

LET'S BUILD A PARTY TO TAKE ON STARMER, AUSTERITY AND WAR

For all those battling against cuts to public services, fighting against low pay, protesting against atrocities in Gaza and in other wars internationally, there exists a huge opportunity to build a new political party to strengthen our struggles.

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's

announcement of their intention to bring a new party, 'Your Party', into existence has sparked enormous enthusiasm - over 700,000 people signing up to stay informed.

The Socialist Party has long fought for the working class to have its own political party, independent of the capitalist bosses. And so we are enthusiastically campaigning for the new party to be built with the trade unions - existing mass organisations of the working class, with over six million members - at its core. (see pages 8-9)

The strike wave gave a glimpse of the strength of the trade unions, organising workers to collectively fight in their interests - cutting across attempts by right-wing politicians and the capitalist bosses to divide us.

Corbyn's time as Labour leader showed how the capitalists will do all they can to destroy any chance of the working class having a party of its own. It also showed the huge enthusiasm for socialist policies for free education, nationalisation of utilities, and mass council house building, for example.

By fighting for policies like these, addressing the needs of the working class, the new party can broaden its support further still. To overcome what would inevitably be vicious opposition from the capitalist class to policies threatening their profits, the new party would need to go further by adopting a programme of nationalisation of major corporations and banks under democratic workers' control, mobilising the working class in support.

In all the debates and discussions around 'Your Party', about how it is formed and what it should stand for, Socialist Party members will be fighting for a new mass party of the working class, fighting for socialist change. Join us!



- Trade unions must lead
- Fight for socialist change

TRADE UNIONISTS FIGHTING
FOR A NEW PARTY >>> p8-9

UKRAINE'S FATE IN THE
TRUMPIAN WORLD >>> p4

PALESTINE ACTION BAN
>>> p4

 **nationalshopstewardsnetwork**



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

LOBBY THE TUC



Thames Water – we need to nationalise water not just the debt

CALLUM JOYCE
SOCIALIST PARTY SOUTHERN AND SOUTH EAST ORGANISER

The spectre of a government takeover is looming over Thames Water once again. The Socialist has carried numerous articles following the scandal-ridden history of this privatised utility with its infamous, but predictable, record of dumping sewage into our waters and hiking bills year on year - all while paying out hefty bonuses to its managers and executives.

Private equity companies have spent decades maximising their profits while our bills have gone up and vital infrastructure spending has been neglected; Thames Water's debt levels now stand at over £17 billion. The unsustainable cost of interest payments, along with having to pay fines for dumping sewage, have repeatedly brought the company to the brink of financial collapse. In each previous case this was only averted by a last-minute injection of investment. Now, the issue has returned after a deal to sell the utility to private investment fund KKR collapsed at the last minute.

Given that Thames Water provides a vital service to 16 million people, the government will be compelled to intervene if further private investment cannot be secured and has announced that it has contingency plans in place to do so. But those who are hoping this may mean the renationalisation of the utility will be again sorely disappointed by this Labour government.

The proposals put together would place Thames Water into a Special

Administration Regime (SAR) where a private consultancy firm is brought in to take over the day-to-day management of the company. But the environment secretary, Steve Reed has said that he still believes in the possibility of a 'market-led solution' to the company's problems. This means that the government would only aim to use the takeover as a temporary measure, restructuring the debts of the company to make it more appealing to future investors. Working-class people, not the bosses who ran down the company, would undoubtedly be expected to pay the price. The government would then try to flog it back to the same private interests that ruined the service in the first place! CKI, another private investment firm, has indicated that it could step in to take over the company in such a situation, no doubt seeing the potential to make a profit once the government has sorted out the company's debts. Increases to our already eye-watering bills has been raised as a way to pay for the costs of temporary government intervention before it has even happened.

Actually nationalise it
This sham measure is no replacement for what is actually needed - genuine nationalisation without a penny of compensation paid to the greedy shareholders who have created this mess. Pensions or other savings invested in the company belonging to ordinary people should be compensated, but this would cost only a fraction of the huge profits exploited from Thames Water over decades.

A nationalised Thames Water run

by government bureaucrats or private consultants would not deliver the changes we need - to reduce pollution and bring down our bills. To do this, Thames Water and the whole water industry would need to be run democratically by the working class. On that basis, it would be possible to properly and efficiently plan the running of the company. Instead of profits spirited away, resources could be invested back into the maintenance and expansion of the pipes, reservoirs, sewage treatment plants and more.

And why stop at Thames Water? Private profit should be kicked out of the entire water industry. With democratic planning, with the expertise of workers in the industry and driven by the needs of ordinary people - not profit-seeking vultures - we could lower bills and protect the jobs and pay of its workers.

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VS

THEM:

122x

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£4.6 million on average, up 7% since last year

A million empty homes?!

ARTI DILLON
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Over one million homes in England are empty. The problem isn't a lack of space, but a political choice not to bring them into public use. The privatisation of housing, with the use of hotels and B&Bs, is a result of successive governments' failure to provide accessible, affordable homes for everyone.

Trade unionists can be at the forefront of the fight for decent housing whilst also opposing attacks on asylum seekers, tackling the root causes of misdirected anger: the lack of jobs, resources, and council homes for everyone.

The Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC), founded by Unite Housing workers a decade ago, is building tenant and resident power, demanding a complete halt to the commercialisation of housing, a freeze on unfair rents, an end to poor maintenance, and a call for genuine democracy and accountability.

- Visit their website at www.shaction.org
- Take part in the conference on 18 October



The Socialist Party fights to:

- **Bring empty homes into public ownership! Councils can use Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs). Launch a programme of mass council house building and improvement**
- **Cap rents, not benefits, and reverse welfare cuts**
- **Raise the minimum wage to £15 an hour for all as a step towards a real living wage, without exemptions**
- **Fully fund support services and housing for women impacted by domestic and sexual abuse**
- **Councils should set needs-based budgets now using reserves and borrowing powers, then send the bill for the services we need to Starmer's Labour government. A mass working-class campaign can win jobs, homes and services for all**

The reliance on hotels for asylum seekers is a direct outcome of government decisions over the last five years, channelling billions of pounds into private hands. The Home Office asylum system has become a cash cow dominated by private companies Serco, Mears, and Clearsprings Ready Homes. Clearsprings' post-tax profits have more than tripled since 2022, to over £90 million last year! This is on top of English local authorities doubling their homelessness spending in a decade, with money mostly going straight to profiteering landlords.

BUILD THE WALKOUTS AGAINST TRUMP

Donald Trump is coming to Britain on Wednesday 17 September, at the invitation of the King and prime minister Keir Starmer.

Socialist Students is calling on students to walk out of their schools, colleges and universities on 17 September, to protest against the chaos that Trump represents for our futures.

Trump defends a rotten capitalist system that prioritises profits for the billionaires while creating wars, climate crisis, and poverty for the rest of us. While our planet burns, Trump has encouraged the mega-rich oil companies to "drill, baby, drill".

Trump is a warmonger. He has backed the Israeli state's genocidal onslaught on Gaza and the Palestinians. In an attempt to prevent young Americans and workers from fighting back, he has stoked racism,

anti-trans hatred and discrimination to try and divide people.

When we walk out, we can send a powerful message of solidarity to the young people fighting back against Trump in America and globally that we stand with them - not with Trump, Starmer and the rest of the politicians defending this capitalist profit system.

Let's get organised to fight for a real future. For a socialist world free from war, poverty, and discrimination.

