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the Socialist

Issue 1335

11-17 September 2025

formerly **Militant**

TRUMP IN UK



JOIN WEDNESDAY'S WALKOUT



As people in Gaza starve to death, and thousands are massacred just queuing for food, Donald Trump will be visiting the UK, invited by Keir Starmer, to feast on a luxury banquet with the King.

The day he lands for his official state visit - 17 September - Socialist Students is helping to organise walkouts at schools, colleges and universities.

We are sending a message to Trump

and Starmer: We won't stand for your capitalist system which awards privileges to the warmongers and profits to the super-rich while creating wars, climate catastrophe, racism and poverty for the rest of us.

Wednesday 17 September is our chance to fight back. Let's get organised for a real future. For a socialist world free from war, poverty and oppression.

SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Get in touch, scan:



socialiststudents.org

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POLANSKI GREENS WIN, WHAT WILL IT MEAN? >>> p7

UNITE WORKERS' FIGHT AGAINST RACIST DIVISION >>> p6

Organise to walk out!

There is loads that can be done between now and when Trump lands on 17 September to build the walkouts and protests

1 Collect names
Who do you know who also wants to walk out and protest, make a list. Use a sign-up sheet to collect the names of classmates who want to take part. You could organise a meet-up beforehand to make plans

2 Get leafleting
Socialist Students has printed thousands of leaflets to help build for the day. Get in touch with an organiser in your area for leaflets, they can be overprinted with details of when and where to meet on the day

3 Plaster with posters
What can you do to make sure that no-one makes it to their lessons without knowing about the walkout? Inside, outside, around town, at bus stops... Get the word out! Get in touch with an organiser in your area for posters

4 Prepare to protest!
What slogans will you use? What chants will you shout? Is someone prepared to do a short speech to explain why you are there? Can you borrow or buy a megaphone? Why not arrange a meet up to discuss these things? It could be combined with a banner-making session

Scan the QR code to sign up and help organise a protest in your area



YOUTH WALKOUT AGAINST TRUMP



LOTTIE YOUNG
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

While the genocide and famine in Gaza continues, Keir Starmer is rewarding Trump with the never-before-seen privilege of a second state visit. Trump acts in the interests of US capitalism, prioritising profit and power. By inviting Trump to Britain, Starmer shows us that he stands with Trump's disgusting economic policies and stance on Gaza, and that he represents the interests of British bosses and the rotten capitalist system.

Trump has consistently backed the Israeli state's genocidal onslaught on Gaza and Palestinians, which has killed at least 62,000 Palestinians since October 2023. Trump has raised turning Gaza into a 'Riviera' - a playground for the super-rich. Trump's riviera plan, which would involve the forced displacement of

... against war

Gaza's entire population of two million people, is a horrific example of how far he, as a dangerous representative of capitalism, is willing to go to exploit working-class people and back violence in order to pander to the profits of the ruling class.

War and conflict are inherent to capitalism because it is a system based on exploitation, competition between capitalist states, and the constant need to expand and defend interests. Profit and power are placed above peace and welfare. War is also big business, with arms sales producing eye-watering profits, meaning the proliferation of war makes a section of the capitalist class very rich. In 2024, Lockheed Martin and RTX, two of the largest weapon manufacturers, made an annual gross profit of \$6.93 billion and \$15.41 billion respectively.

We are in solidarity with Palestinians fighting for liberation and call for the end of the siege of Gaza, ending the occupation of all the Palestinian territories, and the permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from those areas. By walking out of school, college, and university, young people can show the ruling class of both Britain and the US that we are

horrified by Trump's disgusting support for the Israeli state and its plans for the intensification of violence in Palestine. And we are opposed to Starmer's slavish embrace of it. We are prepared to fight for a world free from wars and destruction, and that means fighting for an end to the capitalist system and for a socialist alternative.



Trump has consistently backed the Israeli state's genocidal onslaught on Gaza and Palestinians, which has killed at least 62,000

Oppose Palestine Action repression

Almost 900 peaceful protesters were arrested as 'terrorists' in Parliament Square at the most recent Gaza demo on 6 September, for expressing support for Palestine Action - a protest group proscribed as a 'terrorist organisation' by the government. It comes on top of around 523 arrested for the same reason a month before. But, Trump, one of the most powerful supporters of the state terror being inflicted on Palestinians, gets a slap-up meal!

