificent 37' are in Unison and have been on strike since 17 March.

The bin workers from Birmingham and Sheffield were introduced by

Onay Kasab, Unite the Union lead officer. Before inviting them to the mic, he listed some of the recent victories by workers in Unite.

Not only do both bin disputes involve Labour-run councils, both have employed scab labour. **Dan** from Birmingham said their dispute is against a huge attack on pay which would see drivers lose £8,000 a year and a safety critical role. Using court injunctions, backed up by heavy policing of picket lines, the employers are doing all they can to prevent pickets from stopping wagons leaving depots.

In Sheffield, Veolia, which runs the bins outsourced by the Labour-led

council, refuses to recognise Unite as the workers' chosen union - "Unite members are simply asking to have the rep of their choice at the negotiating table". **Joel** told the conference that their strike "has lasted nearly as long as the miners' strike" - 11 months.

Pete Randle, who spoke at NSSN conference in 2022 as a striking bin worker in Coventry, reported on that strike victory.

- There will be a second 'mega-picket' in Birmingham on 25 July and a mass picket in Sheffield on 9 July.

A workers' political alternative

The NSSN doesn't take a position in relation to political parties. Nevertheless, discussion on the need for the workers' movement to have its own party was a huge feature of the day.

We met just days after Zarah Sultana's announcement that she plans to co-lead a new party with Jeremy Corbyn (see pages 2-3). **Ian Hodson**, president of the BFAWU, welcomed the announcement. "While we queue at foodbanks, they dine on caviar and champagne... Starmer's Labour Party has chosen to balance the economy on the backs of the poorest in our society... We as working-class people have to organise to defeat this Labour government".

Steve Wright, newly elected general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), reiterated his intention for the union to work with the NSSN. He said he wants to make sure that every workplace in the fire service is "a bastion of the FBU". The NSSN can help bring together "activists in workplaces up and down the UK and bring that power and strength to the forefront".

Austerity

Fire services have lost 12,000 firefighters due to austerity. "We cannot see the difference between Tory austerity and Labour austerity... but we need to start demanding that change." Steve went on to say that "at our conference five weeks ago, our delegates debated whether we should stay affiliated to the Labour Party. I said 'We're in the party, we need to demand change from inside'. But that line won't last much longer."

Steve Gillan, general secretary of the Prison Officers Association (POA), said Labour "had an opportunity in 1997 to make major changes to the lives of working-class people, just like Starmer's government has had a major opportunity. And over the last year, I'm afraid to say it's just as bad as what happened in 1997". While arguing for socialists to fight within the

Labour Party, he added "Who would have thought a Labour government would endorse a two-child benefit cap?" Workers aren't looking to Reform because they have all the answers, but because "they are filling a void".

Eddie Dempsey, transport union RMT general secretary, unfortunately couldn't make it but we did hear from RMT London regional officer, **Jared Wood**, speaking from the floor in a personal capacity. On Zarah Sultana's announcement, he said unions had to "not just observe this development", but "the trade union movement has to shape the development. It has to talk to Zarah Sultana, to Jeremy Corbyn, to others; it has to put forward demands for how that party should develop" and take the lead.

Sign the petition

Nancy Taaffe, a Unite workplace rep, said the announcement would "change the atmosphere in this country, already people are talking about the possibility of a new formation on the left". She urged support for the petition "Time for trade unions to take the lead in forming a new working-class party, initiated by former Labour MP and socialist councillor Dave Nellist and 35 current and former executive members of different trade unions.

David Maples, a Unison member, said that disgracefully only three of the 60 Unison-supported Labour MPs voted against the welfare reform bill. He said that Unison should put pressure on the others to vote against the bill when it's back in front of parliament on 9 July. Because if they don't, the debate already taking place among members about the union's links to Labour would intensify.

Speaking on behalf of Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC) was **Paula Peters**. She listed the names of three Labour MPs who had abstained on the welfare reform bill. "That is

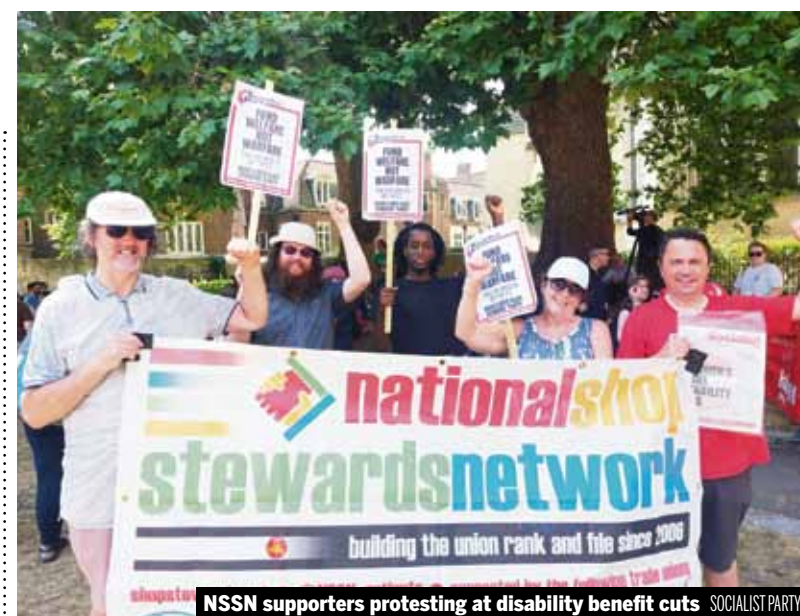
not good enough, there is only one way to vote and that is to vote the bill down!" A PCS member speaking from the floor said that his union was, and can be again, a force which defended both workers' rights and people using government services. In the DWP, union activists are fighting for a socialist social security system, an end to sanctions and instead to provide the services claimants need.