We can beat Starmer's Labour
A decent future for young people is a million miles from what Starmer's Labour Party wants. Just like the Tories before them, their main concern is protecting the profits of big business and the super-rich.
Starmer's Labour says there isn't enough money to have high-quality mental health services, decent housing that we can actually afford, free



education, and reopening youth clubs. But this is a lie! In the last 15 years of attacks on our living standards, the richest 1% globally have increased their wealth by £30 trillion. We need a mass movement of workers and young people that fights to take this wealth into our hands, to provide the things we all need.
We've seen that Starmer's Labour can be beaten back. Under pressure from massive opposition, they have made U-turns over attacks to disability benefits and the winter fuel payment. No wonder they are clamping down on our right to protest, to try and stop us from resisting them and the capitalist system they defend.
On Wednesday 17 September, let's show young people are ready to join the fightback. Some people say we aren't political - but who can blame us for feeling no enthusiasm for capitalist politicians that offer us no future?
Young people need a political alternative to Labour, Reform and all

the establishment parties. The huge enthusiasm for the initiative of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana to launch a new party shows the potential for this - a mass workers' party that makes the super-rich fat cats pay, not young people.

Join Socialist Students
Socialist Students is an organisation active in schools, colleges and universities across the UK. We campaign against all the attacks that young people face under capitalism. We want to help students get organised in the fight for a socialist alternative to capitalism - for a world free of discrimination, war and inequality. A world where the needs of all are put before the profits of a tiny few. If you agree, then join Socialist Students!

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Fees up, costs up! Students can't make ends meet Fight for free education

Join the student fightback

JOIN **socialist students**

socialiststudents.org.uk/join

just half the costs a first-year student faces.
Politicians and university bosses continue to make us foot the bill for their deepening crisis. Over 40% of UK universities will be dropping into deficits next year, with fee rises, staff cuts and worsening teaching standards to plaster over the central issue: there aren't enough resources invested in education.

Some universities and private landlords have made a killing with an 18% increase in student rents in the last two academic years alone. Students have nothing left to give, 65% of us already cut back on food spending and other essentials to make ends meet. So the message from the campuses is clear: no to the cost-of-living crisis!

Polls suggest a Corbyn-led party would actually win a general election amongst 18 to 24-year-olds. No

wonder there's been enthusiasm amongst young people since Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana announced steps towards setting up 'Your Party'. The Corbyn-led Labour Party electrified students and young people with the commitment to free education.
Socialist Students believes the launch of such a party would be a welcome challenge to establishment politics. A new party involving campus activists and trade unions to launch a serious fightback against both the failing marketised funding model, and the rotten capitalist system behind it would be a massive step forward. Thousands of cash-strapped students could be prepared to fight for a socialist programme for education: including an end to fees, grants not loans, an end to redundancies and the complete renationalisation of higher education.

theSocialist

formerly **Militant**

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

PALESTINE ACTION BAN: HOW TO BUILD THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT



WHAT WE THINK

Hundreds of deaths in Gaza from malnutrition, almost half of them children. Hundreds of people slaughtered while seeking food. And now the Israeli military says it is preparing for the forcible displacement of one million people from Gaza City. The official number of those killed in Gaza has topped 61,000 but that is undoubtedly, tragically, an enormous underestimate.

Huge demonstrations have continued to take place in Britain for the last 22 months in a sustained movement that had no reason to cease after the 2024 change of government. Marchers demand an end to the horror. That is not on offer from the Starmer government, which kowtows to Trump and the interests of the capitalist class.

A July YouGov poll found that almost two-thirds of the population sympathise a great deal or somewhat with the 'Palestinian side'. The figure rises to 77% among those who voted Labour in the general election.

Instead of representing the views of the voters and protesters, Starmer's Labour has sought to criminalise the anti-war movement with the proscription of campaign group Palestine Action. The ban makes membership or support for Palestine Action a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

State repression

But in the past month, hundreds of people have been arrested under the Terrorism Act - many of them pensioners - for protesting against the proscription. The attempt to undermine sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians is backfiring. One poll even found that seven in ten Labour members believe the government

was wrong to proscribe Palestine Action as a terrorist group.

The opposition to the war is widespread across society. Hundreds of thousands of workers and young people protest across the country. The most recent demonstration on 6 August was among the largest this year, showing that the movement has not been intimidated by Starmer's threats.

Those arrested on the separate courageous Defend Our Juries protest in opposition to the Gaza slaughter and the ban on Palestine Action included a former magistrate, a retired multinational executive, an ex-army colonel and a priest from Buckinghamshire, whose congregation applauded his stand. But the movement needs to have the organised working class at its heart, with its huge potential to challenge the war-monger capitalists for power.

Starmer's government has picked up where former Tory Home Secretary Suella Braverman left off. She sought to tar protesters as "hate marchers" in October 2023. But her threats to ban the marches also backfired, and led to the biggest demonstration to that point, and her removal as Home Secretary. Then her government was smashed in the general election because of its war and austerity agenda - and five independent anti-war MPs were elected. However, the movement has not yet succeeded in ending British government support for Israeli state terror or Trump.

But this ban, the arrest of 523 people for sitting outside Parliament with signs, not to mention the maintenance of the anti-union laws on the statute books despite commitments to remove them, are not the actions of a confident government but of one anticipating the mass opposition that will shake it as it continues to pursue its own austerity and war agenda.

Undermining their system

There is clearly concern among the defenders of capitalism that these laws will exacerbate the already declining legitimacy of the institutions



NICK CLARE

they rely on such as the police and the court system.

Research last year found that only two out of five people in England said they trusted the police. However, as the general election showed, alienation from the establishment political parties is even greater as they pursue attacks on living standards as well as war. Labour won, but with the votes of only one in five of the electorate.

Former Blair government minister Peter Hain has warned that the Palestine Action ban "will end in tears for the government". Baroness Shami Chakrabarti told The Independent that the "proscription of Palestine Action is in danger of becoming a mistake of poll tax proportions." That was a reference to Margaret Thatcher's unpopular policy that was defeated by a mass movement - which also brought her down.

However, opposition from leading establishment figures cannot be relied on to defeat this major attack on the right to protest - the outrageous labelling of peaceful protesters as terrorists - which if left in place can lead to the government proscribing other protest and workers' organisations. In particular, the trade union movement needs to make defending the right to organise and protest a more pressing task.

Anti-poll tax campaign

Defend Our Juries has pledged to increase the number of protesters facing arrest from 500 to 1,000, and argue that the courts and prison systems being blocked up will lead to the ban being overturned and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper removed from office. This tactic has also been compared to the mass movement against the poll tax. But this is overstated.

Between April 1990 and September 1993 the number of cases of

unwillingness, or inability, to pay the poll tax taken before the magistrates (in just England and Wales) totalled 25 million, involving an estimated 14 million people.

While we salute the heroism of the Defend Our Juries protesters, who have bravely faced arrest and convictions for terrorism to raise awareness of the government's outrageous attacks on the right to organise, it is correct that the movement discusses what are the best tactics to achieve our aims, including why mass organisation is key to building the anti-war movement and why campaigning for the more than six million-strong workers' movement to play a central role in it is vital.

Mass non-payment of the poll tax, with around a third of the entire adult population facing some form of legal action against them over a four-year period, laid the basis for an organised movement to make the poll tax unenforceable.

But it was one of many tactics that were developed during the years-long campaign, including mass coordinated court attendance with campaigners taking up the right to a 'McKenzie Friend' to provide vital support there and challenge the court's ability to intimidate non-payers. The movement organised bailiff busting, and battles in workplaces against wage deductions, among other tactics.

Working-class organisation was the essential foundation on which the development and implementation of non-payment and all the other tasks of the campaign could be built. That organisation was built first locally and then connected regionally and nationally in the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation. The leadership at every level was elected and accountable.

