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the Socialist

Issue 1334

4-10 September 2025

formerly **Militant**

YOUTH WALK OUT AGAINST TRUMP

17 SEPTEMBER



Trump, Charles and Starmer dine while Gaza starves.

On 17 September Donald Trump is set to make a state visit to the UK. He will be hosted by King Charles for a 'glittering' state banquet at Windsor Castle - a stark contrast to the genocide and man-made famine that the people of Gaza are facing.

Israel's military will not be pausing the slaughter to let needed aid into Gaza. This is a decision which will likely worsen the famine, prolonging the starvation of frightened, malnourished children and families across Gaza already struggling to survive.

Trump, heading up US capitalism, the world's biggest capitalist power, backs up Netanyahu's murderous regime, including by sending arms to the Israeli state.

Children and families who could only dream of the luxuries that those at the top indulge in will continue to be killed, continue to be broken and continue to starve, while Trump goes galivanting to Windsor Castle.

This is why Socialist Students has been organising for walkouts of young people across the country on 17 September, showing their disgust for Trump's power and brutality and solidarity with those workers and young people in the US fighting against him. We are sick of profit and power coming before people and planet.

ALANAH CAREY-PEACHER
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Sign up, help organise a walkout in your area



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

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

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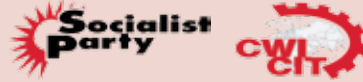
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The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International socialistparty.org.uk socialistworld.net



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ISSN 1366-9621

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

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

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

Organise to fight Labour's disability benefits consultation sham

BEN GOLIGHTLY
SWANSEA & WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY & DISABLED PEOPLE AGAINST CUTS CYMRU CO-ORDINATOR

Facing major defeat in parliament over disability cuts, disability minister Stephen Timms promised to engage widely with disabled people over the summer, and to genuinely co-produce a review into the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit.

Timms's promises have not been met in the slightest. Timms has shown himself neither qualified, nor willing, to genuinely consult with disabled people.

What kind of review?

The PIP review must be independently led by disabled people and our organisations, inviting the views of carers, volunteers, and workers in health, social care, housing, transport, and welfare.

Any review of welfare reform must also involve trade unions - democratic organisations representing 1.4 million disabled workers as well as representing the workers responsible for the day-to-day delivery of services that disabled people rely on.



NSSN supporting protest against Labour's attack on disabled people's benefits LONDON SP

It needs to be independent of Timms. The Labour government was forced back by mass pressure but is still aiming to cut £5 billion. Timms has not dropped that objective.

I urge readers of the Socialist to sign and support an open letter from Disabled People Against Cuts Cymru (DPAC Cymru) raising these demands.

Socialist Party members have also

been championing the call for the TUC (Trades Union Congress) and its Disabled Workers Committee to organise a weekend demonstration as a launchpad for sustained trade union action.

The TUC will soon debate an important motion against disability cuts from Cardiff Trades Council, which won the backing of the Trades Union Councils Conference earlier this year.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has organised a lobby of the TUC on 7 September, in support of that motion. (see page four)

- Sign the DPAC Cymru open letter at bit.ly/independent-pip-review

- Join the NSSN lobby of the TUC, 1pm on Sunday 7 September, at the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, BN1 1NR.

Energy prices set to rise, again

HUW JAMES
ALDERSHOT AND NORTH HANTS SOCIALIST PARTY

The energy regulator, Ofgem, recently announced that it will raise the energy price cap by 2% from October, so that suppliers can charge 2% more for the energy they provide. This comes off the back of huge increases in energy prices over recent years. According to data published by the Department for Energy and Net Zero, domestic energy bills have increased by over 50% on average since 2020.

Ofgem reports the cap will be raised in response to increased wholesale gas and electricity costs. In making the cap dependent on wholesale costs, Ofgem is ensuring that whenever they increase, consumers, not suppliers, foot the bill. Although the cap is ostensibly there to protect consumers, the way it is set means that it ends up protecting suppliers' profit margins instead.

Competition?

The move to a market-based energy system was justified on the basis that competition between suppliers would drive down prices for consumers. By this logic, there should be no need for the price cap, which is a kind of price control. But energy supply relies on fixed infrastructure, which creates what economists call a 'natural monopoly', so this logic doesn't apply.

The real reason for our market-based system is to allow capitalists to generate additional profits at the expense of workers. Privatising the energy supply is particularly lucrative because of our total dependency on it. If energy prices go up then we have no choice but to pay the additional amount; it's either that or freeze to death.

The government would argue that even if it was to renationalise energy, prices would still need to be based on global wholesale costs, which are beyond its control. Except this is only because the UK is heavily reliant on imported gas for its energy needs. Also, our 'marginal cost pricing system' means that the price of electricity is set by the most expensive source available to meet demand at any given time.

Cheaper renewable energy costs do not translate to consumer savings under this system, despite renewable sources now consistently outcompeting fossil fuels on price. Marginal cost pricing is simply another profit-generating device. Until we remove the profit motive from the energy system, our energy prices will only continue to rise.

Help fund the fightback
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Kingston gas power station ITDOON/SHUTTERSTOCK

The Socialist Party says:

- Kick the profit-hungry fat cats out and bring down our bills. Nationalise the energy companies, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need
- We can use the wealth and resources currently in the hands of the bosses to transition away from fossil fuels without making working-class people pay for it, including those currently in polluting industries, by guaranteeing their pay and conditions
- But to do so will require a socialist plan of production, democratically drawing up a plan of what we need instead of what makes a profit to provide decent standards of living for all

HOUSING CRISIS BRITAIN: FIGHT FOR COUNCIL HOMES

ISAI MARIJERLA
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1.28 million households stuck on council house waiting lists

Everywhere you go, you hear stories of how we are struggling to find decent, 'affordable', comfortable homes that we can live in without being forced to move again and again because of rent hikes and short-term contracts.

Young people are often forced either to live with their parents, couch surf or move too frequently to build a stable life. The hope of a permanent home is shattered for many young and working-class families.

Even if you are one of the 'lucky' few that have managed to get a mortgage, the increase in interest rates and inflation means your costs are going up. This is before you take into account the increasing cost of bills and food.

More than 1.28 million households in England are currently stuck on council waiting lists for a social home, according to charity Crisis. In some London boroughs, at current rates the waiting list for social-rented homes would take over a century to clear. More than 130,000 households are trapped in temporary accommodation. In the past ten years, 177,487 social homes have been lost from demolitions and sales.

We need council homes - high quality, genuinely affordable, low cost and secure - and enough of them for those who want them.

But instead of building more, the government is selling more. More than eight times as many council homes are due to be sold off this year than were constructed last year. In other words, council housing stock is

decreasing at a fast rate. This pushes more people into extortionate private rents with less secure tenancies.

We can't trust Labour

Based on their record over the last year, we don't trust the Labour government to provide us with the homes that we need. Earlier this month, homelessness minister Rushanara Ali was forced to resign after the humiliating revelation that she evicted tenants living in a house she rented, then put it back on the market having increased the rent from £3,300 a month to nearly £4,000. No wonder there is a growing anger against Labour.

There are more than a million empty properties in England, over a quarter of a million of which have had no one living there for six months or more.

Councils up and down the country should take over these empty properties, as a start to provide housing for all those in urgent housing need. Councils already have the power to do this, it's a political choice that they are not.

Councils should then use their borrowing powers and reserves to start a mass council house building programme and build a campaign to demand the money to do so from Starmer's Labour government.



THE GENOME/CC

Rent increasingly unaffordable

ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

The cost of renting in almost every part of the UK is increasingly unaffordable for the average worker. Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show that approximately 36% of median salary being spent on rent (with this proportion rising to over 40% in London and large parts of the south-east, Bath, Bristol and Somerset). The ONS considers 30% of salary to be the affordability threshold for rented accommodation.

These figures are even more alarming when we take into account that the 'median salary' in the UK is over £37,000 - a figure that minimum-wage workers could only dream of. The hard fact, according to homelessness charity Shelter, is that many low-income tenants are actually spending two-thirds of their income on rent.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the Labour government is

considering taxing landlords' income - a cost that, without rent controls, would no doubt be passed onto already struggling renters in further rent hikes, rather than private landlords risking their 'passive income'.

MPs on another planet

The housing situation in Britain is in severe crisis and MPs, one in eight of whom have declared income from rental properties in the last year, have little personal incentive to fix it. MPs on £95,000 a year with expenses paid and second homes have no idea how much low-paid workers are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, while still paying increasing bills. Food is becoming an afterthought for far too many households in the sixth-richest nation.

We don't need more private landlords growing fat on the hard-earned wages of the working class; we need safe, secure, permanent housing for everyone. We need rent caps and we need a government that will commit

to a mass council house building project so no family will ever fear being tossed onto the street at a landlord's whim. We need a socialist alternative to the broken system that generations of capitalist Tory and Labour governments have created and ignored.



PAUL MATTISON



THE SOCIALIST INBOX

● Online Safety Act

On 1 August, the Online Safety Act (OSA) came into force. The Act has introduced draconian measures under the guise of 'protecting children'. It makes social media and internet search companies liable for not removing illegal and harmful content from their websites, but this is, quite possibly, its only redeeming quality. As with many recent laws, the Act is deliberately vague, which not only makes implementation and compliance difficult, but also gives regulators and police wide-reaching authority to censor content which could be interpreted to have contravened the Act, in a similar way to how the police utilise the slew of anti-union laws.