Remember that when previous Tory Home Secretary Suella Braverman branded anti-war protesters "hate marchers" in October 2023, she was out of a job a few weeks later. Her comments spurred on the biggest of all the hundreds of thousands-strong Gaza protests in defiance.

Starmer's government is cracking down on peaceful protesters because it fears the huge anger it faces, and the fact that increasing numbers are getting organised to fight back!
● Read more on what the Socialist Party says: 'Palestine Action ban: how to build the anti-war movement' at socialistparty.org.uk



PHOTO: PAUL MATTISSON

...against racist division

MILA
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Thousands of young people in Los Angeles and across the US have walked out of school and protested this summer, showing their anger at Trump's racist attacks on migrants and the brutal raids carried out by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement department (ICE).

One of these brutal cases was a raid at a Georgia Hyundai car factory, where dozens of workers - many of them long-time employees - were rounded up and detained simply for being migrant workers. A union organiser was among those targeted by the raids, showing clearly how ICE is used to intimidate and weaken workers who dare to speak out.

Trump and the billionaires whose interests he represents hope that by blaming migrants for low wages, poverty, and failing schools, they can deflect anger away from the real culprits: the bosses and politicians who preside over a system of inequality.

These attacks are not accidents or 'unfortunate mistakes'. They are part of a deliberate strategy to divide and weaken the working class by the bosses and the state.

But migrant workers are not the cause of decades of declining standards for the working class. It's the

billionaires who profit from our labour while leaving millions of young people facing an insecure future.

And not just in the US! Here, we see the same tactics of whipping up divisive anti-migrant rhetoric in the media. But we've also seen the other side with workers, young people, and trade unionists standing side by side against these ideas!

Young people here are angry about these attempts to divide us and we are fighting back. That is why we're walking out against Trump. When school students leave their classrooms to protest against racism, oppression and exploitation they are taking a stand and fighting for a better society.

But walkouts are only the start of it. To really fight against this system, we need to link up the struggles of school students with workers and trade unionists. Imagine the power of a united movement of young people and workers, all fighting together against racist division and for decent jobs, decent homes and services for all.

That kind of unity could not only stop Trump and Starmer's attacks, but also go further to challenge the entire system of capitalism which breeds racism, poverty, and division.

Capitalism has no future to offer young people. For our generation,

the future promised by the billionaires is debt, low wages, climate catastrophe, and no end to wars. Vulnerable people in society are made scapegoats to distract us from that reality. But the real fight is not between workers born in different countries - it is between the working class and the ruling class.

That's why our walkouts should be a step towards building a mass movement of working-class young people. We need to demand decent schools, jobs, homes, and healthcare for all. And we need to fight for a socialist alternative, where society is run democratically by working people, not for profit but for need.



We need to demand decent schools, jobs, homes and healthcare for all



A walkout against Trump is also a walkout against the system of exploitation and inequality he presents. Under capitalism, women's rights are not indispensable and we must fight for a future where women's hard-won rights are not under threat of being removed. This can only happen through a system that does not prioritise profit at the expense of women, and working class people as a whole.

...against sexism



SOFIA
SOUTH LONDON SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We must fight for a future where women's hard-won rights are not under threat of being removed

The first six months of Trump's second presidency has increased the threats to women's rights and led to a rise in misogynistic ideas and gender-based discrimination, both in the US and across the world. Bodily autonomy has been endangered, abortion rights have been attacked and reproductive health services have been restricted.

As the economic crisis continues to rumble, worsened living standards for working-class people in the US have a particularly devastating impact on women. Similarly, the UK government does not prioritise the protection of women's rights and lives. On average, a woman is killed in the UK every three days. Instead, Starmer's Labour has relied on scapegoating tactics - blaming trans women for the dangers women face as a result of decades of cuts to services. The April Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of a woman in the Equality Act has been used to amplify transphobia.

The US and the UK governments' politics of hate and discrimination have had international consequences. This must be combated with an organised response to show that we do not stand with Trump or Starmer. By walking out during Trump's state visit to the UK, young people can protest against these attacks on women and all other forms of oppression.