Newly elected University and College Union (UCU) National Executive Committee (NEC) member **Marco Tesi** told the meeting how he had taken a motion to UCU conference calling on the NEC to invite Jeremy Corbyn and other pro-worker MPs to discuss how they can best represent the union and its battles in parliament.

Anti-union laws

Still, POA members are banned from taking strike action because of restrictive anti-union laws. The Labour government has already had a year, and yet that ban, the Tory turnout thresholds, and the other anti-union laws which Starmer said would be repealed, are still in place. As **Lois Austin** pointed out when she reported on the Spycops inquiry, the government can act quickly to proscribe protesters as terrorists, but workers are now being told we will have to wait till 2027 for any action on employment rights.

It's a political choice by Starmer not to repeal anti-union laws. As **Fiona Brittle**, from the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) NEC, speaking in a personal capacity, said: "Any new party... has to be built on trade unions and trade union democracy". Otherwise, she said, it risks losing accountability. "Who does Keir Starmer go back to? He goes back to big business. We need a new party to go to the working class to ask for approval, to hand power to workers organised in trade unions".



NSSN supporters protesting at disability benefit cuts SOCIALIST PARTY

National strike action

Fiona Brittle reiterated that the trade unions shouldn't be propping up Starmer's government by offering "industrial peace". But workers are wise to Starmer's attacks: "Partly because we can feel it in our wallets, partly because we haven't noticed any increase in our living standards - in fact, we have seen a decrease". She said: "Labour promised the greatest wave of insourcing in a generation, where is that?" Instead, she said that outsourcing had continued and as many as one in ten jobs were at risk in the civil service. "The time for hollow words from politicians who implement austerity and prop up capitalism is well past time to be over; and the time of fighting talk without action must be next on the chopping block".

Ed Harlow, vice president of the National Education Union (NEU) said that since 2010 it's just been "cut, cut and cut" in education. He highlighted "an entire generation of children who have been through an education system knowing only cuts and decline". He also revealed that nine of every 30 kids in a class are living in poverty. He said that we needed to be "genuinely fighting for an alternative that puts people not profit at the heart of our system".

Shelia Caffrey from the NEU NEC, speaking from the floor in a personal capacity, said "First we had an announcement of a 2.8% pay offer with no funding, leaving schools to foot the bill". Even when the offer was increased to 4%, after a big vote in the union's indicative ballot, it left a £500,000 shortfall in funding. "Partnership" isn't working for education workers or children: "There's only one solution: fight! We've had hundreds of local NEU strike ballots across England since January, winning against redundancies, winning against

changes to conditions and winning improvements for hundreds of members. But without national funding, education is in absolute crisis. We need a national ballot for a national fight back!" Sheila demanded.

UCU activists spoke, including NEC member **Duncan Moore**, who outlined the strikes taking place across universities and FE colleges against cuts and redundancies. Some have succeeded in beating back redundancies. Another NEC member **Christina Paine** backed these points up. UCU congress had voted for national strike action in HE and FE, but parts of the union's leadership are trying to frustrate steps towards action.

In local government, Unison activist **Hugo Pierre** said that Starmer could decide tomorrow to end the funding crisis in councils, where one in three could have to file for 'bankruptcy'. "He could write that cheque now!" Hugo argued for councils to set no-cuts budgets and demand the money from the government, something the Socialist Party has campaigned for. **Onay Kasab** pointed out how that is Unite policy. Unite predicts that a 1% tax on individuals with assets exceeding £4 million could generate £25 billion annually for public services. That money could easily plug the hole in council funding and the NHS.

NHS worker **Roger Davey** outlined the lack of funding and huge amount of privatisation going on in the NHS. He warned that "venture capitalists" are taking over community services, but at the same time he said "not to underestimate what Wes Streeting's 'productivity drive' is going to do".



Odun speaking on Nigeria Solidarity UK (see page 10) PAUL MATTSSON



PAULA MITCHELL

NSSN CONFERENCE 2025 CONTINUED



NSSN marching against racism SOCIALIST PARTY

Workers' unity against war and division

As hundreds of thousands of workers and young people have marched against the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza, **Kevin Parslow**, Waltham Forest Trades Council secretary, argued that trade union leaders should “put the union movement at the front of the anti-war movement”. He said that it was wrong to welcome increased defence spending - instead, as well as backing workers in the defence industry who object to sending arms to Israel, unions should demand nationalisation of the arms industry. In place of “huge profits from death and destruction”, democratic nationalisation would both defend jobs and allow discussion about production for social need.

A related theme of the conference was about how the workers' movement can fight division.

Ellie Waple from Surrey Unison, who had stood for Unison NEC and faced attack in the press as a trans woman, talked about transphobia being whipped up by the right-wing media, Reform and Starmer. She said: “Starmer welcomed the Supreme Court guidance (against trans people) and that’s not a Labour Party I want to belong to, that’s not a Labour Party I want my trade union to belong too”.

Odun, a Nigerian socialist, updated the conference on the court case in Nigeria, where activists have been charged with treason for protesting against the government’s anti-poor policies. **Lawanya** from Tamil Solidarity and the Refugee Rights Campaign answered Starmer’s divisive rhetoric that Britain could “become an island of strangers”, with clear demands for pay, jobs and homes that can unite all of the working class.

NIPSA

Carmel Gates, general secretary of Northern Ireland public sector union NIPSA, sent a video message.

She linked the need for fighting trade unions with the fight against racism and division. NIPSA is a growing union, 18% in the last four years, which Carmel put down to “the activity we’ve been engaged in”, including the public sector general strike in January last year. Within a fortnight of the strike, the collapsed Northern Ireland assembly was back, “largely in part due to the action that we took and the pressure we put on them to come back and resolve the pay dispute... We managed to win additional funding.”