Like Starmer and Cooper, Thatcher faced warnings too. Members of her Cabinet foretold the dangers at an early stage in the preparations for the poll tax, saying it would be uncollectable. But this outcome was not a forgone conclusion. It still had to be organised.

Thatcher claimed to be the Iron Lady. This was never true. Her confidence came from her correct assessment of the non-preparedness to struggle of the right-wing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party, which was more concerned with expelling socialists and transforming the party into one that defended the interests of the capitalist class.

But through the leadership of those socialists organised through Militant, now the Socialist Party, the opposition to the poll tax was given mass organisational form involving 18 million people and won. It was our understanding of the potential for the working class, flowing from its role in capitalist production, to be the agent of socialist change that allowed us to play this role.

There is nothing even remotely iron-like about Starmer's Labour. But, posed by the hugely popular announcement of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana is the potential to create a new workers' party that could be a political voice for the anti-war movement as well as the workers in trade unions and across society, fighting for a socialist alternative to war and austerity.

The creation of such a party would terrify Starmer, enormously strengthen our movement in Britain, and give confidence to the working class and oppressed fighting Trump and Netanyahu worldwide, to build parties that struggle for the ending of this rotten capitalist system and the war and exploitation inherent to it.

Demand the TUC organises a demo against Labour austerity

DAN WARRINGTON
NEU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

As the Trades Union Congress (TUC) prepares for its 157th Congress in September, grassroots trade unionists continue to demand that the TUC stands up against the Labour government's programme of austerity.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) will be lobbying the TUC in Brighton on 7 September, calling for it to organise a national demonstration against Starmer's cuts, as proposed in a motion from the trades council conference to the TUC.

Despite running on a manifesto pledging to implement "change" and "national renewal", after a year in power it is increasingly clear to

workers that Starmer's Labour government has nothing to offer except a continuation (or possible intensification) of Tory-style austerity. While attacks on elderly and disabled people have been partially fought back, Rachel Reeves's pursuit of the fiscal rules she herself fabricated means public services will yet again see their budgets cut in real terms and be expected to find "efficiency savings".

As the workers' bodies that led to the founding of the Labour Party at the turn of the 20th century, the trades unions, which come together in the TUC, should have considerable sway over Starmer's government. Yet, as Labour austerity hits the livelihoods of ordinary workers, the response from the TUC leadership has so far been lacklustre.

However, the cracks are beginning



Supporting Sheffield bin workers

Now is a great time to ask people to join the Socialist Party

JAY COWARD
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The announcement by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana about a new party was always going to stir up the working class. However, I didn't anticipate just how much and how fast interest in socialist politics would build. This is meant to be the quiet period of the year!

This time of year, our members are usually on holiday, planning student meetings for freshers, and recharging. Instead, we have a jolt of energy from a rapidly growing new layer of people joining and interested in joining. South East London Socialist Party is boasting three new members this month, and is soon to be growing further.

As well, all our campaigning has been given a second wind, thanks to a growing wave of questions,

activists, and working-class enthusiasm on the streets, in our workplaces, and on our campuses.

We are building pressure to make sure this new party represents the working class fully and faithfully - our role is more important than ever. We continue our efforts to build every opportunity for the working class to wrench power out of the hands of the super-rich.

Why I joined

ISABELLA GOLDING
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

There are immense risings of radicalisation. People are being prompted by the failure of Keir Starmer's Labour and ever-rising austerity. As capitalism further descends into economic

to show, with one of the biggest unions, Unite, now openly reconsidering its continued affiliation to Labour, following a massive vote at its conference. Many other unions, both within the TUC and without, will face member-led campaigns to back Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' project, which already counts 700,000 supporters, and for the unions to play a central role in it.

National demonstration needed

The TUC should stand by its members in the face of cuts to the public services they rely on, and use its influence to increase the pressure on the government. Calling a national demonstration of workers on the same scale seen in March 2011, when over 750,000 workers took to the streets of London against the Tory-LibDem coalition government cuts, would send a clear message to Labour MPs: you can no longer take the backing of the trade union movement for granted! The 2011 demo was followed that November by over two million public sector workers going on strike together - in what was effectively a 24-hour public sector general strike - against Tory attacks to pensions.

Should Labour refuse to listen to the TUC, the case for unions to disaffiliate and build a new workers' party will be solidified.

Join the NSSN lobby of the TUC in Brighton on 7 September. Call on the TUC to organise a national demonstration against Labour austerity.

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!

NSSN at a vigil organised by the NUJ freelance branch against the Israeli state's targeted murder of journalists in Gaza



"It is an offence to support a proscribed organisation" police sign at a London Palestine protest

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UKRAINE'S FATE IN THE TRUMPIAN WORLD

NIALL MULHOLLAND
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

The recent summit between President Trump and President Putin, held in Alaska under the guise of "peace diplomacy," and the hurriedly convened meeting of Ukraine leader, Vladimir Zelensky, and leading European powers at the White House on 18 August, both revealed the cynical manoeuvres of imperialist nations. In line with imperialism's historic carving up of the world throughout the ages, these powers take a top-down, self-interested approach towards the fate of the suffering people of Ukraine and across the region.

Much to the huge frustration of the European powers, Trump brought Putin back in from the cold. Not so long ago, the Russian president was cast as a pariah, thrown into outer darkness from the so-called 'international community', and he remains wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. In Anchorage, however, Trump rolled out the red carpet for Putin and applauded him. Putin emerged emboldened from the meeting, reiterating his propaganda that Russia's invasion was justified on security, military and ideological grounds.

Prior to the talks, Zelensky and other European leaders - who were excluded from the Anchorage meeting

- lobbied Trump not to make any deals with Putin that involved "land swaps". They called for Trump to push for a ceasefire (with the Ukraine army losing a lot of ground to Russian forces, a ceasefire has become a key demand, which would allow Zelensky and allies time to regroup).

Zelensky and other European leaders were initially relieved that Trump did not attempt 'another Yalta' (i.e. carving up territory with Putin over the heads of Zelensky and European leaders in the manner of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin). But it later emerged that Trump's overtures to Putin included willingness to consider a "comprehensive peace deal" that effectively accepts Russia's territorial gains. Trump also called on Zelensky and European powers to drop the demand for a ceasefire before a deal being made, also aligning with Putin's demand.

Sanctions against Russia were not explicitly stated during the summit, but later Trump suggested on his Truth Social platform that the US would not follow through on threats of new sanctions against Russia.

The outcome of the Anchorage talks drew sharp criticism from Ukraine politicians and army staff. Ukraine officials asserted that Zelensky would not agree to hand over Donetsk and Luhansk but would be "open" to discussing territory in a future trilateral meeting with Trump and Putin. Kyiv is strongly opposed to

giving up a heavily fortified string of cities in the Ukrainian controlled part of the Donetsk region. The Ukraine government argues this would allow Russia a springboard for future offensives.

Alarmed, several European leaders and Zelensky scrambled to meet with Trump in the White House on 18 August. Their main aims were to push again for a ceasefire, to stop the idea of Ukraine ceding land still under its control to Russia becoming a prerequisite for a deal, and to pin down what the US is prepared to do to help "guarantee Ukrainian security" after a peace deal is reached.

Fawning European leaders

Despite their fawning around Trump, the US president reiterated that Ukraine would need to accept the loss of Crimea and give up territory in the Donbass region, and repeated that Ukraine will not join Nato.

Trump talked about a subsequent bilateral meeting (Putin and Zelensky meeting) and "trilaterals" (US, Ukraine and Russia talks), but nothing is decided.