The Act also introduces new age-verification measures for internet users to prove that they are adults. What has been glossed over by the mainstream media, however, is that the verification process has been subcontracted to private companies, notably Palantir owned by the reclusive neo-conservative billionaire Peter Thiel, with barely any restriction on how the companies can use the highly sensitive data of anyone who wishes to freely access the Internet.

Grace Lewis, former Labour councillor in Coventry, recently quit the Labour Party and aligned herself with Corbyn and Sultana's 'Your Party'. Her announcement on X (formerly Twitter) has been age restricted and is now only viewable to UK users confirmed over 18 years old. There is only one pretext under which political disaffiliation could be deemed 'harmful': censorship. We must also remain wary of how this Act will lead to further censorship of global events, particularly in Gaza, given that the government continues to support the Israeli state's genocide of the Palestinians.

THEO HERCULES
WORCESTER

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Unison general secretary election – a clear choice for members



Unison members at the National Mining Museum in Wakefield, on strike over pay (see page 11). Andrea Egan supporting the pickets, fifth from right. PHOTO: ANDREA EGAN FOR UNISON GENERAL SECRETARY ON FACEBOOK

PAUL COUCHMAN
SURREY UNISON BRANCH SECRETARY, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Nominations are now open for the general secretary of Unison – the UK's largest trade union. The general secretary is the most powerful position in the union and plays a huge role in how Unison is perceived by members, employers and the government. As we go to press, we are aware of only two candidates seeking nominations: Christina McAnea, the current general secretary, and Andrea Egan, the left challenger and part of the Time For Real Change network within Unison.

Socialist Party members in Unison are calling for nominations for Andrea and will be campaigning for her to win this election. This is because we believe a victory for Andrea will be seen by members as a sign that the union is going to change – to become more combative, to challenge the government and employers, and introduce more democratic lay-member controls.

It would also be a clear message to Keir Starmer's government that the biggest public sector trade union, with around 1.3 million members, is under new management.

Starmer and Angela Rayner rely

on the support of union leaders like Christina McAnea to get away with their austerity agenda with little or no resistance. For years, Unison has been led by general secretaries who believe in 'partnership' with the bosses, in not 'rocking the boat'. Most end up in the House of Lords as a reward for their services to the status quo. Christina told the Unison conference this year that "there is no magic wand" and that Labour's U-turn on the winter fuel allowance was not a sign of weakness but a sign of the government "maturing".

Unfortunately, the North West 'Organised Left' group have decided to back Christina McAnea, learning nothing from the decades of subservient acquiescence of the union under the leadership of the right wing.

Trade union elections traditionally have a very low turnout, which favours the incumbent. A serious grassroots campaign amongst the membership in every branch will be needed for an Andrea Egan victory, and Socialist Party members in Unison will be doing all we can to support this goal. At the same time, we will be arguing for the fighting programme we think is necessary to transform the union and defend our members.

Socialist Party candidates in trade

union elections have always pledged to stand on a workers' wage so we are pleased that Andrea Egan has said she will only take a social worker's wage if elected. She has also made a clear promise to review and bolster the union's ability to take effective national strike action, which is very positive.

Break with pro-austerity Labour

We also welcome her pledge to launch a comprehensive review of the union's relationship with the Labour Party, but this should not be to "ensure we get value for money" with Labour, as her manifesto says, but to enable a break with a pro-austerity Labour Party and backing only for candidates and parties who support our union's policies.

Nor has she said anything about councils setting no-cuts budgets to protect jobs and services. We will be arguing for these two policies to form a key part of her manifesto in order to galvanise members' support in the campaign to defeat the right in this election.

- Branches, regions and other bodies in the union have until 26 September to make nominations
- The ballot opens on 28 October and runs until 25 November. Results will be announced on 17 December



PHOTO: PAUL MATTESSON

London tube strike over working hours

SOCIALIST PARTY RMT MEMBERS

Strikes by transport union RMT members will take place in different parts of the London Underground workforce from Sunday 7 to Thursday 11 September.

Senior managers have received pay rises this year of up to 22%, while telling workers there is no money to address our demands. RMT union members on London Underground will not accept this. We are saying that it is time to deal with the demand for a shorter working week, as well as holding management to account for former promises yet to be delivered on.

Tube workers have delivered ridership back to pre-Covid levels, in spite of jobs being cut from 18,500 to 16,500. The reduction in jobs has contributed to ever more extreme shift working and more demands on each worker.

In 2023, strike action by tube workers forced an additional £30 million for our pay deal. That was an important win but the overall award was still below inflation, which was then at the peak of the cost-of-living crisis and over 12%. The offer was sweetened by a commitment to seek the reintroduction of concessionary fares on the mainline railways, a scheme that was curtailed after privatisation.

In 2024, we defeated an attempt by management to fragment our pay negotiations by dividing workers into different 'job families', which would have led, in the longer term, to different pay awards for workers playing different roles. After a ballot for action, management eventually agreed that everyone covered by the negotiation would get an RPI pay rise.

Now in 2025, we are still waiting for the extension of concessionary rail travel, and London Underground management has failed to properly implement the changes to pay structures to ensure everyone gets their full pay award every year.

Moreover, RMT members want to see real improvements that give more time away from work to recover from the demands of shift work. As well as giving themselves massive pay rises, the tube bosses have added insult to injury by imposing a plan for train drivers to work a more flexible roster pattern, with longer shifts and many drivers not knowing what their shifts will be until 24 hours beforehand. Management has cynically presented this as a four-day week, but the majority of drivers have rejected the proposal and understand that fatigue cannot be addressed by making people work longer days and cutting jobs. RMT demands real progress on working hours across all job roles.

RMT members on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) will also be striking during the same period in a separate dispute over pay and conditions, which together with the rolling London Underground action, will have a huge impact on London's transport network.

Overall, the motions are far from sufficient in exposing the pro-capitalist character of Starmer's Labour government and setting out the militant strategy that is needed. But there are motions that do point the way forward that must be supported and built upon.

Join the fightback
JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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BACK CALLS FOR ACTION AT TRADES UNION CONGRESS 2025

Organise a trade union-led weekend demo against Starmer's austerity

Socialist Party
WHAT WE THINK

Trades Union Congress (TUC) meets in Brighton (7-10 September) at a critical stage. The first year of Keir Starmer's government - his New Labour Mark 2 - has shown itself to take its starting point as representing the interests of the bosses and the capitalist establishment, both at home and abroad. The employers' profits come first, while working-class people have had to face the first onslaught of Labour austerity, with Rachel Reeves's second Budget due this autumn, promising a gearing up of the cuts offensive.

This has opened up a political vacuum in society that the populist and far-right are rushing to try and fill with their racist divide and rule that wants to pit worker against worker, directing them away from the reality of decades of vicious Thatcherism.

But the huge response to the announcement by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana of a new left party, with over 700,000 signing up to give their support, shows that the workers' movement has an opportunity to put its stamp on events, and give an alternative to workers and working-class communities, both politically and industrially. This is the role that TUC Congress must play.

Overall, the motions are far from sufficient in exposing the pro-capitalist character of Starmer's Labour government and setting out the militant strategy that is needed. But there are motions that do point the way forward that must be supported and built upon.

Experience of past year

A year ago, newly elected Starmer strode into Brighton to lay down his mode of rule to the unions, peppering his speech with his P-word – 'partnership'. He called for

partnership between his government, the unions and so-called 'progressive' employers.

But the experience of the last year has proved once and for all that there are no common interests between workers and their unions and the bosses. And this includes when the boss is Starmer and his cutting Labour councils, as Unite and its members on the Birmingham bins have found out. They have spent much of this year on the picket line, facing down a brutal assault on their income, including up to £8,000 a year cut in wages. The Labour council has resorted to the most brutal strike-breaking measures to try and force through these vicious attacks.

Yet the ending of fire and rehire and the beginning of scrapping the Tory anti-union laws were supposed to be the centrepiece of Labour's Employment Rights Bill, much heralded by most of the union leaderships. But the Birmingham bin workers know full well that fire and rehire is very much alive and being rolled out by Labour!

Unite's 'Fair funding for local authorities' motion 48 calls "on the TUC to campaign urgently for: restructuring or cancellation of local government debt to future-proof local authorities; an end to imposed pay cuts by local authorities and unequivocal support for the Birmingham bin workers."

In addition, scandalously, the undemocratic 50% strike ballot turnout thresholds have still not been scrapped, a deliberate step to attempt to undermine national action, especially in the public sector as Starmer and Reeves continue to peg back pay after 14 years of Tory wage cuts.

The POA and BFAWU unions have powerful motions exposing the duplicity of Starmer's promises. The POA motion 17 calls for support from Congress in its fight for union rights as disgracefully "since a Labour government have been in power they have informed the POA that they do not intend to restore the right to strike for prison officers in England/Wales or Northern Ireland and they



The 2024 NSSN lobby, three months into Starmer's Labour government, warned of the austerity to come and called on the TUC to fight for workers' interests. MARK BEST

are prepared to defend Tory legislation in the European courts."

The BFAWU's motion 18 'Strengthening the Employment Rights Bill' criticises the "loopholes" around fire and rehire and zero-hour contracts, demands the "immediate repeal of all anti-union laws" calling out the delays in "implementing even the limited reforms promised." The union calls on Congress to "implement the 2024 TUC policy by convening a special Congress to review and push for a strengthened Bill" and "coordinate a national campaign, including opposition to austerity and industrial action if necessary."