The “cost-of-living crisis and working-class communities being driven into extreme poverty has fuelled the lies that are being told by the far right”. The north of Ireland has “the longest waiting list in Europe of people waiting for operations” and a significant housing problem. But “NIPSA has been to the forefront of all of the counter-protests that have taken place. We have argued, sometimes as a lone voice, for the trade unions to front up demonstrations.” NIPSA has asked other trade unions to join it in “providing stewards, so those who are attending the counter-protests and challenging the far right can do so safely”. NIPSA has also called on ICTU (the TUC in Ireland) to set up and train formal stewards to keep protesters safe.

Youth walk out against Trump

Starmer was quite happy to pass on the King’s invitation to Trump for a visit. But ordinary people are not so pleased. **Adam Gillman** from Socialist Students spoke to highlight the campaign calling for Trump walkouts in schools, colleges and universities. He reported that a union in Los Angeles whose leader was arrested protesting the immigration raids “has just led a 48-hour strike of 50,000 LA county workers”, and asked for the trade unions pass a motion to show solidarity with students walking out.



1PM SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER - THE OLD SHIP HOTEL, 32-38 KINGS RD, BRIGHTON BN1 1NR

LOBBY THE TUC

CALL A NATIONAL DEMO AGAINST STARMER'S CUTS!

The first year of Starmer's Labour government is not what workers voted for in the general election. After 14 years of Tory cuts, working-class people have had to face yet more austerity unleashed on them and their communities. This includes its vicious Welfare Reform Bill to slash disability benefits.

SHOPSTEWARDS.NET



Do workers really have a ‘seat at the table’ in this government, as some trade union leaders suggest? Clearly, we don’t. The NSSN conference showed that trade unions have huge power to force political change and defend their members. It’s the job of fighters and socialists in the trade unions to fight for a clear political and industrial strategy which can take on Starmer and the 1%.

That’s why the NSSN has called a lobby of the TUC Congress in Brighton on Sunday 7 September. We want a strategy that uses the huge weight of the working class against the government and bosses’ attacks.



Part of the 2024 lobby of the TUC ISAI MARJERLA

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Unions must act to protect trans and intersex people

FRANKIE COULTAS
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Since the recent supreme court ruling on the legal definition of 'woman' in the Equality Act, fear among trans people in the workplace and public has ramped up.

The Labour government has shown that it cannot be relied on to protect our rights. Under cover of the Cass Review, it is denying trans children access to necessary healthcare. The government is threatening to proceed with a similar approach to adult transgender healthcare.

Attacks on transgender people in the UK are part of a broader and time-tested strategy of the capitalist class to divide the working class along identity lines. By falsely painting trans women as the real threat against women's rights, the government and ruling class hopes to avoid the rightful blame for their decades of attacks on women's services – and the sexism within their system. A divided working class is a weaker working class.

Therefore, trade unions must act. It is very welcome that this summer many trade union conferences passed motions pledging to protect trans and LGBTQ+ people in light of the recent attacks. Now it's time for the leaderships of those unions to put their money where their mouth is.

There are over six million people in trade unions across the UK, including many of the estimated 262,000



PHOTO: HELEN PATTISON

trans people. This is a powerful force that can and must be rallied to protect a vulnerable minority that has been systematically scapegoated, demonised and dehumanised by the Tories and now the Labour government, capitalist judiciary and the media.

It is vital that unions raise a counter narrative and use their influence to bring workers together against

this hateful division. Ultimately, if the government will not act in the interest of all workers (and we know it won't), then trade unions should raise the response of building a party of our own. A party that would harness the power of the working class to defend the rights of the most vulnerable and work towards a future where capitalist division is a relic of the past.

Disability U-turn: Timms review cuts trap



Protesting outside parliament against the cuts PHOTO: ISAI MARJERLA

DAVID MAPLES
SOCIALIST PARTY DISABILITY GROUP CONVENER

To avoid a humiliating defeat for Keir Starmer's Labour government, planned attacks on Personal Independence Payments (PIP) eligibility have been postponed until after a review by disability minister Stephen Timms, due to be published in autumn 2026.

The Stephen Timms review is a trap. Disabled people should have nothing to do with it. The government started with an entirely arbitrary plan to cut £5 billion. It still intends to cut £5 billion. It just doesn't have a plan. Disabled people and our organisations have no

responsibility for this situation.

Socialist Party members have been campaigning to oppose the attacks on disability benefits and for the TUC (Trades Union Congress) and its Disabled Workers Committee to organise a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity, as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people.

Our campaign included a motion on this to the TUC Trades Councils conference, through Cardiff Trades Council, which will now be debated at the TUC Congress in September.

Disabled organisations such as Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC) and Crips Against Cuts led a campaign which turned the

government into disarray. It is now the responsibility of the largest democratic organisations of disabled people, the trade unions, to take up this battle.

Trade unions should also use the period of the review to draw up their own demands, against the cuts and for a benefits system that works for us all. Workplace reps have in-depth experience of the issues that disabled workers encounter. It is working-class people who should reform the benefits system, not to cut spending at the whims of the bosses, but to provide everyone with the support they need, an opportunity for a decent job with decent pay and end the race to the bottom.



MAGGIE FRICKER

UNISON HEALTH AND SAFETY REP, SOUTHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Like the rest of Europe, we've seen record temperatures in the UK because of climate change. It has been blistering, with health warnings across the country. But the danger is not just sitting on the beach, billions of us have to work through these heat waves. It's reported that bus drivers are fainting in unbearable heat on London buses and outside workers are being advised not to work in the middle of the day. For many of us, it's no better working inside. With crippling cuts across the public sector our infrastructure is crumbling with non-existent or inadequate air conditioning for most of us.