Trying to salvage something from the Washington meetings, Zelensky and European powers are talking up Trump's vague promise of US "security guarantees" for a post-war Ukraine. But Trump has stated that Europe will have to "take much of the burden in a security arrangement". This is a far off from

full-throated Nato support and protection for Ukraine. The US envoy, Steve Witkoff, spoke last week of making a "concession" to Ukraine that would see the US provide "Article 5-like protection", in reference to Nato's mutual defence clause. But this is an infamously imprecise clause, obliging a Nato member to "take such action as it deems necessary" to come to an ally's aid.

Trump is guided by the fact that Ukraine is losing the war, even with the enormous military aid of Nato and financial help from the European powers and the US. For the Trumpian wing of the US ruling class, they want to pivot US power towards China and the South China Sea. The rising power of China, both economically and militarily, is their main concern. Trump also hopes that an end to the war in Ukraine will open the way for lucrative trade and economic deals between the US and Russia, and a prising away of Russia from the orbit of China.

For the main European imperialist powers, Russia is their focus of concern. Since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, a drawn-out struggle over natural resources, territory and influence has unfolded between the capitalist powers in the region. Over decades, Nato provocatively expanded eastwards, much to the consternation of Russia, which rearmed and eventually invaded Ukraine in 2022. Socialists opposed this reactionary and unjustified war of aggression by an oligarchical capitalist state.

Trump's second term in office marked a sharp break from the Biden

policy on Ukraine and Nato. Trump's 'America first' policy also sees punitive tariffs imposed on his supposed European allies.

The main imperialist states in western Europe abhor the idea of a de facto Russian victory in the Ukraine war. It would embolden Putin to take further military action against other pro-Nato bordering states, they claim, as well as conducting "asymmetrical warfare" further afield, such as making devastating attacks against Western digital infrastructure.

Capitalist hypocrisy

Despite their rhetoric about upholding 'democracy' and 'sovereignty' against Putin, these European powers have no qualms about aiding and abetting Israel's occupations and invasions of Palestinian lands and genocidal policies in Gaza. And the same powers opposing Russia's aggression invaded and bloodily occupied Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East at enormous costs in human life and resources.

Given the approach of Trump and Russia's military gains, Zelensky does not have a strong hand. On the battlefield, Russia has made more gains during its summer offensive. Recently, Russian military made a ten kilometre advance near the coal mining town of Dobropillia. In the sphere of drone war, Russia has had superiority for some time.

On top of this, Ukrainian troop morale is reportedly low, and many Ukrainians oppose the military draft. Zelensky's personal standing has taken a blow recently after large street

protests met his attempts to abolish state anti-corruption bodies that were closing in on figures close to the president.

Zelensky is also under pressure from headline nationalists in Ukraine, and he is aware that concessions on territory to Russia could amount to his political suicide.

European powers are talking up how they will step into the breach left by the Trump administration. Under Trump's pressure, larger spending commitments have been made by Nato countries. The 'Weimar Plus', which includes France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain, the EU and the UK, and the 'coalition of the willing', initiated by the UK, have emerged to co-ordinate 'support for Ukraine'. Europe is now sending more money and more military equipment to Ukraine than the US. For all that however, the European states are not able to replicate the key role of the US military in supporting Ukraine's war with Russia.

Furthermore, increasing defence spending is going together with attacking the living conditions of working-class people in Europe. "It's warfare versus welfare," blurted out General Sir Richard Barrons, former UK commander of joint forces command and one of three experts who conducted Britain's recent strategic defence review.

The European 'big three' of Starmer, President Macron of France and Friedrich Merz, the German chancellor, leading the European opposition to Russia are all unpopular domestically, while demanding sacrifices from the working people of their

countries on military spending.

And the European Union is not at one on the Ukraine war. The governments of the Baltic and Nordic states neighbouring Russia, maintain a tough posture towards Moscow. Poland has also taken that approach during much of the Ukraine-Russia war but did not send a representative to Washington on 18 August. This reflects the domestic divisions between the pro-western prime minister and the new right-populist Polish president. Some other European countries, including Spain, Italy, and Portugal, are less inclined to make Ukraine a key focus. And the governments of some former Stalinist eastern-bloc countries, such as Hungary and Slovakia, lean towards Putin.

The Trump-Putin summit in Alaska drew mixed reactions in the US, with Trump's MAGA base largely supportive. But Republican Party sentiment toward Ukraine has shifted recently. A poll showed that 51% of Republicans now support continued military aid to Ukraine, up from 30% five months ago. Republican Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick and Senator Lindsey Graham emphasised that any peace deal must include Ukraine and "uphold its sovereignty." However, if Trump can appear to be on the path of forcing Zelensky to agree a truce to end a war that is unpopular in the US, Trump's standing on Ukraine can rise.

From a Marxist perspective, the



war in Ukraine is a proxy war between competing imperialist and capitalist blocs, each seeking to expand their influence and access to natural resources and markets at the expense of rival powers and, of course, of workers' lives and livelihoods.

The working class in Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and the United States must reject the false choices offered by their ruling elites and their aim to carve up territories over the heads of working people in Ukraine and the region. Trump would no doubt wish to strike a deal with Putin over the heads of the Ukrainian people. A deal that entrenches militarism, nationalism, and poverty in a war-ruined country.

Cynical attrition

The approach of the imperialist European powers, of convincing the US to continue funding and arming Ukraine in a bloody war of attrition with Russia, with the hope that Putin's regime is eventually exhausted and isolated, is just as cynical.

The only path forward lies in building independent, internationalist socialist movements that oppose both Putin's aggression, Nato expansion and the cynical manoeuvrings of all the capitalist powers.

Workers' organisations, with independent class policies, can play a central role in this struggle. The Anchorage summit and scenes in Washington should be used to expose the imperialist nature of both camps and to raise demands for an end to the 'meat grinder' war, for military withdrawal, and workers' solidarity across borders.

In the US, worker-activists must oppose the self-serving Trumpian nationalist rhetoric and actions. Socialists and the workers' movement in Europe need to resist the warmongering rhetoric and actions of European governments and demand an end to war profiteering. In Russia, anti-war workers and socialists must continue to oppose the war and the repression of dissent. In Ukraine, the left must fight for a programme that opposes Russian aggression and defends national self-determination, while rejecting capitalist exploitation and foreign imperialist domination. This also entails supporting the right of the ethnic Russian-speaking minority in the east of Ukraine and in Crimea to determine their own future, free of all coercion.

The Trump-Putin summit and hurried talks in Washington signal a new phase of imperialist realignment. It will not bring lasting peace but lays the basis for divisions on national and ethnic lines, further militarisation, future wars, economic crises, and increased authoritarianism. Socialists need to expose the bankruptcy of capitalist diplomacy and build an alternative rooted in the international solidarity of the working class.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in the aftermath of World War One: "The epoch of imperialist decay is also the epoch of proletarian revolution." The challenge for the workers' movement is to ensure that the working class does not remain a passive spectator to the deals of billionaires and generals but struggles to build its own powerful organisations, not least in Ukraine and Russia, and becomes the decisive force for opposing war and capitalist barbarism and for socialist transformation.



The first follow-up meeting was held on 7 August for members of Unite the Union. Over 220 Unite activists discussed what needs to be done in Unite, to make sure it can be at the heart of a new anti-austerity and anti-war party.

Chaired by the Unite member and former Labour MP Dave Nellist, the meeting opened with a video message of support from Jeremy Corbyn.

The next speakers, present in a personal capacity, were the Unite Executive Council member Suz Muna and the Unite convener of Birmingham Labour council's Waste and Environmental Services workers, Matt Reid. Suz explained the historic decision made at the Unite policy conference in July for the union to "discuss our relationship with Labour", after the council announced the effective fire-and-rehire of refuse workers striking against pay cuts of up to £8,000 a year. Matt reported on the latest developments and the meeting pledged its continued solidarity.