Pass motions

This call for action is clearly expressed in the motions from the TUC Disabled Workers (motion 38) and Trades Councils (motion 39) conferences on opposing Labour's disability benefit cuts, demanding the organisation of "a demonstration and lobby of parliament in support of disabled workers as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people" and "a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people." An NEU amendment to NASUWT's motion 29 on the crucial issue of capital spending for public services also calls for a national demonstration.

These calls for action must be the main debates at Congress, drawing out the views of those union leaders who are covering up for Starmer and Reeves, and forcing a real discussion about the way forward for the unions. Better that than voting for militant motions in order to bury them.

Union reps and activists should come to the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) rally before the 2024 TUC Congress to lobby union leaders and delegates to vote for the strategy outlined in these motions.

Then fight for them to be implemented

But passing these motions would only be the starting point. They would then have to be backed up by a campaign across the unions to demand the implementation of the action points agreed – particularly the calling of a national Saturday demonstration against Starmer's austerity and preparing for industrial action.

The last year has seen workers' action continue from the strike wave that escalated during the last period of the Tories. But key disputes such as the Birmingham bin strike have also shown that it is essential that workers build a political alternative that can strengthen their industrial action, that stands up to Starmer, and gives workers an alternative to Farage's Reform.

The BFAWU's motion calls on the

TUC to "work with the Socialist Campaign Group, Independent Alliance and suspended Labour MPs". How will any union leaders argue against this? Will they counterpose the need to support those Labour MPs who have dutifully voted against scrapping the two-child benefit cap or for the removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance or the disability welfare cuts, as well as standing by Starmer's outrageous support for the brutal Israeli regime and being a faithful apologist for Trump?

The motion brings out into the Congress, and therefore the whole trade union movement, the need for the unions to debate the need for a political alternative. That this would take place just as Corbyn and Sultana launch a new party, makes this a concrete discussion. And it means that it is an opportunity to argue the need for the unions to be central to what is needed – a new workers' party on a socialist programme.

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Trade unionists fighting in their unions for a new party

Issue 1333 of the Socialist reported on meetings in five trade unions, following on from a 1,000-strong 'Trade unionists for a new party' meeting hosted by former Labour MP Dave Nellist on 21 July.

We carry here extracts from reports of meetings in two more unions. The full reports of these and the other meetings 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



PHOTO: ROGER THOMAS

GMB

On 20 August, 21 members of general union GMB met online to discuss how we build support across our union - one of the biggest backers of Labour - for a new party of the working class, with a socialist programme, rooted in the trade unions. Attendees represented a wide range of regions and sectors, from 17 GMB branches, and most were activists with positions as branch reps or officers, including some regional council members.

Gareth Bromhall, a general council member of Trades Union Congress Cymru and a GMB Wales and South West regional council member (speaking in a personal capacity), introduced the proposed model motion. He emphasised that many Labour MPs in the GMB Parliamentary Group are not voting for GMB policies, and that a new party must "unambiguously" be based in the trade unions.

A good debate ensued, with points made including:
● GMB's next rule amendment Congress is not until 2027, hence the

importance of point 4 in the model motion, arguing for a special policy and rule amendment conference in 2026 to discuss and draw political and organisational conclusions

● The initial aim at least could be on amending our rules to allow GMB to also back candidates from other political parties who are prepared to fight to implement GMB policies

● One attendee made the point that some GMB activists seek union positions in order to climb up the political ladder, through GMB's Labour Party liaison structures, which results in a culture of not holding our leadership to account for its continued Labour backing. In contrast, when Dave Nellist was a Labour MP in the 1980s, he stood on a 'worker's wage' which rejects the financial benefits of a parliamentary career

We need to make sure that GMB members are involved in any new party - through our union's collective, democratic structures (rather than 'One Member One Vote', which is being mooted by some, but would

not allow the unions' collective voice).

It was agreed to meet again in October, with report-backs on the progress of the motion and next tasks planned.

EXTRACT FROM MODEL MOTION FOR GMB BRANCHES

● Launch a discussion at all levels of GMB about our relationship with Labour and the need for a political strategy that supports our members taking action on the basis of agreed GMB policies

● Encourage regional councils/committees to organise members' meetings at which members of the GMB Parliamentary Group, as well as the Independent Alliance MPs, are invited to speak. This should include reviewing to what extent an MP's voting record has been in line with GMB policy

● 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 will fight to implement GMB policies

● Convene a special policy and rule amendment conference in 2026 to discuss and draw political and organisational conclusions. This would potentially include the building of a new workers' party, standing and supporting workers' candidates, and calling for a conference across unions to build a political alternative for workers based on a pro-worker, socialist programme

20 members of the retail and distribution workers' union Usdaw joined a Zoom meeting on 31 August.

Usdaw is affiliated to the Labour Party. Iain Dalton, Usdaw Broad Left secretary, speaking in a personal capacity, introduced the discussion outlining the anger of Usdaw members at the policies of the Labour government, such as cutting pensioners' Winter Fuel Allowance. This was demonstrated with the near unanimous condemnation of this at Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). Additionally, the government has attacked disability benefits, failed to repeal the two-child benefit cap, and betrayed the WASPI women over their pensions, going against union policy. Also at ADM, the question of the accountability of the Usdaw group of MPs to union members and the policies we agree was raised.

Keir Starmer's leadership has suspended Labour MPs who have voted for Usdaw policies, such as scrapping the two-child benefit cap. Former Usdaw equalities officer Ruth George was blocked from standing again for her seat as a Labour candidate. Usdaw members will be rightly asking why are we giving support to Labour MPs who have not backed us on these issues, and not to elected representatives from the workers' movement, including Usdaw members, who have supported our policies?

It is therefore hardly surprising that Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's announcement of their intention to bring a new party into existence has sparked enormous enthusiasm - over 700,000 people signing up to stay informed.

The meeting discussed Rule 34 of

the Usdaw rulebook, 'Connections with Other Organisations', where there does not seem to be any clause which would prevent Usdaw nationally from continuing to support MPs or councillors who back Usdaw policies regardless of their status with the Labour Party or not.

What is restricted is branches' ability to spend political funds, limited to only what is 'compatible with support for the Labour Party' (in Rule 34, 2b). A special delegate meeting is scheduled for 2026 where branches could propose amendments to this and any other rules and it was agreed that members would draft motions to go to that meeting taking up this issue.

Much of the union's rules around political representation, including affiliation and the official support of candidates, are in the hands of ADM decisions, and ultimately implemented by Usdaw's National Executive Committee (NEC). Frustration at the outgoing Usdaw leadership and current NEC was expressed by many in the meeting, including former Usdaw president Amy Murphy.

With the next round of the election process for Usdaw president and NEC due to start in autumn 2026, supporters of a new workers' party should consider standing for such positions, with these issues being part of the fighting programme needed for Usdaw, as well as lobby all candidates as to their position.

We will be organising a follow-up meeting soon to prepare potential motions for the 2026 ADM, and we encourage all Usdaw members enthused by Corbyn and Sultana's initiative to join in the discussion about how we can fight for a real political voice for Usdaw members.

napo

Members of probation union Napo met on 1 September to discuss the role their union can play in building a new party. A report of those discussions will follow.

Wales Trade Union Conference on the crisis of political representation

Saturday 18 October 11am-3pm at Holiday Inn Cardiff City Centre, CF10 1XD. Supported by: Cardiff Trades Union Council; Swansea Trades Union Council; Newport Trades Union Council; Caerphilly Trades Union Council; Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union; Cardiff Council Unite branch; Cardiff Rail RMT branch; GMB Wales Ambulance Service branch; Cardiff General Unite branch; Cardiff and Area Community Unite branch

YOUR PARTY



The case for a socialist name



'Corbyn can win with socialist policies': the Socialist Party campaigned in support of Corbyn PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

On 26 August, over 700,000 people got an email asking "What should your party be called?" The first email to the huge mailing list made up of those who responded to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's call for "a new kind of political party. One that belongs to you".

The name alone will not determine the character of the party, any more than Keir Starmer's Labour Party having 'labour' in its name makes it a party of the working class. But the question has been asked to three quarters of a million people, starting a very big conversation!

At the moment, the parliamentary group of six MPs which includes Jeremy and Zarah calls itself the Independent Alliance. This is aimed to distance itself from the capitalist establishment parties. However, to stand in May's council elections as an 'independent' would not be sufficient. It would not effectively identify the candidate with the call for a new party, nor with the need for the working class to have a party of its own. Neither would it distinguish a candidate from the whole plethora of politicians describing themselves as 'independent', including disaffected Tories, for example. In fact, there are already over 1,600 'independent' councillors in England alone, around 10% of all local councillors. Dozens of councils have an 'independent' leader.

The original 'Your Party' statement begins with the sentence: "The system is rigged". Which is absolutely correct. Capitalism systematically exploits the working class to generate profits for the capitalist bosses, to assist it in doing so it breeds and

perpetuates other forms of oppression: sexism, racism, islamophobia, LGBTQ+ phobia, for example.

The Socialist Party thinks the name should present what the alternative is to the 'rigged system' - socialism! A system where the vast wealth and resources, as well as the levers of power, are wrested from the hands of the capitalist class, where big business and the banks are brought into democratic public ownership so that the economy can be planned to meet the needs of all while protecting the environment, and the working class can have a democratic say over all aspects of our lives.