Workplace temperatures are increasingly becoming a health and safety issue. In the hospital I work in we are often treating patients in temperatures well above 30°C in the summer months. Not only does this have a detrimental effect on patients but it is a serious threat to staff who can suffer from loss of concentration, brain fog, tiredness and other symptoms of heat stress. There is no legal maximum temperature, but the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, state that the temperature inside workplace buildings must be "reasonable". The approved code of practice is that "all reasonable steps should be taken to achieve a comfortable temperature" and "effective and suitable provision shall be made to ensure that every enclosed workplace is ventilated by a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air". Unfortunately, this legal obligation is being ignored by many

employers who force us to work harder and harder with less and less resources.

The TUC (Trades Union Congress) has for years called for a maximum working temperature of 30°C, or 27°C for strenuous work. Trade unions should be demanding the Labour government include this issue in their, much talked about but little happening, legal changes to workers' rights. But reps also need to act now to fight for improvement in working conditions, access to drinking water, extra breaks, access to good staff-room facilities and to make alternative arrangements to work patterns in hot weather. We have the legal right to stop work if conditions are not safe, as teachers did during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The bosses have no interest in the detrimental effects of climate change on working conditions, as long as their profits keep rolling in. We call for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the energy and the transport industry. This would allow us to plan the best use of resources for the benefit of workers and users alike rather than penny pitching for us and maximising profits for them.

But this rotten system of capitalism is utterly incapable of solving any of these problems for good – with its continuation we have to fight over and over again for better working conditions. In a socialist society we could harness the vast wealth in the world to the benefit of the planet and its populations. So, workers suffering exhaustion, dehydration and heat stress to benefit a handful of greedy bosses will be become a thing of the past.

Join the fightback

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

• Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join or call 020 8988 8777

• or text your name and postcode to 07958 032 071

to find out more about joining us today!





WHAT WE STAND FOR

Capitalism is an ailing, crisis-ridden system based on the exploitation of the majority of the world's population by a small, super-rich elite who own most of the wealth and the means of producing it. This way of organising society, in which the pursuit of profit comes before everything else, causes poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, wars and oppression across the globe.

The Socialist Party organises working-class people to fight against the attacks from this rotten system on our lives and livelihoods, and for a socialist alternative: a society which takes the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich and is democratically run by working-class people to meet the needs of all not the profits of a few.

Building fighting democratic trade unions in the workplaces and a new mass workers' party is a vital part of the struggle to change society along socialist lines.

Because capitalism is a world system, the struggle for socialism must also be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International which organises across the world. Our demands include:

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand of a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.

- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.

- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.

- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.

- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.

- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.

- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.

- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick out the privateers. Bring private social

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

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

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

- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.

- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.

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

- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.

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

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!

- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.

- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.

- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

- 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

- 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.

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are set by consumers, small farmers, and all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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- No to imperialist wars and occupations!

20 years since 7/7 London bombings



The scene outside Russell Square station on the morning of 7/7 PHOTO: FRANCIS TYERS/CC

'No to terrorism, no to war, no to racism'

PAULA MITCHELL
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

During rush hour on the morning of 7 July 2005, four suicide bombers attacked three London Underground trains and a bus. 52 people were killed and over 700 injured.

The bombers were young British men inspired by the ideas and methods of al-Qa'ida, a fundamentalist right-wing Islamist network which had previously carried out the horrific suicide plane attacks on the 'Twin Towers' World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, in which around 3,000 people died, on 9 November 2001 – 9/11.

In response to 9/11, the US government led by George W Bush, with Tony Blair's New Labour government in the UK willingly trotting along behind, launched a so-called "War on Terror".

The Socialist warned at the time that this was "an excuse by US imperialism – with the support of Blair – to subjugate the Middle East and other regions it considers crucial for its own ends." That included the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the occupation of Iraq in 2003, opening up a bloody nightmare of occupation, terror and social breakdown for the people of both countries. Between the invasion and the summer of 2005, at least 100,000 people were killed in Iraq (added to by a further

50,000 over the following ten years).

These actions were opposed by a huge global mass movement. Two million people marched on the streets of London to try to stop the invasion of Iraq – on the same day, about 35 million marched worldwide. On 'Day X', the day the war started, tens of thousands of young people walked out of schools and colleges. The war was one of the key reasons why Blair's Labour lost 5 million votes between 1997 and 2010.

Yet, as the editorial of the Socialist on 14 July 2005 pointed out, it wasn't the warmongering capitalist leaders who were killed or terrorised by the 7/7 London bombs, but ordinary people.

'Ordinary working-class people'
"The photographs of the victims, the details of where they live, their cultural, ethnic and religious background – including Muslims – demonstrate that it was not the 'rulers' but the 'ruled', ordinary working-class people, who were blown to smithereens, or who had their lives blighted by terrible injuries, by the perpetrators of his obscene terrorist act.

"Those who carried this out deserve unequivocal and unqualified condemnation. But so do those who have created the conditions for the growth of terrorism."

Tony Blair rushed to say that the Iraq war had nothing to do with the events of 7/7. Then Labour Foreign

Secretary Jack Straw said the attacks 'came out of the blue'. But as the Socialist said at the time, "He must be the only person in Britain who holds that view. Police and intelligence chiefs have been warning relentlessly that it was not a question of 'if' but 'when' such an attack would be made." 20 years later, in 2025, former head of counter-terrorism Neil Basu told the Guardian: "A driver of the 7/7 attacks was foreign policy and Iraq".

Al-Qa'ida was itself, we explained, "a product of the humiliation of the Arab peoples and ruthless occupation by imperialism in the past of the lands of the Muslim peoples. That occupation was continued by the Israeli ruling class, in collusion with US imperialism, in the territory of the Palestinian people."

But al-Qa'ida was not a genuine movement of national liberation. It was and is a vicious reactionary organisation, enforcing extreme discrimination against women and violence against all those – including Arabs and Muslims – who do not accept its outlook.