'Drill baby, drill'? Trump may as well be saying 'burn baby, burn!'

Socialist change not climate change

"Drill baby, drill" is Trump's message to oil bosses in the US. He might as well be saying "burn baby, burn!" With him at the helm of the world's biggest economy, the world continues to heat up, accelerating towards climate catastrophe.

It's our futures at stake, and capitalist leaders are concerned above all about the profits of big business. The global climate strikes in 2019 had an estimated 7 million people taking part, showing the huge urge to force change. Many were young people walking out of school and college to protest.

To solve climate change requires massive investment in developing clean energy and transforming production to make it more

environmentally sustainable. There can be no trust put in profit-seeking bosses to do anything other than what they think is profitable. That's why we fight for nationalisation under workers' democratic control and management, so we can collectively decide how to invest the vast wealth that the super-rich bosses currently hoard.

Solving global climate change requires collaboration internationally. The opposite of what is on offer from competing capitalist nation states, not trying to make a safe environment for us to live in, but the most profitable economic climate for their own capitalist classes! We need socialist change worldwide. Join us in fighting for socialist change not climate change!



PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

YOUTH WALKOUT AGAINST TRUMP



PHOTOS: NUMBER 10/CC AND JESSICA TAYLOR/UK PARLIAMENT/CC

HANNAH
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Over 800,000 people have now registered interest in Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's new party, with opinion polls even predicting a Corbyn-led party would win the most votes amongst young people!

All of this enthusiasm has arrived

before the party has been officially launched or even has a name, showing how needed a workers' alternative to the establishment parties which have failed to address working-class concerns is.

Many of the policies from Corbyn's 2017 manifesto found massive popularity amongst young people. Policies such as scrapping tuition fees,

an end to zero-hour contracts, and nationalisation of energy, rail and water brought hope to many people. This even resulted in up to one million people who had voted for UKIP in 2015 changing to vote for Corbyn's Labour in 2017.

In this era of ever-growing resentment towards both the Conservatives and Starmer's Labour, and the

rise of Reform UK sowing division in communities across the country, the need for a workers' alternative which unites people around a programme that takes on the bosses and improves the lives of us all is vital.

A new party, based on the working class and its organisations, such as the 6.5 million-strong trade union movement, would play a significant part in strengthening the battles that students and young people are involved in, such as the fight against rising tuition fees, our own cost-of-living crisis and the effects of Labour's austerity on our education.

Walking out against Trump's visit gives us an opportunity to organise and protest against the capitalist system which Donald Trump represents. These walkouts also serve as a way to concretely demonstrate that young people are capable of organising politically and that young people fighting back should be given a voice within a new party.

Socialist Students will be fighting for a socialist programme within the new party, not just to patch up problems faced by young people under capitalism, but for it to fight for the socialist transformation of society. Democratic planning, with the corporations that currently dominate the economy placed into public ownership, could provide young people with a real future, free from poverty, climate destruction, war and oppression. A real socialist alternative could rally together the thousands of young people fed up with the capitalist system.



Walkouts also serve as a way to concretely demonstrate that young people are capable of organising politically and that young people fighting back should be given a voice within a new party

...for our education system

USRA
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

The prevailing myth that hard work guarantees success in education is a dangerous distortion. In truth, it is class, not effort, that ultimately determines opportunity for the privileged.

Private schools, exclusive networks, and well-funded universities provide a clear path to success. For the working class, state schools are overcrowded, under-resourced, and undervalued, leaving students to struggle without the support they need to thrive.

In the last year, the Labour Party has consistently failed to address these deep structural inequalities, despite being a party that, when founded over 100 years ago, was based on principles of social justice. The Labour government's policies have increased the divide between the wealthy and the working class. The education system is increasingly market-driven, with private institutions receiving preferential treatment while state schools are left to collapse with less and less to deliver a decent education. Teachers are underpaid



As we plan to walk out against Trump and all the capitalist system he represents, we also demand an education system that empowers everyone, not just the few

and overworked, and any small increases to their pay are expected to come from the already overstretched education budgets.

At the heart of the crisis is the escalating cost of higher education. University tuition fees leave students burdened with crippling debt, while extracurriculars, networking opportunities, and access to career advancement are reserved for those who can afford them. Even if you get the full maintenance loan, this is not enough to cover the basic costs of living – a roof over your head and enough food to eat – let alone to go out and live a normal life. Students are forced into working exploitative jobs instead of being able to focus on their studies.