Labour's 2017 election manifesto, calling for socialist policies like free education, nationalisation of the utilities and building council homes, was hugely popular. A government carrying out those policies and others, mounting a serious struggle to reverse the decades-long transfer of wealth from the working class to the capitalist bosses, would have to mobilise working-class struggle to support it. In the course of its struggle, to be successful, it would have to adopt a socialist programme. The new party should fight for socialism and should call itself socialist.

There are those who will raise concerns about how the word 'socialist' is misunderstood or is smeared by the capitalist media. Whatever the name, there will be no avoiding attempts by the capitalist establishment to try to prevent the working class having its own mass party that fights for socialist change.

In fact, at the beginning of Jeremy's time as Labour leader, him being described as a 'socialist'

actually provoked a renewed interest in socialist ideas, particularly among young people. Thoughts of: 'Well if Corbyn is a socialist, then that's what I am too'. A similar process took place around Bernie Sanders in the US.

What can best cut across establishment attempts to smear and undermine support for a new party, is for it to organise working-class struggle. The May 2026 council elections offer an opportunity to kick-start that struggle. In London where all council seats are up for election, for example, it would be entirely possible for a new party to win the leadership of councils. It would be an opportunity to organise mass resistance to Starmer's austerity by building council homes, re-opening services and demanding the money needed from central government - demonstrating in practice what the new party's ideas mean for working-class people and their communities.

For a party to appear on the ballot paper, Britain's electoral law requires registration with the Electoral Commission. There are restrictions on what can be used, for example if it overlaps with the name of an existing party. To help overcome that, the Socialist Party would offer to hand over its registration of 'Socialist Alternative' for use by 'Your Party', as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition has done with its registered names. There are no technical reasons therefore, for Your Party not to say clearly it is socialist. If the will is there.

Join in making the case for a socialist name, submit your response online: yourparty.uk/ourname

How can democracy be organised?

Since the launch of the 'Your Party' mailing list, there has been huge enthusiasm and excitement for the potential of a political alternative. At the same time, many feel a sense of urgency and even frustration that the party has yet to take shape.

The need for a new workers' party has been growing for years. When the campaign Enough is Enough was launched during the strike wave in 2022, led by the general secretaries of the RMT transport workers union, Mick Lynch, and the Communication Workers Union, Dave Ward, half a million signed up looking for a new party.

The hundreds of thousands who have signed up so far to 'Your Party', rightly want to play a role in building and democratically directing what this new party should stand for.

The Socialist Party agrees that any new working-class political voice must have democratic structures and, importantly, political accountability over elected representatives and other elected positions.

There are many different ways which organisations, particularly ones as large as this potential new party, can be structured. We would advocate for a structure of representative democracy over the system of direct democracy, which has been referred to as one member one vote (OMOV).

While OMOV can superficially feel very democratic, it actually allows those who set the questions to control the discussion. For example, over the years councils have surveyed their constituents about local government cuts, posing questions such as "what is more important to you, saving service X or service Y?" Councils have then insinuated that local people support cuts to which ever services had the least votes. But there was never an option in these surveys to say: "We want to save all our services, we want you to fight the national government for the money needed to stop all local authority cuts".

A federal structure could allow for both individual members of a new party, via local branches, as well as pre-existing workers' organisations and democratically organised community organisations, to have on-going oversight over policy and the elected representatives of a new party.

In general though, we would also say that these issues, while important, can be developed and built upon over time. First a new party needs to get 'off the ground'.

At the moment, however well meaning, just six people, including Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana in the Independent Alliance of MPs, are the only democratic structure 'Your Party' has. The lack of involvement from authoritative mass workers' organisations has been a stumbling block to getting the party off the ground.

Therefore, a founding conference, primarily made up of delegated trade union representatives, themselves already democratically elected by thousands of members of their trade union branch or region, would be an important first step. Alongside them should be delegates from existing socialist and representative community organisations.

The trade unions are the largest voluntary democratic organisations of the working class and don't just represent the interests of their members in the workplace but the general interests of working-class people. For example, Unite the Union has been at the forefront of opposing attacks on pensioners, not because they directly represent most pensioners but because their members are sickened by the Starmer government's blatant attack on the elderly. Similarly, Enough is Enough garnered huge support because it was seen as leading a working-class fightback against all the attacks being faced by working-class people, not just the issues faced by members of individual unions.

A founding conference made up of trade union delegates, alongside other democratic organisations, could set the framework for what would quickly become the biggest working-class party in Europe, inspiring not just people here but internationally to organise against the establishment politicians and the rigged capitalist system.



Enough is Enough protest in 2022 PHOTO: PAUL MATTSOON

'YOUR PARTY' – WHAT DOES THE SOCIALIST PARTY SAY?

Sarah Sachs Eldridge, Socialist Party Executive Committee, responds to questions from socialists in Germany, members of Sol, the German section of the CWI (the socialist international which the Socialist Party is also a member of)

700,000+ HAVE SIGNED UP TO SUPPORT THE CALL FOR A NEW PARTY ANNOUNCED BY JEREMY CORBYN AND ZARAH SULTANA. WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THAT DEVELOPMENT?

Since the world economic crash of 2007-08 enormous austerity has been inflicted on the working class. The Tories cut central government funding to local authorities by 60% since 2010, including about 600,000 jobs.

It has especially impacted young people. Today most young people can't even imagine a youth club or a service dedicated to them. University fees were trebled to £9,000 in 2010 – and the average student debt now stands at £53,000. With further increases on the cards, no wonder a new party, even though it hasn't yet been formed, wins among 18 to 24-year-olds in the polls.

There was huge anger – but in 2012 right-wing trade union leaders derailed national strike action. Labour-controlled local councils wielded the axe just like their Tory counterparts.

That anti-austerity anger found expression in the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in 2015 – accidentally enabled by an attempt to remove the last vestiges of the collective voice of the trade unions from the party. But Keir Starmer's counter-revolution since means Jeremy is now excluded.

In 2022-23, the biggest strike action since the 1980s miners' strike involved over a million workers. It showed a new generation that striking can win. Tens of thousands, often hundreds of thousands, have marched on demonstrations almost every month since October 2023 against the slaughter in Gaza.

All of this led to an historic general election result last July. The Tories, the most successful capitalist party the world has ever seen, were smashed. But Starmer also seeks to defend the interests of the capitalist class. He won a massive landslide as the best means voters had to punish the Tories – but with the lowest ever vote for the winning party, just 20.1% of the electorate!

This tiny mandate means that driving through the interests of the capitalist class is not straightforward. For example, Starmer was forced to U-turn on £5 billion of cuts to support for disabled people, and on other cuts. These retreats have given confidence that this is a government that can be beaten.

But there is polarisation. His government attacks democratic rights in preparation for mass opposition and gives legitimacy to the divisive racism of right-populist Reform UK. A new anti-austerity party could cut across Reform's ability to present itself as the anti-establishment alternative.

WHY IS A NEW PARTY ON THE AGENDA NOW?

Back in 2022, two trade union leaders who had become household names in the strike wave launched 'Enough is Enough'. Half a million signed up. Mass rallies were in some areas the biggest meetings since the 18-million strong anti-poll tax movement in the early 1990s that brought down Thatcher! But those trade union leaders sought to turn the movement towards Labour and it dwindled away.

What has changed is that Labour is in government. The capitalist class hoped that Starmer would be more effective at driving through austerity using the last memories linking previous Labour governments with gains workers won. But not only has there been a continuation of Tory austerity, by removing anyone who opposes it Starmer adds to the difficulty the trade union leaders have in painting Labour as 'our party'.

Today there are more than six million workers in trade unions. In those which are still affiliated to the Labour Party, including the biggest three – Unite, GMB and Unison – there is huge anger about paying members' money to a party that is attacking workers.

For example, at Unite's conference this year after the Labour-led council in Birmingham announced that it would sack striking bin workers organised in Unite if they didn't accept pay cuts of up to 25%. An emergency motion was passed overwhelmingly which agreed to reassess the union's relationship with Labour. The ability of the trade union leaders to contain the enthusiasm for a new party that stands in workers' interests is extremely limited today – and a debate is already starting.

WHAT KIND OF PARTY SHOULD IT BE?

To be able to fight Starmer's austerity and war agenda, a new party must be a party of the working class. The Labour Party was founded when the working class, organising and fighting in the workplaces and communities, understood it needed its own political voice.

Labour began as a highly federal organisation with representation from different trade unions and socialist organisations. There are lessons to learn from Labour's foundation – and from every stage of its existence, including when Corbyn was leader. And from Blair's transformation into New Labour in the 1990s, a party that the capitalist class could rely on to represent its interests.

Before that, Labour had been a 'capitalist workers' party' with a leadership that defended the capitalist system but, unlike today, structures through which its mass working-class base could apply pressure. In the late 1960s that pressure was able to stay the leadership's hand on anti-union laws and sending troops to back Nixon in Vietnam.

The pandemic showed that the working class, despite claims it no longer exists, is key to keeping society going. The strike wave showed how collective action can win. The



conclusion we point to is that the working class has enormous potential power arising from its role and its collective nature under capitalism. Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation of the majority for the profits of the few. In 2025 we do not need to explain the misery it engenders, nor the inequality inherent to it.

But it is essential we make the point clearly that our class has the power to transform how society is run. Part of explaining that is pointing to how to realise that potential – and key is the building of a mass party in which workers could fight collectively for all our interests.

A socialist programme of planning society's resources to meet social need – instead of a handful of billionaires controlling it – most clearly expresses those interests, and would win over wider sections of society quickly.

THERE IS A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW PARTY. WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE?