Its methods, which include terrorism, can offer no way forward for the struggles of the oppressed. Violent acts by individuals or small groups, including and especially those carried out indiscriminately on ordinary people, alienate the mass of ordinary people, and are used by the ruling class to justify further repression. They are the opposite of what is needed to bring an end to oppression, including national oppression – a united mass struggle against the capitalist system, led by the working class.

20 years later, as people look back at these terrible events in London, and as hundreds of thousands protest at the horrific onslaught waged by the Israeli state on Gaza and Palestinians, and the bombing of Iran,

many will be fearful that we could face the same again now in Britain.

The 'war on terror' has not eradicated terror. In fact, right-wing Islamist terrorism increased as a result of imperialism's actions. Al-Qa'ida did not exist in Iraq until the invasion. But just between May and July 2005, the months leading up to the London bombings, 120 suicide bombs took place in Iraq. Mass terror attacks continued for over a decade and in every continent, with most victims Muslims.

'War on terror'
The 'war on terror' has been used as a cover for brutal actions by capitalist states – most recently by the Israeli state to carry out extreme state terror in Gaza.

It is true that after ten years, the US finally managed to assassinate al-Qa'ida's leader, Osama bin Laden. But many young followers then moved over to a new, even more brutal formation, known as ISIS or 'Islamic State'. At one stage, ISIS held vast swathes of Iraq and Syria under a self-styled 'caliphate', declared in 2014, controlling the population through extreme brutality.

A US-led coalition of military intervention eventually beat ISIS back. However, both al-Qa'ida and ISIS still exist, and carry out attacks in Iran and Syria. Right-wing Islamist terrorism is rife in parts of Africa. Given the horror of Gaza, the attacks on Iran etc, it cannot be ruled out that angry and desperate individuals or groups get misled and drawn into using terrorist methods against 'the West' again.

The 'war on terror' also whipped up division in Britain and increased Islamophobia. Decades of subjugation and war, exploitation and brutality were swept under the carpet, as capitalist leaders pointed the finger of blame at Muslims. Racist attacks

increased 600% after 7/7. The day after the attacks, the vile Sun rag said: "Britain is crawling with suspected terrorists and those who give them succour". The same day, the Muslim Council of Britain reported that 30,000 threatening emails had been received by Muslim organisations.

The 'war on terror' at home included anti-terror legislation and measures such as the 'Prevent' programme to combat 'extremism'.

But these measures have not made the threat of attack go away. New anti-terror laws were introduced in 2000 and 2001 which did not prevent 7/7. But the laws have been used to threaten peaceful protesters. The latest use has been to try to intimidate the hundreds of thousands who have protested against the Israeli state's war on Palestinians. Starmer's Labour government has attempted to ban Gaza demos, prosecute members of the band Kneecap and investigate Bob Vylan, and proscribe Palestine Action.

The Prevent programme was first trialled by Tony Blair in the wake of 7/7, and became a legal requirement in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It requires staff in all public services to report on anything that might suggest someone is "vulnerable to extremism". Not to report a suspicion is potentially a criminal offence.

Prevent training involves stereotyping Muslims in particular, but the definition of radicalisation is undefined and has been interpreted by some trainers to include extreme left-wing ideas. It is no coincidence

that anti-extremism laws came at the same time as the Tory Trade Union Act in 2016, an attempt to make striking harder.

Neither anti-terror legislation nor Prevent have succeeded in stopping terror attacks. There have been at least 24 attacks in Britain characterised as 'terrorist' since 2005, including the Manchester Arena bombing and London Bridge attack in 2017.

Both Tory and Labour governments have told us these measures are necessary for our safety. But the reality is these capitalist governments have no interest in our welfare. The heroes of 7/7 were the firefighters, tube workers, bus drivers and hospital workers – the same workers who were again the heroes during Covid. But since 7/7 those workers have seen their real pay eroded by 20+%, savage cuts and privatisation under Tory austerity, the closure of fire stations and tube ticket offices, the rampant privatisation of NHS services, and a historic cost-of-living crisis.

Conditions for terrorism
Terrorism cannot be eliminated by capitalist governments as they create the conditions for it. The Socialist Party has always argued that the only way to rid the world of the threat of terror attacks is to eradicate the conditions that breed them: poverty, war, oppression and exploitation. In 2005, the Socialist Party in London campaigned for the unity of all working-class people in London, and for demonstrations to oppose

• Paula was Socialist Party London Secretary at the time of the 7/7 bombings in 2005

war, terrorism, racism and oppressive legislation.

The obscenities of the actions of western imperialism in the Middle East have continued till today. But in some respects the world is now a different place from 2005. The disastrous war in Iraq was the beginning of the unravelling of US dominance on the world stage. The world economic crisis of 2007-08 shattered the idea that capitalism could provide a decent life for everyone. It was followed by mass industrial movements, especially in Europe, the Arab Spring uprisings, and attempts at establishing new parties and leaders that could fight in the interests of workers in a number of countries – including temporarily the possibility of transforming the Labour Party presented by Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Jeremy had been one of the few Labour MPs who stood out against the Iraq war and the 'war on terror'.

The crisis of capitalism in the multi-polar world we now face, a crisis expressed and exacerbated by Trump's presidency, makes the world a more dangerous and volatile place. But it also increases the likelihood of struggle of working-class people, and the search for political representation and a socialist alternative to this brutal unjust capitalist system – which is the route that is necessary to end terror.

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Socialist Party on an anti-war protest in the months following 7/7 PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

Enthusiasm for political alternative at Prides

London

JAY COWARD
SOUTH EAST LONDON

The usual crowds took the streets in colourful celebration of how far the fight for LGBTQ+ liberation has come throughout history. However, a lot hung in the air.

There are attacks on LGBTQ+ people worldwide. In the US, with Donald Trump's flurry of executive orders dismantling healthcare, legal recognition, and protection from discrimination.

And attacks in the UK too. April's Supreme Court ruling against trans people's rights, put through by five Oxbridge educated judges.