Education should not be commodified; it should be free for all. Yet,

under the current system, only those with financial means have a real shot at success. This entrenched inequality is not accidental it is the result of a system that serve the interests of the rich while sidelining the needs of the majority.

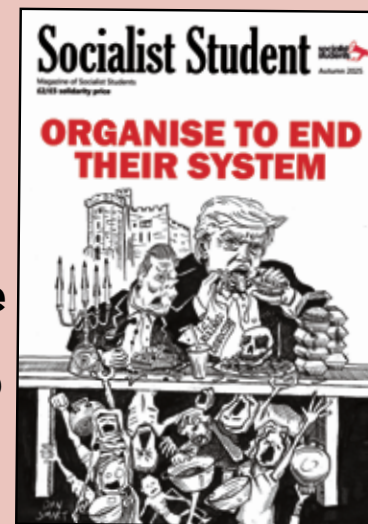
The time for change is now. The Labour government must shift from supporting a system that entrenches class divisions to one that guarantees free, fully funded education for all from primary school through to university. As we plan to walk out against Trump and all the excesses of the capitalist system he represents, we also demand an education system that empowers every student, not just the privileged few.



The Socialist Students Funding Not Fees campaign demands fully funded, free education – not more fees and cuts. See socialiststudents.org.uk/funding-not-fees

Socialist Student Magazine

Find us at your freshers fair on campus to buy the magazine - £2 or £5 solidarity price



Join the student fightback: join...



- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8761**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07749 379 010**

Join the fight for socialist change

TJ DINIZ MOTA
LEEDS SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Donald Trump's return to Britain is a reminder that the system works for one class - the billionaire bosses - for one purpose: profit.

Trump, as US president, is the face of global capitalism, a system that puts corporate interest before people. While he tours red carpets and eats dinner with the king, wages are driven down, racism and division are stirred up, and genocide continues. But Trump is only the loudest voice of a system that also dominates our lives here in Britain.

Keir Starmer's Labour government has left working-class young people behind; sky-high rents, poverty wages, collapsing mental health services, and privatised education are an everyday reality. The launch of Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's new party has shown how many young people are hungry for change as nearly a million have signed up for more information. But history teaches us that unless a new party is rooted in fighting for

socialism, with workers in the driving seat, it will be pulled back into the same old compromises with the bosses' system that have failed before.

So, what do we mean by socialism? Today, a tiny rich elite own and control almost everything from the banks to companies and land. They decide how society runs, and their priority is always self-preservation. The capitalists produce what will make a profit for them, and politicians represent their interests. That's why billions can be spent on endless wars and genocides while students can't afford rent, and why fossil fuel giants rake in record profits while the planet burns. Socialism flips this on its head. With democratic public ownership of the economy, run by and for ordinary people, we could use society's resources to meet human need. That means: good homes for all, fully funded education and healthcare, green jobs that protect the planet, and a future free from poverty and oppression.

But ideas alone don't change the world. Organisation does. Young

people have always been at the forefront of movements that shook society, from the fight against apartheid in South Africa, to walkouts against war and injustice.

That's what Socialist Students and the Socialist Party fights for young people to get organised, to fight for a socialist programme and link up with workers in struggle. We organise in schools, colleges and universities to give young people a real voice and connect our struggles internationally. We fight for any improvements to the lives of workers and young people but don't just settle for reforms. We fight for a world where we take control of our future. Joining us means joining thousands of young people and workers who know that change doesn't come from the top, but from the masses when we stand together.

Trump's visit is one flashpoint in a global crisis of capitalism. But our answer is bigger than one protest. We are part of a movement for socialism with young people fighting alongside the working class for the future of us all. Join us.



Joining us means joining thousands of young people and workers who know that change doesn't come from the top, but from the masses when we stand together



Join the fightback

JOIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206** to find out more today!



After Trump's visit... Let's get organised!

Send in your videos, pictures and reports to editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Students' unions can give us a voice

A students' union means young people coming together, sharing our ideas for how to fight back, and then all pulling together with a plan to win.