There is a lot of discussion. An open debate between Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn about the structure is of course being used by the capitalist-owned press to say the left is always split. But debate is necessary.

The Socialist Party is energetically involved in the debate. Our members elected to their trade union executives are calling meetings in their unions, to discuss how to campaign for a political voice that represents members'

interests. Our branches have called around 60 public meetings across England and Wales.

Central is the question of how the party can most effectively be a collective voice for the working class and how can it express the voice of the organised working class in the trade unions. That is being expressed in the wider debate between supporters of the One Member One Vote (OMOV) and those who favour a federal structure for initiating a new party, as we do.

Many of those who have signed up to the mailing list will not be aware that John Prescott, before he was Blair's deputy, helped win the argument for OMOV and later credited it with being central to the transformation of Labour into 'New Labour'.

OMOV undermined the collective role of the trade unions in party decision making. Former militant RMT union leader Bob Crow actively fought for working-class political representation – but he opposed his union participating in the Respect party which came out of the 2003 movement against the war in Iraq because the RMT as a union would have had no say over things like candidates, policy, and so on.

In a trade union, members have a say, but their democratic organisation means they can act collectively. OMOV would be akin to saying that all trade union members are merely individual members – thereby negating their ability to decide a collective

course of action or policy. And removing the vital element of representative democracy.

When she attended the 'trade unionists for a new party' meeting hosted by former socialist Labour MP Dave Nellist on 21 July 2025, Zarah argued "for a party that stands with workers not the wealthy, a genuine democratic socialist alternative that is rooted in the trade union movement and built by and for our class, the working class."

However, in interviews since then she has argued for a structure based on OMOV. In one she said: "We should be striving for mass participation, as opposed to a narrow delegate structure which could be unrepresentative of our base."

In the debate Jeremy has suggested a federal structure. In fact, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), an electoral coalition in which the Socialist Party participates, has adopted a democratic federal 'umbrella' structure. That has allowed TUSC to bring together trade unionists and socialists to contest elections with a basic – and democratically agreed – anti-austerity platform. For ten of TUSC's 15 years, the RMT with 80,000 members had a seat on the steering committee – and a say.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE FIRST STEPS TODAY?

The other experience the Socialist Party can draw on is when Militant

our predecessor, led Liverpool city council 1983-85. Through the council, the Liverpool working class won tremendous victories – including thousands of council homes, nurseries, youth apprenticeships, and more.

Through the District Labour Party, with more than 600 delegates from unions, ward Labour parties and so on, the course of the struggle was decided. It was a kind of parliament of the workers' movement – both setting policy for councillors to implement and organising strikes and demos to back them up.

We are proposing a founding conference with delegates from affiliated trade unions, affiliated political and working-class community organisations including socialist organisations, plus groups of independent councillors. Autonomy for the party structures in Scotland and Wales.

Local members' organisations of the party could also have representation at national conferences as the party develops. They could also operate on a federal basis. Local district committees could again have delegates from more localised units made up of individual members, probably based on wards, plus affiliates, a youth wing and so on.

Our point about structure is that the new party's ability to be a voice for our class is a question of how it is organised – and what it stands for. The two are completely connected. The capitalist class will use every means at its

disposal to try to make the leadership of a workers' party accept the limits of existing capitalism – and not go 'too far'.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR A NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY FOR MANY YEARS. HOW WOULD THE SOCIALIST PARTY RELATE TO A NEW PARTY?

The Socialist Party has campaigned for a new mass workers' party since the Labour Party was transformed by Blair – and of course in 2015-20 we campaigned for the transformation of Labour under Corbyn into an anti-austerity party.

Throughout we have campaigned for the trade unions to stand candidates. Hundreds of trade union and community fighters have stood as TUSC candidates over the years, offering a socialist alternative at the ballot box and showing in action how the trade unions could strengthen their struggle against the bosses.

But in the general elections in 2017 and 2019 when Jeremy Corbyn was Labour leader, TUSC stood down. The Socialist Party applied to be re-admitted to Corbyn's Labour on a federal basis. But that was unfortunately not accepted.

Even so, we enthusiastically campaigned for Jeremy's anti-austerity programme, unlike the Blairite MPs who did all they could to sabotage the potential for it to become an anti-austerity party. A key task then was to kick them out!

If the programme of a new party was something like the 2017 manifesto, which spoke of nationalising the privatised utilities, mass council housebuilding, rent control, free education, raising the minimum wage, a green new deal and removal of anti-trade union laws, it would be very

popular – as it was then.

We warned in 2017 that: "The hostility Jeremy Corbyn faces in opposition is only a pale shadow of how they would attempt to derail a Jeremy Corbyn-led government. To prevent this will pose the need for far-going socialist measures including nationalising the 100 or so major corporations and banks that dominate Britain's economy, in order to be able to introduce a democratic socialist plan. This would allow a socialist government to begin to manage the economy in a planned way under democratic workers' control and management – that really would be 'for the many, not the few.'" We will do everything we can to strengthen our ability to fight for socialist ideas within a new party.

If you look ahead imagining such a party comes into being, how could it change the UK within the next years?

That is an impossible question in one way given where we are right now. In another it is straightforward. If organised workers can start to build a party of their own it will accelerate the growth in confidence and cohesion of the working class. That is a step on the road to challenging the capitalist class for power that cannot be passed over.

That will include facing attempts at sabotage as the capitalist class tries to prevent such a party developing. This will be a struggle both inside and outside the party. The question is how we prepare.

These vital issues will inevitably be debated in any party that is serious about fighting in the interests of the working class, and the Socialist Party will be to the fore in arguing for the clear socialist programme that is needed.

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ORGANISING TO TAKE ON THE FAR RIGHT

Dozens of protests and counter-protests have taken place outside of hotels the government is using to house asylum seekers waiting for their asylum claims to be heard. Far-right agitators have either been instigators of the protests or have been seeking to gain an influence. In some instances, anti-racist counter-protesters have been in the numerical majority, in others they have not.

Socialist Party members call for the trade unions to take the lead in organising to undermine the influence of the far right in our communities by spearheading campaigns that can unite the working class to fight for the resources our communities need, such as council homes and fully funded public services, against racism.

We carry reports from some of the counter-demonstrations Socialist Party members have taken part in or helped to organise.

Southampton

DECLAN CLUNE
SECRETARY, SOUTHAMPTON AND SOUTH WEST HAMPSHIRE TRADES UNION COUNCIL

In recent weeks and months, Southampton, like many other cities and towns, has had its share of protests outside a hotel in the city currently housing asylum seekers. Encouragingly, we have consistently seen greater numbers gathered to counter them.

On 31 August, unrelated to the issue of immigration and asylum seekers, far-right activists calling themselves 'Southampton Patriots' targeted a peaceful demonstration calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza, with racist chants and insults, assembling at one end of the march to 'confront' us.

As a very diverse city with people from all corners of the world calling our city home, this latest Palestine solidarity protest included members of the Muslim and Sikh communities coming together and holding a joint rally in the city centre.

Socialist Party members also active as members of Southampton Trades Council were approached by the organisers and asked to help steward the event.

Police tried to apply pressure on the organisers of the Palestine march to cancel it and instead hold at rally at its starting point. The organisers,

with support from the trades council, stated clearly their intention to march.

Despite attempts to disrupt the march, intimidate and insult marchers, we managed to gather everyone together and march peacefully and silently through the city, the tactic requested by the organisers. We were followed and verbally harassed all along the march route and at the end location while carrying out a successful small rally.

The day has to be seen as a resounding success due to the effective stewarding that kept everyone safe and together under extremely trying circumstances. It was also successful in gaining cross-community support.

The police estimated around 350 people to have taken part in the march and rally, about ten times the number the 'patriots' had mustered. But it's clear that there is a continued need to mobilise to defend our communities from the far right and its influence.

Southampton Trades Council has consistently urged its affiliates and other trade union bodies to play a full role in taking on the far right, by mobilising their members to attend counter-demonstrations and assisting in organising safe stewarding, as well as leading a united working-class fightback for the jobs, homes and services our communities need, against racism. It is discussing a public meeting this autumn to step up the fight back.



Southampton



Police in Bristol

Bristol

Around 30 self-styled 'patriots' gathered in Bristol following a call out by far-right organisers. They quickly found their anti-migrant protest was absolutely dwarfed by hundreds of counter-protesters. Trade unionists and anti-racists assembled in large numbers, determined to block them from spreading their divisive ideas. The top priority was to stop the far right reaching a hotel housing asylum seekers.

For a few hours this was achieved simply by blocking their path peacefully with overwhelming weight of numbers. They would not have been able to march at all had the police not cleared the way for them. Police struggled to push back the crowd at first, and only managed to by deploying police horses and then violence. Counter-protesters who were simply peacefully standing their ground were kicked and struck with batons. I witnessed one woman being repeatedly pushed by police even though she was already walking away and another lifted from her feet and thrown to the ground.

Prior to the police escalation attempting to drive counter-protesters back, there had been complete calm. Violence was deployed where none was called for. The far right were

ushered into a busy shopping area where a Palestine protest and an event for children were taking place.

This was not an operational decision but a political decision by senior police to facilitate a march organised by the far right.

When the anti-asylum seeker protesters did eventually march around town they were a sorry sight – outnumbered, surrounded and humiliated. "We were pathetic", one of their participants later lamented on social media.