Over a quarter of LGBTQ+ people in the UK are disabled, affected by Keir Starmer's assault on disability benefits.

All of this adds to an ever-growing anger at the establishment, and a ravenous hunger for an alternative. So there was a more than understandable air of enthusiasm about Zarah Sultana's announcement of a new party with Jeremy Corbyn coming soon (see pages 2-3).

A group of Socialist Party members headed to Pride together to do what we do best – help people draw conclusions, link struggles, and raise



Socialist Party members at London Pride PHOTO: JAMES IVENS

consciousness of the need for mass working-class mobilisation and organisation.

This was taken well by young LGBTQ+ people we spoke to, on board that Labour no longer holds the

working class in its interests, and enthusiastic about a new party. But they also had reservations, hoping

that a party like that would actually serve their needs.

What entity can assure that the working class won't be cheated out of benefits? Out of our jobs? Services? Housing? To not be discriminated against, and be protected when they are? That entity has to come from the working class itself.

Nuneaton

CHRISTOPHER GAMBLE
NUNEATON SOCIALIST PARTY

We are fortunate that Nuneaton Socialist Party is growing, so we were able to send members to Pride in Nuneaton and the National Shop Stewards Network conference in London (see pages 8-9).

We set up in Nuneaton with a petition demanding the right to self-identity, leaflets for joining the Socialist Party and the youth walkout against Trump, as well as homemade badges to raise fighting fund.

In the face of recent news about book bans, exclusion of trans people from spaces, and rhetoric spewed about 'harmful LGBT ideology', discussions with the people at Pride showed that the need for change is felt more sharply now that establish-

ment institutions are even less willing to deliver the change LGBTQ+ people need. The LGBTQ+ rights won within the framework of the capitalist system are purely provisional, to be sacrificed when it suits the bosses.

The petition for self-identity was incredibly well-received. It fostered good conversations about showing solidarity and uniting to fight for all of our liberation.

I am really glad that we got to meet

several activists who embody the fact that Pride is foremost a political movement. Only by keeping it a political movement can we progress the rights of LGBTQ+ folk, workers, and disabled people.

Pride has a political history. Often today, official Pride events are used by private companies as a shield to hide behind when they attack the pay and conditions of all workers. The struggles against social and class oppression cannot be separated.

Our biggest success was getting in contact with many more people who share our core values than we typically do at our regular campaign stalls. We invited them all to join us at our weekly meetings, and receive information about who we are and how to join our party.

Many expressed frustrations about the lack of progress in society, and enthusiasm to get involved. We look forward to speaking with them more in the weeks ahead.

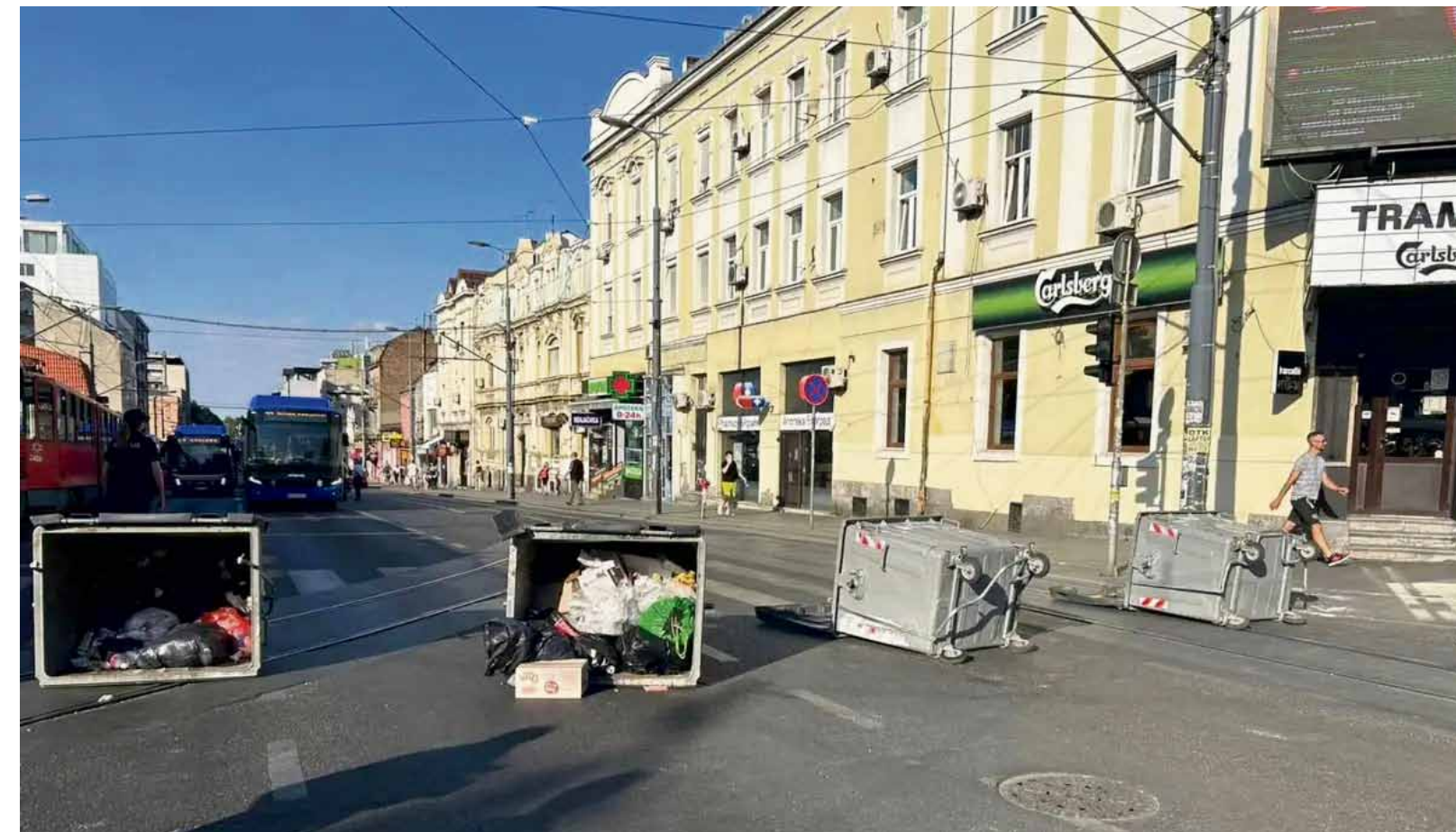
A personal highlight for me was speaking to some young queer folk about building a community that stands together in the face of social regression, and about how they could get involved with the Trump youth walkout.