Discussion concentrated on what needs to be argued for in a union that at this point is still affiliated to Labour, centred around a model motion

for branches.

There was general agreement with the tactics, with arguments illustrating some of the different issues involved. For example, Dave Reid from Cardiff Trades Council reported on the plan to convene a conference called by trades councils in October to discuss how unions can ensure there is a workers' voice in the 2026 Welsh Senedd elections. Because it has been posed as a discussion – and with a speaker invited from Labour to debate how workers can be politically represented – there is no constitutional bar to Unite branches sending delegates even under the current rules.

But there was debate too about the tactics proposed. Phil Smart, the branch secretary of Unite WM6070, asked why, with the union's objectives including "to have a strong political voice fighting on behalf of working peoples' interests... so as to promote a socialist vision" (Rule 2.1.4), the Executive Council couldn't use its powers to amend the rules itself?

Other speakers accepted that such a move was possible, but given the requirement that 75% of the Executive Council would have to agree, they argued that a membership campaign could also achieve the convening of a special policy and rules conference, which would result in a more deeply rooted and long-lasting change in the union's political strategy.

EXTRACT FROM THE MODEL MOTION FOR UNITE BRANCHES:

- Launch the discussion at all levels of Unite about our relationship with Labour and the need for a political strategy that supports our members taking political action on the basis of agreed Unite policies
- This discussion should lead to the convening of special policy and rules conferences to draw political and organisational conclusions, potentially including the building of a new workers' party, standing and supporting workers' candidates, calling for a conference across unions to build a political alternative for workers on a pro-worker, socialist programme
- Unite should send delegations to meetings and conferences organised by trade unionists on political representation for workers



Over 70 National Education Union (NEU) members joined the Zoom call on 18 August as part of the round of individual union meetings to bring together "Trade Unionists for a New Party". Not only was this a great turnout at a time when education staff are on holiday, the thorough and wide-ranging discussion also reflected the

enthusiasm and determination to campaign for the NEU to play a role in building a new party.

One shared aim from all the many contributions was to encourage as many NEU members as possible to take the arguments for a new workers' party into NEU structures, at school, district and national levels. There was also agreement that a mass trade union base can help make sure the new party has both firm roots in working-class communities and a programme that offers new hope to the millions let down by the existing mainstream parties who might otherwise look to the populist right like Reform.

The kind of policies that educators will want to see from a new workers' party were also discussed – including the reversal of cuts and privatisation, bringing back education into democratically accountable public control.

But there was also agreement that helping to shape the policy and structures of the new party needed more

than just individual educators joining the new party, it should be done through the union at all levels getting involved as a collective organisation. To cement that involvement, federal structures were needed that allow unions to affiliate.

A further meeting was planned for the new term, particularly to look at a motion for NEU Conference 2026 that could allow the union's existing political fund to start being used to back candidates committed to fighting for the union's policies.

EXTRACT FROM THE NEU MODEL MOTION:

- To request our National Executive members invite Jeremy Corbyn, Zarah Sultana and the Independent Alliance MPs to an urgent meeting of the National Executive
- To request our National Executive members approach the Unite EC, UCU NEC and bakers' union executive, and other relevant trade unions, to discuss trade union

involvement in the founding of a new workers' party

- To write to our local trades union council to suggest working with other unions locally to discuss what is locally needed for political representation
- To elect representatives to attend local meetings about a new workers' party and share the needs of education workers



On 21 July, over 1,000 trade unionists attended the successful 'Trade Unionists for a New Party' campaign launch, hosted by former Labour MP Dave Nellist (see '1,000+ trade unionists discuss' at socialistparty.org.uk).

Follow-up meetings are now being held in different trade unions. Here we carry extracts of reports and model motions from some of those meetings. The full reports, and the full text of the model motions in each union, can be read here: 'Trade unionists discuss how their unions can fight for political representation' at socialistparty.org.uk.



Meet with activists in your union to discuss: linktr.ee/TU4NewParty



PHOTOS: PAUL MATTHEWS

What kind of democratic structure?

Extract from the editorial of issue 1332, read in full '700,000 sign up to 'your party' call: What next in the fight for a workers' party?' at socialistparty.org.uk

If even a quarter of the trade union movement, inevitably sometimes on a local rather than national basis in the first instance, joined with a new party, the absolute numbers, and the social weight because of their collective power, would far outweigh the very impressive 700,000 who have signed up as individuals for updates about Corbyn and Sultana's 'Your Party'.

But the structure being proposed by some, One Member One Vote (OMOV), would not allow the collective voice of the trade union movement to have any weight within a new party.

The Labour Party began as a highly federal organisation with representation from trade unions and socialist organisations. This would be the best basis for a new mass workers' party, especially in its early stages.

A founding conference with delegates from affiliated trade unions,

affiliated political and working-class community organisations, plus groups of independent councillors would be a good first step. Local members' organisations in a council area, could also have representation at national conferences as it develops. They could also operate on a federal basis.

Some may argue that such 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 which forced the Thatcher government to concede millions. The District Labour Party was the key body through which the course of the struggle was decided.

It had over 600 representative delegates from unions, ward Labour parties and so on, and was a kind of parliament of the workers' movement, setting policy for councillors to act on, and organising action 'on the street' like rallies and demos to support their stand. The creation of a party able to play that role in the many struggles ahead would be a great step forward.

A democratic structure is not secondary but crucial to this party developing the kind of political programme and fighting determination that the working class needs.

The capitalist media and establishment will try to pressurise a new party's leadership to become more 'moderate' and 'respectable'. A structure through which the working class can apply strong counter-pressure, holding the leadership accountable, will be essential.



April Ashley and Jim McFarlane, Unison National Executive Council (NEC) members acting in a personal capacity, called the first 'Unison for a New Party' meeting on 18 August, attended by around 70.

April raised that, as only 16% of Unison members currently pay into the affiliated political fund (Labour Link), it is clear that most members no longer see Labour as a party that represents their interests.

Andrea Egan, who is standing for general secretary of Unison against the current right-winger Christina McAnea, sent apologies for the meeting. Participants felt it important that the call for a review of Unison's relationship with the Labour Party, and for the union to use its political fund to only support MPs who follow union policy, form a prominent part of Andrea's election programme. If elected, we would also urge her to work with Jeremy, Zarah and the other suspended MPs so that they can represent Unison's policies in parliament.

There was concern raised by one attendee that union block votes had been applied undemocratically by union leaders in the past in the Labour Party. However, as others raised, a 'one member one vote' system may seem more democratic but was used by the right wing in the Labour Party to defeat the left. It is vital that a new working-class party has

not just the active support but democratic collective involvement of the trade unions, and a federal structure is the best way of ensuring this. It is also vital that we fight for our unions to be democratic and accountable to the members.

The meeting agreed that we need resolutions for the 2026 national delegate conference on reviewing the political funds, ending the Labour Link and supporting candidates who support Unison policies. There is currently a right-wing majority on the NEC and it is has previously been difficult to get anything past the standing orders committee at conference. However, a flood of resolutions, backed up by signatories on a petition, would show the strength of support.

EXTRACT FROM MOTION FOR UNISON BRANCHES

- Launch a campaign under the banner 'Our money, our choice', calling for a full review of Unison's political funds, with a commitment to ballot members on options so that our money can be used to back only political candidates and parties who support our union's policies
- To seek clarity from all candidates in the 2025 general secretary election about whether they support such a review
- To launch a national petition within the union to campaign for these aims



Activists from across the Communication Workers Union (CWU) attended a meeting on Monday 11 August. CWU general secretary Dave Ward sent his apologies as he was away.