Anti-migrant sentiment continues to be stoked, not just by the far-right, but by capitalist politicians of all stripes as they attempt to scapegoat people and deflect the blame from their anti-working class policies. The trade unions must take the lead in organising to oppose the far right, to mobilise against them when they try to march but also to offer real answers to the issues they seek to capitalise on

Speaking for Bristol Trades Council at the rally that began the counter-protest, Socialist Party member Tom Baldwin said that people's anger must be turned against the billionaire class and their political lackeys, not migrants, because division only benefits those who exploit us. That's why the ruling class will direct their police to help the far right in spreading that division.



Capitalist politicians of all stripes are encouraging anti-migrant sentiment as they attempt to scapegoat people and deflect the blame from their anti-working class policies

Gloucester

BILLY JONES AND SUE POWELL
GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

A Gloucester hotel housing 70 asylum seekers was targeted by protesters on Saturday 30 August. Residents share rooms and receive less than £10 a week, but protesters repeated false rumours that they get luxury treatment.

Disparate groups were posting about a counter-protest, so Gloucestershire Socialist Party members convened a planning meeting with others, appealing to the trade unions to take a lead. It was agreed the counter-demonstration would focus its chants calling for solidarity with asylum seekers. We leafleted local residents, calling for 'Unity over Division', and got a small contingent of Muslim youth to join us.

Our show of solidarity drew over 250 supporters; around 150 gathered on the other side taunting our demonstration. The mood was tense, yet we stood firm for over five hours, with stewards from trade unions, Socialist Party members and other activists. Some of those inside the hotel came up to their windows and made hearts, one holding out a "thank you" sign.

We shouldn't downplay how polarising the subject of immigration is in Britain. Cars driving past would alternately honk in support of one side and then the other. A strange unity was found when our opponents began to chant "Keir Starmer's a wanker", and we joined in singing even louder!

The economic situation in the UK is dire. Most of those we saw protesting against the hotel were working-class people facing the brunt of that crisis. Asylum seekers are not causing their hardship, however, but a decade plus of government-mandated austerity is – something that Starmer's Labour is continuing with.

The six million-strong trade union movement should be drawing together workers from all ethnic groups and backgrounds to lead a movement against the far-right and racist scapegoating.

The need for a new mass workers' party is clearer than ever. Aligned with the unions, it could take on the bosses, cutting across attempts by right-populists like Nigel Farage to exploit the political alienation felt by workers.

Read more:

Search socialistparty.org.uk for:

- 'Defend our communities from far-right attacks'
- 'Far right exploit Epping anger'
- 'Editorial: Starmer's immigration white paper'
- 'Lessons from the fight against the far right'

Oxford

HANNAH CHAPMAN
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

On Saturday 23 August at a Holiday Inn Express in Oxford, two crowds faced off against each other. On one side was a protest initiated by far-right activists against asylum seekers being housed there. On the other, a counter-protest organised by Stand Up to Racism. What followed – though non-violent – was one of the bleakest protests I have ever attended.

As both sides chanted at each other, Socialist Party members spoke to individuals on the counter-protest, hoping to discuss the next steps for the workers' movement to build opposition to the far right. While we had a few positive conversations, most were depressingly revealing. One man said that the problem was that they (referring to the anti-asylum seeker protesters) were all uneducated and the best we could do was hope for them to die. No one else was so blatantly direct, though many expressed a similar attitude.

Many people from the neighbouring estate came out to watch the demonstration, but none joined the counterprotest. Had the counter-protest been led by the trade unions, and offered a means by which the working class can fight back for decent pay, council homes and fully funded services, maybe it would have been different.



West London bus strikers say 'Nothing has changed – bus companies should not be run privately'

Bus drivers in West London, members of Unite employed by First Bus, were on strike over pay for 48 hours at the end of August into September.

Drivers at Stamford Brook Garage spoke to **David Hofman**, West London Socialist Party.

"We're on £19 per hour. We're asking for £20. We're not asking for much – other companies are paying £21 or £22. We're one of the lowest-paid garages. This offer won't offset the rise in the cost of living. I did an ordinary food shop last week and it came to £50 – I couldn't believe it. I'm already working a six-day week, now I'm going to have to work six and a half."

One striker explained: "They're trying to cut our break times to the minimum. The current 'stand times' (the interval between reaching route end and starting back) are being cut just to make money. On some routes there are no toilets at either end. Bus driving in London

has become more stressful, with increased traffic jams and cycle lanes to look out for. We have passengers who are stressed themselves, and we have to put up with abusive behaviour."

"The stand time needs to be re-branded as a safety break," another added. "If I've been driving for an hour, my legs are aching from sitting in the same position all this time. I need to be able to stand up, stretch myself, take a walk. When the stand time is cut, it increases blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Bus drivers, I was told, are the number one profession accounting for the increase in diabetes type-2 diagnosis."

One striker told me: "They treat us like numbers. They're trying to get rid of senior drivers, who are on higher rates, for new trainees, who have to work two and a half years on the minimum rate." "We voted Labour expecting change," another said. "But nothing's changed. Bus



companies should not be run privately – the owners think only of their money. The bus industry should be owned by the people for the people." Drivers have given notice that they will be out again 11-14 September if this is not resolved.

RMT members at CrossCountry angry at bosses' backtracking

ELAINE BRUNSKILL AND NORMAN HALL
NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST PARTY

RMT members working as guards on CrossCountry trains took two days of strike action on 23 and 25 August in an ongoing dispute over rest-day working arrangements.

It was great to see RMT flags flying as we approached the Newcastle picket line.

Strikers told us that this strike is about a multitude of things, including CrossCountry not fulfilling a promise in 2023 that they would fill all vacancies. One of the strikers commented: "It's 2025 and they still haven't filled all the positions."

There has been an undermining of the safety-critical role. CrossCountry are getting contingency guards to cover the role of train managers and senior conductors, strikers said.

They explained that one of the sticking points was that management has backtracked on an agreement that all grades would get a rest-day working enhancement. Bosses are now saying they are only prepared to pay extra money (which was to include time-and-a-half for booked Saturday shifts) to train managers and senior conductors.

One of the strikers commented, "We cannot allow the company to offer a manager extra money for giving up their time off, but not us". They went on to say, "Their time off is no more important than a cleaner's".



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Mining museum bosses renege on pay offer

IAIN DALTON
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Tour guides, cleaners and other workers at the National Mining Museum near Wakefield, who are members of Unison, began four weeks of strike action after management withdrew a pay offer.

Initially, management had offered a pay rise of 5%, later revised to a £1-an-hour increase for mine guides and 5% for everyone else.

After ACAS talks, Unison agreed to recommend acceptance of £1 an hour or 5%, whichever is the greater, for all staff.

But 11 days later this offer was withdrawn, and instead replaced by 80p or 5%.

Last year the museum made over £500,000 operating surplus and has been in surplus for the four preceding financial years, as well as holding £10 million in reserves. Unison estimates that the cost of the 20p

difference would only be £20-30,000 extra per year.

And the idea this could be afforded was reinforced when strikers turned up to the picket line to find that management had employed security guards for the day to intimidate them!

Meanwhile, the three senior managers at the museum are themselves on a combined £250,000 a year, while the lowest-paid staff are currently on £12.60 an hour.



The museum made a surplus last year and holds £10 million in reserves



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.

- 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.

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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.

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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!

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

socialistparty.org.uk/donate



Come and discuss with the



The Socialist Party has dozens of branches in towns and cities up and down the country.

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 07958032071.

Help us step up fight for new workers' party – donate!



Socialist Party campaigning for a new mass workers' party. DAVE BEALE/FOCUS LIBERATION

BEA GARDNER

SOCIALIST PARTY FINANCE ORGANISER

The fight for a new workers' party with socialist policies has amped up. The Socialist Party is supporting every step to make such a party a reality.

We've organised 58 Socialist Party public meetings on 'What next in the fight for a new workers' party?' Socialist Party members have also initiated meetings, across various trade unions, on the steps each union can take in building a new party based on the unions.

We are also participating in the discussions and meetings called by other groups. We are building amongst young people – channeling the huge anger that exists by calling for and organising student walkouts against Trump when he visits on 17 September.

All of this comes at a financial cost. We've produced tens of thousands of leaflets to advertise our public meetings, and offer our ideas on why

we need a new party based on the working class, with a democratic federal structure, and socialist policies. We've bought new banners to attract young people to sign up for the anti-Trump walkouts.

That is what our Socialist Party fighting fund is there for. It's what allows us to produce new campaigning materials as and when we need them, so we can put forward clear socialist ideas, and offer a way forward. To be able to book rooms to host public meetings. To purchase banners and equipment for demonstrations, such as sound systems and gazebos.

As we go into autumn, working-class struggle is stepping up. Help us hit our fighting fund target so we can, too. Donate today, fundraise in your local area, and let's make sure the Socialist Party can continue playing a leading role.

Help fund the fightback **DONATE** socialistparty.org.uk/donate

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025	30 SEPTEMBER 2025
South West	1,910	2,100		91%
Northern	694	800		87%
Wales	1,338	2,400		56%
Yorkshire	1,338	2,650		50%
North West	506	1,200		42%
Eastern	480	1,300		37%
East Midlands	753	2,050		37%
London	1,792	5,000		36%
Southern & SE	780	2,400		32%
West Midlands	488	2,700		18%
Other	1,243	2,400		52%
TOTAL	11,322	25,000		45%



Local independent MP Adnan Hussain speaking at the Blackburn event, with Jeremy Corbyn (right). DAVE BEALE/FOCUS LIBERATION

Blackburn – Corbyn addresses 1,000+ rally

"This is the beginning of a new political movement, not for the wealthy, not for the elite, but for you – the people, the working class, the forgotten voices."