We were received warmly by the organisers of Nuneaton Pride. They have invited us to participate in the event itself next year.

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Serbia: Another huge anti-government protest as determined movement searches for way forward



MIRA GLAVARDANOV

The situation in Serbia is still critical after another huge anti-government protest on 28 June. Around 300,000 people again gathered in Belgrade from all over the country to show solidarity with the student movement. The movement has now entered its ninth month and there is almost a feeling of a stalemate. Neither side is giving in, but also unable to come out victorious at the moment.

Aleksandar Vucic's regime employs increased brutal and repressive powers but, crucially for its survival, still enjoys tacit support from the EU. The student movement has the support from majority of the population; it knows what is at stake and understands it has to go forward. Vucic has bragged many times that he will end the movement, but it remains his wishful thinking. Even though it seems that the movement is running out of ideas, it is not running out of determination.

Students have done everything they can, walked through towns and villages across the country, mobilising support. They have blockaded universities, schools, streets. All that is a great irritation and a worry for Vucic, but none of it can make his regime fall. Students have from the start called on the wider population to join them in protests and blockades, and that has happened en masse. They have called on workers to join them in strikes, but unfortunately this has not yet happened. This is the main reason Vucic is still standing.

On the night of 28 June protest, the students gave a 'green light' to the mass of people there to take over the movement and transform it into civil disobedience. Blockades and

workplace walkouts were called for the next few days. Blockades of roads became barricades, using rubbish bins to stop traffic, and sometimes emptying them at the doors of the ruling party offices. Again, crucially, workplace walkouts didn't materialise. Union leaders understandably complained about a very short notice, which obviously was the case due to student inexperience. However, unions have had time in the last eight months to organise walkouts, but apart from education unions (which are affected directly by university blockades), they haven't.

Trade unions

This is not just the fault of union leaders; many workers are very scared of losing their jobs, knowing this would be threatened immediately if they walked out. The teachers on strike haven't received salaries for months; they have been surviving thanks to donations from ordinary people at home and diaspora. Vucic's reprisals are ruthless as he holds all institutions firmly in his hands.

Socialists know that any capitalist state's institutions aren't genuinely independent, however, there are levels of independence that they can exercise, according to the level of democratic rights achieved by the struggle. This level is generally lower in neocolonial countries. In Vucic's regime, state institutions have no independence whatsoever. In over a decade of his autocratic rule he has managed to put jurisdiction, police, even the education and health systems under his thumb. The judges, tops of the police, school headmasters etc have in time all been replaced with his loyalists.

Police brutality against protesters has been increased, on and after 28

June. On that night and the day after, the police were literally chasing and arresting young people in the streets. The number of arrests has dramatically shot up; people are normally held for a few days (sometimes beaten up in prison) and then released. Protesters are begging the police to stop defending the regime, stop beating their own people and join them instead. Even a group of retired and ex-police officers have appealed to former colleagues to do so.

Elections and assemblies

The student assemblies have recently decided to add a demand for a general election. For a long time they had opposed this idea that was pushed by the official opposition, for the reason they, and most of the population, have little trust in the opposition. Nobody has any trust in the electoral system either, also controlled by Vucic. But the students have now sensed his vulnerability and made this step. The truth is also they have exhausted other avenues.

With their earlier call for people to organise in their own local assemblies, the students showed a great insight into a possibility for ordinary working people to make their own decisions about the society they live in. For many months now the local assemblies have been a big feature, that offer a view into different ways a society could be run, by working people for the benefit of working people, without giving away that power to capitalist parties and the capitalist parliament, that work for the interest of big capital.

This is why the demand for a general election almost feels like a step back. The capitalist opposition parties offer no way forward for the student movement and others struggling

A makeshift barricade
PHOTO: MASINA.RS

for change. Currently there would be no socialist or workers' party on the ballot. The local peoples' assemblies now demand a general election too, and also the re-establishment of neighbourhood community organisations, as a form of local democracy that existed when Serbia was part of Yugoslavia, and later suppressed, until Vucic completely suffocated them.

Students have suggested they would make a slate of opposition or unaligned candidates which they would endorse in elections, rather than stand themselves. But it is a mistake for the organisations of struggle to call for an election only to step aside. The student and peoples' assemblies should discuss building their own political organisations, developing a political programme that can help mobilise broader sections of the working class into struggle.

Vucic would likely try to rig and 'win' an election, which he could use to try to give himself legitimacy. It is notable though that in the past Vucic has been extremely keen on elections, calling them every year, but this time he has rejected the demand. This is the sign that he knows he would struggle to win or rig the election, such is the level of opposition to his regime.

Undemocratic methods

The EU more recently made some shy noises about the "undemocratic methods" of Vucic but this is only in order to save some credibility. This is deceiving no one in Serbia, especially after the EU, at the beginning of June, included the proposed lithium mine in Serbia on their list of "projects of critical interest". The opposition to the mine, in the most fertile and water-rich area of Serbia, is massive. The EU knows this but cares little. It sees Vucic as its vehicle to suppress the opposition to the mine, and Vucic is more than ready to oblige, so they keep their eyes shut. The imperialist powers only oppose dictators that don't act in their interests.