Many of the attendees contributed to the debate on the tactics and strategy needed in our union, all in a personal capacity. Deji Olayinka, chair of UTAW (tech workers) branch, introduced a model motion for branches to discuss and to call on the union leadership to engage, as Andy Gibb, former national executive member, raised.

Alex Shepley, Manchester Branch Women's officer, highlighted that if the party built on Corbyn's manifesto promises of nationalising Royal Mail, BT and Openreach it would attract, unite and re-engage union members who had been turned off by the union's relationship to Starmer's Labour.

Duncan Davis, UTAW Branch Secretary, called for clear rulebook provisions securing branches' rights to fund the best candidates including those outside of Labour. Gary Clark, former Scotland No. 2 branch secretary, explained that branches can ask for motions to be discussed at the National Executive Committee (NEC),

and that a policy forum would be held if branches representing over 40% of members asked for one.

EXTRACT FROM THE MODEL MOTION FOR CWU BRANCHES:

- Instruct branch political officers, regional official and regional political committees to organise members' meetings with CWU-backed Labour MPs as part of a review of the voting record of those MPs in line with CWU policy
- To take steps to create a formal CWU parliamentary group of MPs that support our policy, including MPs outside of Labour such as Corbyn and the Independent Alliance MPs
- Launch a union-wide consultation about the best use of the union's political fund, including the question of funding candidates outside the Labour Party who support CWU-agreed policy
- To convene a special policy forum and rules conference in 2026 to draw political and organisational conclusions



On 14 August, 40 activists in the University and College Union (UCU), from workplace reps and rank-and-file members through to National Executive Committee (NEC) members, met online to discuss the next steps in the fight for our union to have a voice in a new party of the working class.

In chairing the meeting and proposing a model motion for UCU members to take into their branches for discussion, National Executive Committee (NEC) members Duncan Moore and Marco Tesi explained that since UCU passed motion 63 at the union's annual congress in May (see 'UCU votes for national action in HE and FE' at socialistparty.org.uk), major developments in the struggle for independent working-class politics have come apace. This meeting was for UCU members to discuss how to campaign for UCU to engage in the formation of a new party.

The union's current rules state that no part of the fund of the union or of any branch shall be used for affiliation to any political party - that would require a rule change, achievable by a two-thirds majority vote at congress. But the union can spend the political

fund in any way that congress or the NEC deems to be in the interests of UCU members.

UCU congress motion 63 called for the union to invite Jeremy Corbyn and the other independents (now including Zarah Sultana) to a meeting of our national executive to discuss how they can support our union's fights in parliament, and for UCU to encourage our own members to stand in elections.

One participant argued that instead of concentrating on moving motions, it was important to build struggle. But others answered that these two processes are not separate – the strikes and campaigns are vital, but how much better if there was a political voice for those battles being built at the same time.

EXTRACT FROM THE UCU MOTION:

- To call for the urgent implementation of motion 63 and support calls for a special NEC on the question of political strategy to invite Corbyn, Sultana and the Independent Alliance MPs to
- To call for a joint meeting between the Unite EC, UCU NEC and bakers' union executive, and other relevant trade unions to discuss trade union involvement in the founding of a new workers' party
- To encourage members of our branch to stand as candidates in next year's local elections, linking up with other trade unionists, and to campaign for our union's policies

Right-wing Unison NEC opposes criticism of Labour and tries to clamp down on debate

APRIL ASHLEY
UNISON NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The newly elected Unison National Executive Council (NEC), which now has a small majority for the right wing met in July. The left, in which the Time For Real Change grouping (TFRC) is the biggest bloc, lost its thin majority in May's election.

However, the success of the right wing doesn't at all mean that Unison members are themselves moving to the right, but that they are yet to see the difference a left fighting leadership could make. In fact in that election, many right-wing activists also lost their seats.

The right majority on the new NEC started as they mean to carry on, with little criticism of the Labour Party, despite the government and councils acting against Unison policies and attacking our members.

There was little discussion on the NHS pay campaign, despite members being in the midst of a consultative ballot on the pay review body recommendation of 3.6% (having already rejected the offer), or of the local government pay campaign, in which Unison accepted the dismal pay offer of 3.2% because of the below-50% turnout in the consultative ballot.

The discussion on local government funding cuts highlighted the pivotal Unite Birmingham bin

workers' strike. Unison has sent messages of support to the bin workers. But I pointed out that Unite conference had voted to suspend Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner from membership, and that Unison should do the same, as Angela's actions on behalf of the Labour government amount to strike-breaking. However, Unison general secretary Christina McAnea completely rejected this, claiming that there was no mechanism to do this in Unison.

Christina also didn't agree that Birmingham Labour council's action could amount to 'fire and rehire' if they offered the workers new inferior contracts! Fire and rehire was meant to be outlawed by the Labour government, but hasn't been. It seems that repeal of the Trade Union Act 2016, to revoke the 50% ballot threshold that hampers strike action, is also receding further.

The NEC majority refused to allow discussion of the campaign around Julia Mwakule, outrageously removed from the NEC as Senior Vice President despite topping the poll in the recent election, alleging that it could create a conflict of interest.

General secretary election

The NEC also agreed the election procedures for the general secretary election taking place by the end of the year. This is a crucial election under Starmer's Labour government. Christina McAnea is standing



Socialist Party members supporting Unison members on strike. LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

for re-election, determined to keep the union safe for the Labour government. The Socialist Party is giving support to the TFRC candidate Andrea Egan, as defeating McAnea would open up the opportunity for members to push Unison in a more fighting industrial and political direction.

When the left won a majority on the NEC in 2021, they correctly removed an undemocratic rule instituted by the old right wing, which had barred candidates from accepting support from any entity that was 'not provided for in Unison rules'. That rule was used to try to prevent

socialist candidates - who, unlike the establishment candidates, don't have all-year-round access to the union's official communications - from putting forward a fighting programme widely.

It is no accident that at the first opportunity the new right-wing NEC has reintroduced that rule, barring campaigning by 'outside organisations and associations', even when Unison candidates are members of those organisations. They would rather bureaucratically restrict a fighting programme and a political alternative being put to members than allow a real serious debate on

strategy - clearly they are not confident that, as Starmer's attacks rain down, they would win the argument!

TFRC amendments to this were rejected. Unfortunately, the 'Organised Left' group members who were present in the meeting mistakenly voted against all TFRC amendments and for the right wing's rules.

There will be continued battles on the NEC as the right wing seek to acquiesce with the Labour Party whilst Unison members are looking for a fightback and an alternative to Labour, as their pay and the services they provide continue to be eroded.

Scottish Government pay rejected: PCS members prepare to fight



PHOTO: ROB WILLIAMS

FIONA BRITTLE
PCS NEC MEMBER AND SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT GEC, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Workers in Scottish Government (SG) and Scottish Devolved Sector groups have been offered a 9% pay 'rise' over three years.

Despite months of negotiations, this is identical to the Scottish public sector pay policy published in December 2024. It is below RPI inflation

and is therefore a pay cut. All public sector unions, including PCS, rejected the policy immediately.

Disgracefully, the offer removes the long-standing 'no compulsory redundancy' guarantee, and heavily implies job cuts. PCS in SG does not accept that pay should be funded from restructures or a drop in service delivery.

The SG Group Executive Committee (GEC) met on 16 July and unanimously voted to reject, and formally ballot members on pay and

conditions. Less than an hour later, the GEC was told that the National Disputes Committee (NDC) secretary insisted we deliver a consultative ballot first.

The NDC is dominated by the 'Left Unity' (LU) grouping, which currently has a majority on the PCS National Executive Committee, as well as the general secretary and national president, and has a record of holding back struggle. In contrast, Broad Left Network (BLN) members across the union have full confidence that our

members will vote 'yes' in pay ballots, when engaged in a proper campaign to build support for a fighting strategy.