This was how Adnan Hussain, the Independent MP for Blackburn, opened the packed rally of 'Your Party' supporters. Alongside him on the platform were three other members of the Independent Alliance group of MPs, including the one everyone wanted to hear from, Jeremy Corbyn.

An incredible 1,500 tickets had been snapped up for the event. However, the Labour Council tried to limit numbers, supposedly on safety grounds, so many ended up listening to the speeches on a big screen outside. The enthusiasm for building a new party was clear.

Corbyn said housing is the biggest issue in his Islington constituency, with massive rents charged by private landlords. He called for new builds to be 100% social rent.

He also called for an end to tuition fees and a return of maintenance grants, as well as trade union action, pointing to the recent victory of the young Unite the Union strikers at the Village Hotel in Glasgow.

Adnan Hussain MP said: "Neoliberal policies have destroyed the unity of communities", creating loneliness, isolation, and mental ill-health. He said that the new party will fight for the funding needed for housing, health, education, and transport, and to reopen youth clubs and community centres.

Jeremy condemned the \$2.4 trillion last year on global arms spending and the major powers' ever-growing nuclear arsenals. Iqbal Mohamed talked about the "mismanagement of public finances" by successive governments, and the scandal of corporate tax avoidance. But exactly how funding needed to meet our needs will be taken back from the greedy hands of the super-rich wasn't clearly spelt out.

While all the speakers stressed that the new party would be democratic, accountable, and grassroots up, they gave no detail about their thoughts on exactly how the new party should be structured. But these issues were

discussed in the long queues waiting to go in.

This was a rally, an opportunity to hear from Your Party-supporting MPs. But not a meeting where those present could discuss and debate the way forward.

The leaflet given out by Socialist Party members attending pointed to Liverpool District Labour Party, which ran the city's socialist council in the 1980s, as an example of the kind of representative structures that could root the new party in local working-class communities. It had "over 600 representative delegates from unions, ward Labour parties, and so on, and was a kind of parliament of the workers' movement".

To really build a society 'for the many not the few' requires decisive measures to take the levers of power – nationalising major corporations and banks, under democratic workers' control, and mobilising the working class in support of that programme.

Over 100 attendees expressed interest directly to Socialist Party members about hearing more about the ideas that we were putting forward, and over 40 people bought one of our Socialist papers.

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES
LANCASHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

East London discusses trade union role

This was an 'unofficial' gathering of around 150 new party supporters. The mere announcement of a potential new party has brought a breath of fresh air to workers, particularly all of us activists who have been campaigning against all kinds of cuts over many years.

The three platform speakers were Noor Begum, an Independent Redbridge councillor, Michael Lavalette, another Independent councillor from Preston, and Andrew Feinstein, who stood against Keir Starmer in Camden in the general election last year.

We had a good contingent of Socialist Party members present. Two of us managed to catch the eye of the chair, and got two minutes to speak.

We both emphasised having trade

union bodies in this new party, not just individual trade unionists. The six million workers in the Trades Union Congress (TUC) could be a tremendous resource for a new party – just as it was in the formation of the Labour Party.

Unfortunately, Counterfire, the organisers of the meeting, dismissed this idea saying that the new party can't be "Labour Mark 2". But we can't forget that this early Labour Party set the tone for the 'spirit of 1945' Labour government – setting up the NHS, building masses of council housing, and nationalising utilities.

If we don't have good organisation, then our action on the streets can disappear. When two million marched against going to war in Iraq, Labour prime minister Tony Blair initially thought the game was up, and was ready to step down. However, the anti-war coalition never followed up street protests by pressing the TUC to call mass strikes. Blair survived, and the invasion of Iraq was given the go-ahead.

When Egyptian workers brought about the mass occupation of Tahrir Square in 2011, and successfully forced the dictator president to resign, they had no organisation ready to contest the elections that followed. As a result, the right-wing pro-capitalist Muslim Brotherhood won, having a network of well-organised mosques across the whole country.

The new party has to say what it would specifically do, especially in the council elections next year. We should pledge to not vote for cuts in services, to freeze rents, and to advise anyone threatened with no-fault eviction to stay put – we'll organise masses of members to come and defend those tenants. These ideas went down well.

It was apparent that One Member One Vote (OMOV) will become a contentious issue. But it will be one of many issues where there is lively debate. Can't wait!

LINDA TAAFFE
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

• Tell us what was discussed and debated at meetings of 'Your Party' supporters in your area – editors@socialistparty.org.uk – and let us know about Socialist Party public meetings on 'What next in the fight for a workers' party?' too

Uni Labour societies disaffiliate Join Socialist Students to take on Starmer's cuts



SOCIALIST STUDENTS STATEMENT

In the course of the last month, Warwick, Newcastle and Manchester university Labour societies have dis-affiliated from the Labour Party.

In Warwick, the group's decision was linked to local Coventry MP Zarah Sultana and councillor Grace Lewis leaving Labour, Zarah making the call for a new party with Jeremy Corbyn - 'Your Party'. In Newcastle the society says it wants to "promote true socialism". In Manchester the society gives its "full support" to Jeremy and Zarah.

Tuition fees

Polls show a third of young people (16-34) would vote for a new party founded by Corbyn and Sultana. During Jeremy's time as Labour leader he got huge support from students, including for his policy to abolish tuition fees. Socialist Students has been at the forefront of fighting for free education on campus, including raising how a new party of the working class is needed, and how that would strengthen the struggles of students and young people.

Over the course of the last year, the Funding Not Fees campaign, initiated by Socialist Students, has organised protests and lobbied MPs to demand that they fight on our side against Starmer's government by calling for full funding for universities, an end to tuition fees and for living maintenance grants. Socialist Students has fought to defend our courses from cuts and closures, in solidarity with university workers fighting to save their jobs.

60+ campuses

The Socialist Students steering committee has written to the new group in Warwick inviting it "to consider being part of our national organisation, linking up with student socialist societies across 60+ universities and colleges across the UK... Our main aims as an organisation year-to-year are summed up as resolutions passed at our annual conference, which for 2025 can be viewed on our website". The group has been invited to attend the next steering committee meeting in September, to which they could contribute their thoughts on Your Party and how students can best organise the fightback on campus, as well as to collaborate in building the youth walkouts against Trump on 17 September.

Similarly, Socialist Students has approached societies in Manchester and Newcastle, and is open to all students who want to discuss, campaign and fight for socialism.

If you are student, or soon to become one, who wants to fight back against Starmer's attacks and fight for socialist change, then join Socialist Students!

Join the student fightback: join...

socialist students

- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07515 921 699**

Fighting for socialism, new party, and our rights at Pride

Cardiff Trans Pride - support for our socialist ideas

JOHN WILLIAMS
CARDIFF CENTRAL SOCIALIST PARTY

300 people attended Trans Pride in Cardiff.

Socialist Party member and PCS Proud delegate, Eilonwy Awen, spoke. She mentioned how the Supreme Court ruling that is being used to attack trans rights didn't actually consult a single trans person. She also said how capitalist institutions will never give minority groups their full rights.

She said: "Starmer's Labour government does not represent our interests. Fighting for our rights means building an independent, workers' party, rooted in the trade unions. Such a party could unite workplace struggles with the movements for trans and non-binary rights, women's rights, racial justice, and environmental protection – providing a socialist alternative to the capitalist profit system."

She called for "the nationalisation of the 100 largest banks and corporations in Britain, which dominate the economy. This nationalisation must be carried out under democratic workers' control and management,

laying the foundation for a democratically planned socialist society.

"With society's vast wealth and resources under the democratic control of the working class, we could plan to meet the needs of all, ending the chaos of capitalism, the divisive ideologies it fosters, and the daily misery and oppression it sustains."

It was clear that there were no illusions in Labour. All the speakers criticised the Labour's decision to block puberty blockers, and the government using the Supreme Court ruling to attack trans rights.

Representatives from the Unite Wales LGBTQ+ committee were there. Delegates from PCS Proud were there too. They have been battling the leadership of their civil service union leaderships to fight for trans rights.

The Socialist Party had a stall. We called for the right for self-identification, and for a new workers' party, where LGBTQ+ people can organise for their own liberation, through fighting capitalism and profit.

Many speakers alluded to this too. Cardiff Trans Pride is proudly non-commercialised.



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Carnival atmosphere at Leicester Pride

TESSA WARRINGTON
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Leicester Pride had a carnival atmosphere. But many still wanted to discuss socialist ideas. Socialist Party members were out in support with two campaign stalls. Young people had a great reaction to our leaflet building for a walk out against Donald Trump's visit on 17 September.

The queue for entry to the event was slow. While they waited, people took our socialist campaign material, and read it immediately.

Many were aware of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' announcement. We raised the role a new party built on the trade unions could play in fighting the far right and for LGBTQ+ rights, and for the whole working class.



Obituary Frank Holt (1950-2025) – 'Red Frank' Enthused by socialism until the end

IAIN DALTON
SOCIALIST PARTY YORKSHIRE SECRETARY

Frank Holt, a member of Leeds and West Yorkshire Socialist Party, living in Todmorden, sadly passed away after a long illness on 22 August. Frank had been a supporter of Militant (Socialist Party's predecessor) in the Rochdale area when he worked for BT.

He had been active in the Post Office Engineering Union (one of the forerunners of the Communication Workers Union - CWU). He

was known as 'Red Frank' to his colleagues.