How long and how far can the student movement, the new civil disobedience and daily protests and blockades in many towns go, without the involvement of the organised working class, as the only force that has the power to solve this situation? It is certainly the case that protests are making Vucic very nervous, that they have seriously cracked his regime and made the lithium mine delayed indefinitely. But that's not enough. Instead of the road blockades, should the attention be turned to places of strategic interest for the regime? The most important question is, will the organised workers eventually join in? They did 25 years ago to finally topple Slobodan Milosevic.

Documentary review

Gaza: Doctors Under Attack

The film the BBC doesn't want you to see

JANE NELLIST
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

This harrowing and very powerful documentary, which is described as a "forensic investigation of Israeli attacks on Gaza's hospitals", is an important testament about the brutal way that the Israeli government has systematically destroyed the healthcare system in Gaza.

It lays bare the brutal assaults on the hospital infrastructure in Gaza and more importantly, the deliberate targeting of medical staff and their families, particularly the highly trained and dedicated doctors. As one contributor explains, you can set up a hospital quite quickly but to replace the skilled surgeons takes many years.

The documentary was originally commissioned by the BBC, but their controversial decision to refuse to show it has caused much anger and criticism.

It's only been possible to see it, because the BBC gave the film back to the production company, Basement Films, and Channel 4 agreed to broadcast it.

The film clearly goes to great lengths to avoid any accusations

similar to those made against the BBC documentary about children in Gaza, which was controversially withdrawn as one of the children was a relative of a Hamas official. A voiceover tells us on a number of occasions that some doctors interviewed have expressed support for Hamas.

The United Nations has reported that over the period covered in the documentary, they found that there were at least 136 strikes on at least 27 hospitals and 12 other medical facilities, claiming significant casualties among doctors, nurses, medics and other civilians, and causing significant damage, if not complete destruction of civilian healthcare infrastructure. That, it said, was a war crime!

This film graphically shows what the impact of these attacks are, not just for the medical personnel and their families, but for the Gazan people as a whole left without a functioning healthcare system, causing needless deaths and lifelong misery.

Doctors are shown being forced to leave one hospital by the IDF. Evading soldiers, they find another hospital in the north to work in and save lives. They repeated that until

they are captured again and sent to detention centres where they suffer the most horrendous conditions and systematic torture, only to return to what little healthcare is left in Gaza - if they survive!

The film also focuses on the Israeli 'Black Sites' set up in Gaza to hold prisoners with no oversight, brutally interrogating those held for any information they may have about the hostages held by Hamas.

In another section of the film, an anonymous Israeli medic recalls seeing a Palestinian detainee being forced to undergo an operation with no anaesthetic. Compare that to the courage of these doctors and medical staff who have suffered and lost family members, sacrificing so much to support their communities and save lives.

I would urge anyone to watch this film, it's the least we can do to bear testament to these crimes.

For me as a socialist, the only answer to this barbarity is to redouble your efforts to fight for a better socialist world!

• Watch now at [channel4.com/programmes/gaza-doctors-under-attack](https://www.channel4.com/programmes/gaza-doctors-under-attack)



Doctors Under Attack is an investigation into claims that the IDF has been targeting medics in Gaza's hospitals PHOTO: CHANNEL 4/BASEMENT FILMS

£1 / £2 solidarity price

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WALK OUT AGAINST TRUMP



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

TOM GIBSON
BRADFORD SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students is holding campaign stalls and events to protest Donald Trump's state visit later this year, during which we want to help organise thousands of students walking out of lessons in protest.

We oppose Trump's state visit for a variety of reasons, firstly his policies at home have been radically anti-working class and pro-rich. His recent economic plan has been a massive series of cuts to programmes that help working-class Americans to fund his vanity projects and tax cuts for the rich. Millions could lose food-stamps and millions more could lose healthcare coverage.

His policies on immigration have included inhumane treatment of both documented and undocumented immigrants, including politically motivated deportations of socialist and pro-Palestinian

activists. Trump's trademark bigoted social policies have also targeted LGBTQ+ people, particularly the trans community.

Texas floods have killed, the result of extreme weather made worse by climate change, and Trump tells bosses to "drill baby, drill."

All in all, Trump's presidency has been a nightmare for ordinary people in America and internationally too, Trump also supported the Israeli genocide in Gaza and helped Benjamin Netanyahu bomb Iran.

This disgraceful combination is why we are organising for a student walkout in solidarity with young people and workers in the US. Keir Starmer does not represent the public in welcoming Trump to visit Britain. The so-called special relationship does not benefit the workers of either country. Opinion polls show that Trump is rightly despised by the majority of people here, particularly young people, yet Starmer in typical fashion is going against

the will of the people to benefit himself and the bosses.

In pushing for this walkout, we are showing the ruling class of both Britain and the US that the young people of both are horrified by Trumpism and Starmer's embrace of it, and that we offer a hopeful alternative of economic and social equality. We want to show all the victims of Trumpism that young people here stand with them as they fight against it.

Join Socialist Students in our Youth Walkout Against Trump campaign:

- Organise a meeting at your school, college or uni
 - Discuss with your friends and classmates - invite them to a meeting, it could be in a classroom, cafeteria or even a local cafe
 - Make a social media graphic to share, posters to put up, and leaflets to distribute to get people along
- Organise a protest on Day X**
- Once we know the date of Trump's visit to parliament, put out a time and place for the protest

- Bring a megaphone and banners, make up some chants, and invite some speakers to explain why they are protesting

Join Socialist Students

- Be part of an organisation

fighting for socialist change at schools, colleges and unis

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

YOUTH WALKOUT AGAINST TRUMP



Want to organise a walkout?
Scan the QR code to get involved



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

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