The first step is holding a meeting of everyone who is interested in campaigning in your school or college. You could start by inviting anyone who protested against Trump. But to get even more people involved, you could put up posters and give out leaflets to other students, advertising the date and time for your meeting.

In the meeting, everyone can have a chance to share their thoughts on what the main issues are facing students in your school/college, and what students should do about it. There might be anger at war, racism or the climate crisis. Or maybe students have had enough of high cafeteria prices, or the expensive cost of school trips. Students have the right to protest on all of this and more!

There are lots of ways to campaign on the issues students face. You could hold a protest at lunchtime. You could write a protest letter to your headteacher, explaining the issues you face and the changes you want to see, and get as many students as possible to sign it. You could all organise to attend an upcoming protest in your town or city, and make posters to bring with you.

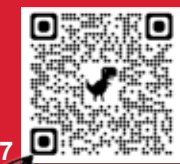
The key thing is getting people to discuss and agree on an issue, make a plan to protest, and then do it – as a team! That's the power of a students' union.

COME AND DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS:

- Have you protested against Trump?
- Are you worried about being punished for walking out?
- Do you want to build a students' union?

ONLINE MEETING
Sunday 21 September 12pm

Zoom meeting ID:
859 2586 9207



Scan to register!
All students welcome

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

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020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

DEADLINES

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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- Paper subscription £4.50 a month, or £6.50 including Socialism Today
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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

Build a united working-class fightback, against racist division

The Socialist Party recently received the following email:

I'm very concerned that some of my friends are making a distinction between refugees, legal immigrants looking for a better life and so-called illegal immigrants, saying they only have a problem with the latter. I need a counter-argument urgently. They seem to be buying the right-wing fascist argument. Can you advise?

Steve Score, Socialist Party National Committee member, responds:

Thank you for contacting the Socialist Party. We strive to put forward arguments that can help workers and young people unite in struggle against our common enemy, the big business bosses and the politicians who serve their interests by driving down our living standards and whipping up division.

We are all constantly bombarded with stories about asylum seekers and 'illegal immigrants', and not just from right-populist Reform and the far right. "Stop the boats" was a main Tory slogan in the last election. Starmer's Labour are constantly echoing the same points. They announce ever harsher measures, primarily designed to make them look effective. Scapegoating a minority is a tool that unpopular governments pick up as they try to maintain their position.

The billionaire-owned media have whipped it up for years, including the supposedly "impartial" BBC giving daily figures on the number of asylum seekers arriving in small boats (but not on days there are none). This constant divisive rhetoric goes largely unanswered in the establishment media and can therefore find an echo at this stage. Those who suffer when the minority of racists in society are emboldened have reason to fear this whipping up of prejudice and it must be answered by the workers' movement.

Strained services

There are many people who are concerned that the numbers of immigrants mean fewer doctors' appointments, less housing to go round, longer NHS waiting lists, low wages, etc. These problems are real - but they are caused by successive Labour and Tory government cuts to the NHS and all public services; unaffordable rents arising from the sell-off and lack of building of council housing, privatisation, and a capitalist system that seeks profit from exploitation of the working class.

Austerity has been a disaster for working-class people. For example, local authorities across England cut their spending on domestic violence refugees by 24% between 2010 and 2017, leaving thousands of women turned away. It's estimated half of councils have cut streetlights in a society where 97% of young women report sexual harassment.

But, at the same time as scapegoating minorities for these problems, big business also seeks to profit from their presence. The reality today is that low-waged, insecure workers

brought from abroad have been used to keep the NHS and social care running in the face of staff shortages. Migrant labour is also used as a means to keep wages low.

The RMT union is organising against the brutal changes to visa rules that threaten over 200 workers in London transport with deportation. The RMT has given a glimpse of the power of the working class with its four days of strike action on London Underground estimated to cost big business £230 million.

We need to campaign for the trade union movement to address all these problems, fighting to take the wealth from the super-rich to put money into services, raising the minimum wage to £15 an hour with no exemptions, and building a million council homes. Nationalising the top 150 banks and corporations that dominate the economy would be a great start.