The SG GEC clearly agrees, but rather than waste time arguing with the LU bureaucracy we launched a consultative ballot on pay from 4-25 August. Member turnout at SG branch pay meetings has been high, with large majorities voting at the meeting to support rejection and industrial action.

Members tell us that pay is a huge issue, and is consistently linked with hybrid working - increased cost is a key reason why members oppose forced office attendance.

SG bosses have announced, without union consultation, a mandatory office attendance of 40% for staff in 'Core SG' from October, with the intent to increase this further. Social Security Scotland workers are already under a compulsory 40%, with other areas indicating they'll do the same.

BLN members on the SG GEC have argued repeatedly to combine the fight on pay and conditions with hybrid, based on member feedback. Both issues are intrinsically linked, and a single campaign would unite members for whom pay or hybrid is the greater priority into a single point of leverage. Unfortunately, this position has not been supported by the

wider GEC, which opted to consult members on the issues separately, arguing that this was so as not to risk the issue of hybrid impacting negatively on any pay campaign.

However, SG GEC have now reported that the group-wide petition to gauge members' appetite for strike action over hybrid (an indicative ballot in all but name) which ran throughout July has achieved a huge 62% turnout, with 88% supporting our hybrid demands and 70% supporting industrial action. This is a clear demonstration of members' anger and desire to fight on hybrid, and crucially their ability to beat the anti-trade union 50% threshold.

BLN members will continue to argue for one campaign that unites office attendance of 40% for staff in 'Core SG' from October, with the intent to increase this further. Social Security Scotland workers are already under a compulsory 40%, with other areas indicating they'll do the same.

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Sheffield Veolia bin strikers: One year on and still fighting!

ALISTAIR TICE
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

On 19 August, Unite members at Lumley Street Veolia bin depot in Sheffield celebrated one whole year of indefinite strike action for union recognition. The 'Lumley Street Warriors' welcomed around 150 trade unionists and supporters to the picket line in a show of solidarity on the strike's anniversary.

Striking Birmingham bin workers and a Fire Brigades Union delegation were joined by Rob Williams on behalf of the National Shop Stewards Network, who opened the speeches aimed at the both strikers and appealing to the GMB union members still working.

Despite a High Court Injunction, strike supporters exercised their right to picket, to ask drivers to stop, take a leaflet, have a conversation. The first wagon due out didn't try to leave the depot, and all the refuse trucks were delayed by two hours, giving the strikers a huge boost.

The determination of the strikers to be represented by the union of their choice must now be matched by Unite extending the threat of industrial action to other Veolia sites around the country, as well as continued pressure on the Labour-led council to take the 36-year outsourced contract off Veolia and bring it back under local authority control.



PHOTO: SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

● Imperial College staff fight derisory pay offer

MARY FINCH
UNISON MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

University staff across the country have suffered years of pay rises which are below inflation - ie real-terms pay cuts. Unison, which organises professional support staff, and the University and College Union (UCU) have been on strike together several times in a national battle for better pay and working conditions.

More recently, UCU members have been fighting in many universities as they face attempts to slash jobs and entire courses.

And on pay, this year, university staff nationally have been offered just 1.4% - another real-terms cut!

The employers at Imperial College London aren't part of the national offer, but workers are still having to take action for better pay and working conditions.

The Joint Trades Unions (JTU) argued for a 5.2% pay increase this year, and a £2,000 lump sum. University management offered us just 2%. 94% of Unison members voted to reject this, but management are implementing their 'pay rise' anyway.

The JTU claim also asked for greater flexibility at work. We're entitled to up to one week's leave to care for dependents - but without pay. Paternity leave stood at only two weeks, and while university management has agreed to increase this to four weeks, the claim for paid carers' leave was rejected.

Some employers are now introducing four-day working weeks without loss of pay. The JTU asked senior management to establish a working group to explore introducing this at Imperial - and this too was outright rejected.

We're currently voting in a full industrial ballot. The results of the consultative ballot show that there's a mood amongst members to fight back.



Ardagh Glass workers score a victory. IAIN DALTON

● Forklift drivers victory

Forklift drivers at Ardagh Glass, Knottingley, Wakefield, are celebrating. They have forced their new employer, Lockwood Haulage, to continue the existing Unite the Union recognition agreement they had when they transferred from the previous contractor, GXO.

Following two separate days of strike action in July, a further eight continuous days had been notified to the employer, which forced them to concede.

Unite rep Dean Gittins told the Socialist: "We had no alternative option to striking, having been expressly told the company would not recognise the existence of Unite. Unite has always been included in our employment contracts for decades, which we would expect to continue, in accordance with the government's rules regarding TUPE [regulations which protect rights when workers are transferred between employers]."

"I would like to thank colleagues and Unite for their solidarity and courage in standing together."

● Bradford UCU fights cuts

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) at the University of Bradford took a further three days of strike action, on A-Level results day and the subsequent days, in their ongoing dispute over course and job cuts.

Management had met with them the day before the strike, but no guarantees have been given to the union.

One picket said: "They're rearranging the deckchairs whilst the ship is sinking." The lasting solution to this crisis, repeated in universities round the country, lies in demanding that the Labour government fully funds education.

YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

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A tale of two 'thresholds'

Commentary in the media aimed at preparing public opinion for tax increases in the autumn focused my attention on the continued maintenance of the income tax personal allowance thresholds (£12,570 and £50,270) frozen by the Tories in 2022 till 2028 and retained by New Labour in government.

The amounts workers were allowed to earn before starting to pay tax used to increase each year with inflation. The 'I' newspaper reported that had the personal allowance been allowed to rise with inflation each year since 2022, thresholds would now be at £15,480 and £62,080. The number of higher-rate taxpayers has risen since 2010 from 3 million to 7 million today.

With the expectation that Reeves will possibly extend the freeze to 2030, the article forecast that groups not considering themselves 'particularly affluent, let alone wealthy', including teachers and band-six NHS workers, some charge nurses and midwives, could be pushed above the £50,270 threshold by 2030 and into the 40% tax bracket!

Alongside of this we have the government's retention of another Tory threshold in the anti-union laws which seek, a year into its term of office, to continue to hinder resistance to poverty by the working class by imposing the 50% ballot threshold.

LEN HOCKEY, WALTHAM FOREST BRANCH

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

Join the fightback JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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



WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand of a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.
- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.
- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.
- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.
- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.
- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.
- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.
- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.
- The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence – where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced - and unrecycled waste.
- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any loss of jobs, pay or conditions.
- A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.
- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.
- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.
- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

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50 socialist meetings to debate new party

The Socialist Party has organised 50 public meeting across England and Wales. 30 are yet to take place.

All of them are to discuss and debate how the new party – that Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sultana have announced their intention to create – can be built into an organisation where workers can fight for our interests. These reports

give a flavour of what's being talked about.

All of the meetings have had people attending a Socialist Party meeting for the first time.

Come and discuss with the Socialist Party - visit socialistparty.org.uk/ events to see a list of upcoming public meetings. Get in touch for more info about meetings in your area, or to discuss joining – socialistparty.org.uk/join or text 07958 032071.

● Tyne and Wear – lessons from history

Everyone who came along joined in with the discussion, with an array of topics debated – including what democratic structure the new formation should have.

Almost half the people were not (yet) Socialist Party members. One person who found out about our meeting texted us: "I'm travelling in for the public meeting for socialists", adding that he didn't know any of us. I texted back to assure him we were a friendly lot. He enjoyed the meeting and is definitely interested in joining the Socialist Party.