After some time as a subscriber to Socialism Today and the Socialist in the 2010s, Frank rejoined the Socialist Party during the Covid lockdown, after a discussion with then circulation manager Chris Newby. Frank would Zoom into Socialist Party meetings, and regularly add to the discussion on issues around the environmental crisis and the economy.

Frank had multiple spells in hospital over recent years, which limited his ability to be fully active, but was

overjoyed at the response we got on a stall in Todmorden in 2022, selling ten Socialist papers in an hour.

He had intended to stand as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in the local council elections, but ill health prevented that. Frank made several generous donations, particularly to enable young members to attend national conferences. Less than a month ago, he rang me up after making a donation enthused on the potential progress towards a new mass workers' party.

What kind of party?

Whatever the exact course events might take in the weeks and months ahead, the possibility of the development of a new, mass vehicle of independent working-class political representation is now part of the consciousness of all classes in Britain, as the multifaceted crises of capitalism unfold.

This is the indelible result of the appeal made by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana on 24 July to join in the founding of "a new kind of political party", based on "a mass redistribution of wealth and power" against the "rigged system".

There is no one blueprint readily available for what next. For how to get from the nearly three-quarters-of-a-million sign-ups who have answered the 'Your Party' call, to the actual formation of the new, mass, democratic socialist party the working class needs, with its programme, structures or even its name agreed. And nor could there be. But the challenge has been laid down to "the interests of corporations and billionaires" that Corbyn and Sultana take aim at in their declaration, and the fight for such a party of the working class to be established is on.

Read more in **Socialism Today, September 2025**

Also including articles on...

- The fight for a new mass workers' party is on
- Why federalism? What we can learn from the Labour Party's formation
- France Insoumise

Also revisit the 'Corbyn special', June 2020

Both available online at socialismtoday.org



Interview: The Socialist Party's longest-standing member at 90



Keith (centre) on the Socialist Party's campaign stall and bookshop at the huge TUC anti-austerity protest in London March 2011. PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

To mark the 90th birthday of the Socialist Party's longest-standing member **Keith Dickinson**, Scott Jones sat down with him to ask about his life and time in the party.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A SOCIALIST AND WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

My mum and dad were in the Labour Party, and it was that post-war Labour government which brought in the National Health Service. I had chronic asthma and the NHS probably saved my life. It also influenced me as a young adult to join the Labour Party.

I left school at 14 and started work in the print industry as a messenger boy, working for the Liverpool Evening Express, then the Echo in the branch offices and was moved around Merseyside branches, and joined the National Union of Printers, Bookbinders and Paper Workers when in Huyton. I was eventually sacked and got a job at Eric Bemrose, a large union 'closed shop' and played a big part in the 1959 print workers' strike, getting elected to the Merseyside strike committee.

Soon after this I got involved helping the huge engineering apprentices strike in 1960. This was a very important educational period for me. On Merseyside, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) branch in Walton was crucial in establishing the strike.

First of all, sending an apprentice comrade to Glasgow where engineering apprentices were on strike. So we brought one of them down to Merseyside to speak. The branch had leafleted all the engineering firms that we could and ended up with 5,000 apprentices from 50 firms out on strike on Merseyside.

I moved to London at the request of the national leadership because we needed help with the youth inter-ventational period for me. We started recruiting youth such as in the LPYS. In North Paddington we managed to convince the majority there, and became an active branch involved in the campaign against the Rachman landlords. I had a few dodgy landlords myself in that period, moving from bedsit to bedsit, for quite a few years.

Peter Taaffe, who had joined us in Socialist Fight before I moved down, then built a very big base particularly among the youth and as we grew we took him on as our first full-timer.

WHAT ABOUT THE ROOTS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY AT THIS TIME, TELL US ABOUT SOCIALIST FIGHT.

I joined the Socialist Fight group, as we were known at that time, in 1958. Socialist Fight was our monthly paper. We had a branch on Merseyside of about a dozen with around six present at the weekly branch meeting discussing basic Marxist ideas.

Peter made a huge difference to developing the organisation. We gradually built support, particularly among the LPYS where the comrades in most regions won a majority for our ideas in the early 70s. And from there we held a majority on the National Committee, it grew into a mass campaigning youth organisation and got big support among the Labour Party ranks.

WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF THE MILITANT NEWSPAPER AND HOW DID MILITANT GROW?

Our first issue was in 1964 just prior to the October general election, and it enabled us to build contacts nationally and get our ideas and programme out to people generally. This is the importance of the Socialist today and the longer theoretical articles of Socialism Today. The ruling class, despite all their efforts, cannot prevent workers from exchanging ideas and organising around them.

At first the main sales were to members of the Labour Party, which of course at the time was a working-class party. We then decided that we would start doing sales on the street and built up our influence in Labour, the trade unions and in the wider working class. That's when the Labour Party leadership, with the capitalist class behind them, decided that we were getting too much influence. By the early 1980s, we had three supporters elected as Labour MPs and majority influence in Liverpool council. At one Labour Party conference we had, out of 500-600 delegates, 100 who were Militant supporters elected by the local constituencies.

The Labour Party leadership used the national press to campaign against us, and we were expelled. I remember 23 February 1983 when the Militant Editorial Board appeared before the Labour Party National Executive Committee and we were expelled despite huge support among the rank and file, hundreds of whom protested outside the Labour Party headquarters. The expulsions were not welcomed by the majority of the active Labour Party membership. We

were allowed to appeal to the Labour Party conference but we got expelled on the basis of the block vote of the union bureaucrats. Only a few of the left unions actually voted against our expulsion. Only the building workers' union had discussed the issue of our expulsions at their national conference, and they voted against our expulsion, but their general secretary decided that the only way he could prevent his delegates voting for us was to have a delegation meeting outside the conference so that they didn't vote at all.

Neil Kinnock was elected leader the day before we were expelled and he just continued with the witch-hunt campaign, but he still couldn't stop all the achievements we made in Liverpool, with the council building more houses than all the other councils around the country together. Neither could he undermine our leadership of the anti-poll tax campaign later, that defeated Thatcher and the poll tax.

IN YOUR BOOK YOU ALSO TALK ABOUT BUILDING THE PARTY INTERNATIONALLY.

From the very beginning, we kept international contacts. Despite our shortage of funds and time, it was still very important for us to do. Then, after trying to work in what remained of fresh new forces. We founded the Committee for a Workers' International in 1974. Many international visits were made by comrades as they are still today. I only officially visited Ireland and Belgium as part of these efforts. Otherwise I used my few holidays, which all comrades should do today.

Organisations that are confident that they are going to change society, not just reform society, but actually change society, will, as long as they continue to keep an international outlook, be successful. And that's what's enabled me to reach my 90 years. Ideas! They keep the mind working. That's what keeps you alive and working with like-minded, self-sacrificing comrades in a disciplined, well-organised revolutionary group or party.



Keith (centre) and the Militant Editorial Board protest their expulsion from the Labour Party in February 1983. PHOTO: DAVE SINCLAIR

A Revolutionary's Memoir

Keith Dickinson

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the Socialist

Issue 1334

4-10 September 2025

formerly **Militant**

TUC: ORGANISE THE FIGHT AGAINST STARMER'S CUTS

For a trade union-led national demo

SHEILA CAFFREY

NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND 2025 CONGRESS DELEGATE (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) brings together hundreds of delegates representing millions of workers from 7-10 September, against the backdrop of a crumbling political status quo.

Parliament is only just back in session, and yet the summer has moved the political scene, with hundreds of thousands of working-class people demanding an end to Starmer's austerity.

There is a burning desire for change. A change that includes providing affordable homes for all; jobs with decent pay and conditions - with no exceptions for age or employment status; fully funded public services with a halt and reversal to all the austerity cuts that have decimated our communities; and an end to the system that means we now live in a society with more food banks than McDonald's branches - and people still struggling to know where their next meal is coming from.

There is huge enthusiasm for the idea of a new political alternative, sparked by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' announcement (see pages 6-9). But the over 6 million-strong trade union movement can't just sit on the sidelines passively. Trade unionists have been holding meetings discussing how the unions

themselves can be central to building a new party of the working class, to go hand in hand with the industrial struggles against attacks from the bosses and Starmer's Labour government.

The trade unions must lead the working-class fightback, and organise the huge anger and desire for change. A starting point would be for the TUC to call a national demonstration against Starmer's austerity.

Joining the NSSN lobby at the TUC will be a key part of fighting for that - encouraging solidarity between unions, whilst pushing wins amongst rank-and-file trade unionists in the workplace. It will be urging delegates to back the motions calling for a national demo (see page 5).

Mobilised and built for by trade unionists in our branches, workplaces and communities, that could send the threat to Labour that is needed: if you're not willing to tackle austerity and division in our society, we will take to the streets and picket lines until you are forced to.

As a member of the National Education Union delegation to the conference, I will be encouraging my delegation to take a stand against discrimination and austerity, and to take the actual action that will force Labour to respond to what is needed; and hope other unions will take the same stand to leave the congress with policy to show a trade union movement ready and willing to fight for what is needed.



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

LOBBY THE TUC

Confirmed speakers so far:

Steve Gillan POA General Secretary, Sarah Woolley BFAWU General Secretary, Mick Whelan ASLEF General Secretary, Ian Lawrence NAPO General Secretary, Steve Wright FBU General Secretary, Unite striking binworkers from Birmingham & Sheffield, Paula Peters DPAC, Rob Williams NSSN Chair



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p12