Divide and rule

The richest 350 people in the UK have between them just short of £800 billion, enough to reverse the worst effects of a decade of austerity. Divide and rule is the age-old tactic used by the rich and powerful to divert attention from the fact that it is their profit-driven system that is to blame for the very real problems working-class people face and prevent the working class from realising its potential collective power. The working class is stronger to fight to take the wealth off the super-rich when it is united.

Distinctions between economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are deliberately distorted and blurred. Asylum seekers are fleeing war, civil war, repression and persecution. When they have their applications accepted, they are legally recognised as refugees. Capitalism means an increasingly unstable and violent world. Repressive regimes, war and conflict, economic crises and environmental disasters are the conditions that create refugees internationally. Labour defends this system including its wars.

The propaganda around people coming to the country "illegally" neglects to mention the fact that many of those coming here, especially on small boats across the English Channel, are denied any opportunity to apply for asylum and to travel by legal routes. No one is going to risk their life to travel unless they are desperate.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, six in ten of small boat arrivals were Afghans, Syrians, Eritreans, Iranians, and Sudanese fleeing war and dictatorship.



LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Cuts in the civil service mean that there are huge backlogs for those waiting for their asylum claims to be heard, during which time they are not allowed to work.

Workers' control

In 2024, there were 108,000 people going through the application process; a minority of those, 44,000 are classed by the government as "irregular arrivals". In comparison, 210,000 people were granted visas for work.

Making legal and safe routes for people to claim asylum in Britain would eliminate the criminal gangs who take people's life savings to transport them. Having a fair, democratic, properly funded system for dealing with appeals would also end the need for asylum hotels.

These three companies running the hotel contracts - Mears, Serco and Clearspring - have an interest in the delays. They made £383 million in profit since 2019 and Clearspring boss Graham King, a Tory donor, became a billionaire! The process should be under the democratic control of the workers' and trade union movement.

This has to be linked to organising in our communities for council budgets that reject austerity, and instead are based on funding the jobs and public services, and building

homes needed by the entire local community. This requires the building of a united movement.

Funding is the start, but the working class also needs to be fighting for how public services are democratically run to meet the needs of all sections of the working class. We want services for women fleeing domestic violence and for those who have suffered brutality in the world's wars. A trade union-led struggle to fight for this and against division is necessary - linked to building a political voice for the working class.

By fighting on these basic class issues, a new mass working-class party could cut across support for Reform and the ability of the far right to have an influence in our communities. The response to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party announcement shows the huge potential. If built as a collective voice of our class it could start to gain authority with people, answer their fears, and provide a real alternative.

Also a party like that in Britain with a bold socialist programme would have a huge effect and be a step towards the mass struggles needed to get rid of capitalism worldwide. This would be a start to eliminating the need for mass movements of people fleeing war, civil war, repression and poverty.

Polanski wins Green leadership

What does it mean for the fight against cuts, 'Your Party' and May's local elections?



WHAT WE THINK

Zack Polanski has won the Green Party leadership race as a self-described eco-populist calling nationalisation a "no-brainer" and to tax the millionaires and billionaires - as he puts it, the "policies of the 99%".

His victory is a reflection of the huge appetite that exists for a left-wing alternative to the capitalist establishment parties.

The margin of victory was huge: 85% to 15% for his opponents' joint ticket of incumbent Adrian Ramsay and Ellie Chownes.

The Green Party's own figures reveal its membership reaching a new peak at 68,500, surpassing the previous peak of 63,219, just before Jeremy Corbyn's election as leader of the Labour Party in 2015 deflated a previous 'Green Surge'.

Since Polanski's announcement of his standing in March, 8,500 have joined the party. The vast majority will have done so to vote for him. However, to put these numbers into perspective, since July nearly 100 times as many, over 800,000, have signed up to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' announcement of their intention to launch a new party.

This in itself shows that for the big majority of the working class and young people the Greens are not

seen as 'their party.' And rightly so. The Greens are not a party rooted in or emanating from the workers' movement. A trade union affiliating to them, for example, would have no means to use its collective voice in the party's democratic structures, or to hold its leaders to account. The party also - consciously - does not have a socialist ideology, a vision of an alternative system to capitalism, leaving their elected representatives with no anchor to resist the pressures of the capitalist establishment.

There are important lessons for the founding of 'Your Party' in this. It should boldly present itself as socialist and as fighting in the interests of the working-class, and ensure it has a democratic structure with the organised workers' movement playing a central role.