The role of Labour's Liverpool City Council during the mid-1980s was raised by one of our young Socialist Party members, which shows the lessons of that battle against Thatcher's Tories still resonates to a new generation.

Then, the District Labour Party played the key role – deciding the course of the struggle at each stage. It had more than 600 delegates from unions, local Labour parties and more – a kind of parliament of the workers' movement, setting policy for councillors to implement, and organising massive protests to support their stand.

Their achievements included building thousands of council homes. A party like that would be a massive step forward.

We're going to discuss this more fully at our Socialist Party branch meeting next week. We're inviting

those who attended our public meeting to come along.

After the meeting, we carried on with our discussions in a more informal manner – this definitely helped clarify points that had been raised in the meeting.

We raised £107 to fund the campaigns our party does, and hope to welcome some of those who attended into the Socialist Party.

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

● Leeds – how can we stop Reform?

The discussion from the floor focused on two things – how a new party can tap into the anger of trade union members clashing with the Labour Party, such as in Birmingham and other councils, where workers' jobs and conditions are under attack.

The other was how a new party could cut across the growth of Reform UK, as some polls showing significant support for a new party, especially among young people, also show Reform's support holding up.

Reform now runs a number of councils. What are they prioritising? The housing crisis, jobs for young people, the crumbling state of local services? No.

In nearby Doncaster, the issue Reform chose was what flags were flown by the council – an attempt to distract people from the cost-of-living crisis, which would divide and weaken the working class.

Our speaker, Socialist Party National Committee member Alistair

Tice, said that a new party fighting on those important issues, including in council chambers, would expose Reform's lack of a genuine alternative to the capitalist establishment.

IAIN DALTON

● Gloucestershire – discussing democracy

One purpose of the Gloucestershire public meeting was to help clarify some questions members and supporters had. For example, on the trade union block vote and 'one member one vote'.

It was good to see new faces, and some we'd not seen for a while.

We noted that, historically, the right wing always hated the union block vote, which Tony Blair scrapped in his transformation of Labour into an out-and-out capitalist party. Despite right-wing trade union leaders, the union block vote had the potential to push conference to the left. We argue for the union block vote to be under the democratic control of the union membership.

As to 'online democracy', the parallel was drawn with Tory anti-union legislation. Strike votes at mass meeting were replaced with postal ballots.

The move to postal ballots was designed to shift the balance away from the active membership – who are involved in the day-to-day struggle and life of the union – to inactive members, who are more susceptible to propaganda of the right-wing media, which reflect the interests of the bosses.

SUE POWELL

● Cardiff and Caerphilly – no cuts and elections

40 people participated across both meetings.

We discussed what to do about the Welsh Senedd elections next year. Some have said 'Your Party' should support Plaid Cymru or Greens to stop Reform.

In power in local councils, the Greens and Plaid have acted like Labour and the Conservatives, with cuts and privatisation. They have not fought alongside the working class and trade unions for the jobs, pay, and services we need.

In our meeting, a Green Party supporter raised doubts about whether



Tyne and Wear



Camden

● Leicester – Corbyn #1 discussed

Some expressed concern that Jeremy Corbyn could be taken down again, like in the 2019 election. But there was also optimism at an alternative to the other parties.

Questions were asked about

whether disability laws would change from their current 'one size fits all' approach and demonisation of disabled people, and whether the new party structure could allow other political groups to join.

Others asked – would the new party be able to draw in Conservative voters? Do people understand what 'socialism' actually means, as they felt Corbyn was undone by media spin of 'socialist' and 'communist'.

But socialist ideas do gain widespread support when they are understood, as representing the interests of the working class. And these subjects are all discussed at Socialist Party meetings.

RICHARD TILLEY

● Brighton – what can youth do?

All the new attendees spoke in the discussion – raising the outlook and disenfranchisement of young people, the need to battle within the

trade unions to make them more fighting and democratic, and how a new party could combat the 'divide and rule' of the current capitalist parties.

There was also agreement about the role of the Socialist Party, and the need for us to continue putting forward clear ideas about the programme and organisation needed by the working class, while at the same time fighting for this new party to be a success and taking part in its development.

We are now discussing holding another public meeting on the same topic later in the summer, to maximise the number of workers and young people that we can arm with our socialist ideas for the important debates taking place around the new party.

CALLUM JOYCE

● Southampton – 'how can I join?'

There were several new faces, including young people who had come to discuss how a new party could represent them.

After the meeting, one young worker approached us, and asked to join the Socialist Party. Most of the new people bought the Socialist paper, and asked for more info. The fighting fund collection raised £147.

From the response we have received on our Socialist Party campaign stalls, this meeting was just the tip of the iceberg.

TIM CUTLER

● Bristol – what next?

35 people attended. We sold 30 Socialist papers, and raised £100 fighting fund.

Socialist Party member Sheila Caffrey is an elected member of the National Education Union (NEU) executive. Her introduction sparked discussions on the need for this new party to be rooted in the working class, and linked with trade unions.

Attendees wanted to be involved in the next steps, including more wide-reaching public meetings, ensuring the involvement of as much of the working class as possible. That way all of our voices are listened to, from young people – workers and those at school or uni – to pensioners.

ANNABEL GRIFFITHS

● Camden – postering works

There is a big appetite to discuss 'what next in the fight for a new workers party'. Six people turned up to their first Socialist Party meeting after just seeing a poster.

OSCAR PARRY

Do you agree?

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the Socialist

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FIGHT TO END GAZA SLAUGHTER



MARK BEST

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

After months of bombardment by the Israeli military, inconceivable death and destruction, and now famine and starvation, the people of Gaza are facing another bloody escalation by Benjamin Netanyahu's regime.

Television screens have been filled with the harrowing reality of life in the Gaza Strip. Children starving, people shot queuing for food, and buildings that were once homes reduced to rubble.

Now Netanyahu is planning the next stage, occupying Gaza City. One million people face being forced into tent camps in the south of the strip. And thousands more will die from a lack of food, water and medical supplies, or be killed by the Israeli military.

The brutal occupation and military assaults by the Israeli state wouldn't be able to continue without the backing of western capitalist countries. Countries including the US and Britain continue to supply arms and trade with Israel, to maintain bosses' profits and to keep the state as a bulwark for their interests in the Middle East. And despite recent proclamations that a Palestinian state may be recognised, like Keir Starmer threatened to try and restrain Netanyahu's regime, in actions instead of words the war and occupation is still supported. This reflected too the anger he faces.

Israeli state's biggest backer

The Israeli state's biggest backer – Donald Trump – hasn't even gone this far. He has hit back with words and increased tariffs at states that have criticised the Israeli state's actions such as Canada. He joined in with the bombing of Iran, pushing the region closer to more widespread war, which would have devastating effects on the working class and poor that live there.

Across the world, people are sick of a system in which bosses' profits are prioritised over lives and livelihoods. And angry at the politicians that defend the interests of the bosses and maintain the capitalist system which means war and starvation is inevitable.

Starmer, in a desperate attempt to keep on Trump's good side and protect British businesses from the worst of Trump's tariffs, is rolling out the red carpet again. Trump is coming to Britain for an unprecedented second state visit, touching down on the 17 September.

For young people and students, many of whom will have marched over the last year and a half against the war on Gaza, what better way to show opposition to war and the capitalist system that causes it than walking out against Trump when he visits?

If you want to organise a walkout in your school, college or university to stand up to Trump, Starmer and the system they represent, then get in touch with Socialist Students. Turn to page 3 to see how you can get involved and get organised now to fight back against war, the capitalist system and for a socialist alternative to continued destruction.

WALK OUT AGAINST TRUMP



PHOTO: MICHAEL VADON/CC

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