May elections

An immediate first test will be the May 2026 elections, in which all seats will be up for election in London borough councils for example, presenting a real opportunity for a new party to get councillors elected. Even for it to win the leadership of councils.

By adopting the policy agreed by the biggest local authority trade unions - Unite the Union, the GMB and the Unison local government group - and setting no-cuts needs-based budgets, councils could lead in mobilising a mass movement of the working class in a fight for services, demanding the funding from Starmer's government and that the super-rich should be made to pay.

In preparation for those struggles, Socialist Party members are arguing for activists enthused by the Your



Trade unions march through Bristol where the Green Party leads the council making cuts BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY



New Green Party leader Zack Polanski BRISTOL GREEN PARTY/CC



Polanski's victory is a reflection of the huge appetite that exists for a left-wing alternative to the capitalist establishment parties

Party announcement, trade unions and others, to take up the campaign now for 'peoples budgets' - coming together to draw up a plan of what services our local communities need and what we are demanding our elected representatives fight for in the council chamber.

No cuts

Unfortunately so far, the more than 800 existing Green councillors have not used their positions to take such an approach. The Green Party has a majority in Mid Suffolk district council, it leads coalitions in twelve local authorities, and is part of coalitions in two-dozen more. In none of these instances are those councillors using their positions to spearhead a fightback to defend services. In Bristol, where the Greens are the largest party, they are pushing through millions of pounds of cuts.

In anticipation of May 2026 and future elections, Polanski, Corbyn and Sultana have all been asked about future collaboration, alliances and electoral pacts between the Greens and 'Your Party'. So far, answers have not extended much beyond saying nice things about one another.

However, James Schneider, a co-founder of Momentum now involved in the 'Your Party' discussions, has spoken of the possibility of running joint open primaries between the Green Party and 'Your Party' for mayoral candidates.

What means then would the workers' movement and thousands of 'Your Party' supporters have to hold those elected to account and to ensure that the council and mayor's office uses all of the tools at their

disposal to mobilise a fightback against Starmer's austerity?

Better surely that the Green Party is invited to affiliate to 'Your Party', as part of a federal structure that allows for the affiliation of trade union bodies, other representative community organisations and political parties, like the Socialist Party? Existing Green Party councillors, like all elected politicians of a new party, would act under the direction of a democratic body in which the working class would be the overwhelming majority.

It was an under an organisational structure of that kind, in Liverpool's District Labour Party (DLP), that the struggle of Liverpool City Council against Thatcher in the 1980s was organised. It won millions of pounds from the Tory government to build council homes, leisure centres and parks. Tens of thousands of workers in the city were mobilised in support, including in a one-day strike in support of the council! Then, Labour councillors acted under direction of the DLP, which itself had 600+ delegates from trade unions, ward Labour Party branches and other groups, representing tens of thousands of workers in the city.

Polanski's win gives just a hint of the appetite that there is for a socialist fightback against Starmer's austerity and the capitalist system it serves. The opportunity is there, through the processes unfolding, for the working class to establish its own mass party. The Socialist Party is fighting for that to become a reality, and for it to adopt the socialist programme needed to transform the lives of the working class.

IAN PATTISON

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

A year ago, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) warned that Keir Starmer's Labour government was preparing 'austerity 2.0', and lobbied the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for it to lead the fight against this. And, in the last year, Starmer's Labour has attacked the working class, cutting our pay and public services.

Therefore, this year, the NSSN again rallied and lobbied at the Congress, calling on the trade union leaders – representing 6.5 million workers, a potentially powerful force – to lead the battle against Starmer's Labour cuts. That starts with calling a massive national demo this autumn against austerity.

Rob Williams, chair of the NSSN, said that, a year ago, Starmer "called for partnership". But Starmer's Labour has "dutifully voted against scrapping the two-child benefit cap, or for the removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance, or the disability welfare cuts".

"There are no common interests between workers and their unions and the bosses. This includes when the boss is Starmer and his cutting Labour councils."

Birmingham Labour council has resorted to brutal strike breaking. "Yet, ending fire and rehire, and scrapping the Tory anti-union laws, were supposed to be the centrepiece of Labour's Employment Rights Bill. But Birmingham bin workers know full well that fire and rehire is very much alive, and being rolled out by Labour"

"We've waited 14 months for Starmer to deliver on his promise to scrap the 50% strike ballot thresholds, and we're still waiting. It's a deliberate step to attempt to undermine national action, especially in the public sector, as Starmer and [Labour chancellor Rachel] Reeves continue to peg back pay after 14 years of Tory wage cuts."

"Why shouldn't the trade union movement lobby for what we need? To make the rich pay, not workers. To not just stop more cuts, but to reverse those already made. To give back all that has been taken by the Tories and New Labour from the NHS, education, welfare, and the 40% funding stolen from council budgets in the last 15 years or more."

National demo

"So on behalf of the NSSN, I say: 'Name the date for a national Saturday TUC demo'... And it you're looking for a date, let me make a suggestion – Saturday 22 November – four days before Labour's Budget."

"Labour austerity has opened up a political vacuum that the populist and far right are rushing to try and fill, with their racist divide and rule that pits worker against worker."

"But the huge response to the announcement by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana of a new left party, with over 800,000 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."

"This is the role that TUC Congress must play."

Steve Wright, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), said: "The call for a national demo against Starmer's cuts, we fully back that as a union. I fully back it as a general secretary. And we will be there."

"I'll tell you why we back it. It's not just because of the 14 years of austerity in the fire and rescue service."

"We expected change a year ago, and we're not seeing it. We are facing 'austerity Mark 2?'"

"We are facing [fire] cuts of over £200 million over the next year. That equates to 2,300 firefighters... Whether your members work in a school, in a shop, in a factory, they are at risk... They are at risk because of Starmer's cuts."

"I don't believe that Labour is going to turn these cuts around. We're going to have to take that fight on ourselves. That's going to have to be an industrial fight of every fire station, every control room."

"We need to be on the frontline of this call for a national demo."

Sarah Woolley, general secretary of bakers' union BFAWU, agreed: "The call by the NSSN to support the trades council motion... is so important... From the Bakers' Union, we say clearly that we back the call on this motion."

"But passing a motion at TUC Congress is one thing... Unless motions are backed up by action, they're just words on paper."

"We've got to have the TUC leading from the front, organising a demonstration against austerity."

Paula Peters, from Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), spoke: "What a shame we have with a Labour government, who brought in 'austerity 2.0'... The first demand needs to be a huge national demonstration in London against Starmer's austerity."

Workers' rights

Some speakers still held out hope in Starmer's Labour.

Mick Whelan, is general secretary of train drivers' union Aslef. He is also chair of the organisation of unions that are still affiliated to the Labour Party.

Mick said that he, and the other left-wing unions, argue for the policies we need on bodies inside the Labour Party. "We're losing those votes 18-10 and 18-12."

"Don't believe that taking Angela Rayner out of the game... is not going to allow them to try and water down the Employment Rights Bill further. Don't believe that going through the House of Lords, that the Federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors, the CBI [bosses' club], the right-wing press, Farage, and all those vested interests, aren't seeking to change it."

"We need to get what we've got through the Lords next week, in its entirety."

"We need to keep the firm pressure on Starmer's neck", FBU's Steve Wright put it.

But the Prison Officers' Association (POA) is excluded from Labour's Employment Rights Bill. **Steve Gillan, POA's general secretary**, said: "My union is in its 31st year of not having a right to strike, that a Conservative government ripped away from us in 1994. The problem is, successive Labour governments haven't reversed that either."

"Plenty of talk. Plenty of empty promises."

Labour's Shabana Mahmood has just been moved from justice secretary to home secretary. Steve added: "I told her to her face, 'Shame on her', that they weren't going to reverse that ban on basic fundamental human rights."

The POA has motion 17 on the



agenda, to get the TUC to back its fight for full union rights.

The Socialist Party and NSSN backed the policy passed at last year's TUC, to call a special Congress if Starmer's Labour didn't deliver its promised workers' rights within the first 100 days of the government.

Ian Lawrence, Napo probation union general secretary, spoke when we marched outside. He said that Congress needs "to let this Labour government know that we intend it to stand by its promises". Napo has just voted 90% to strike on a 45% turnout. But its members are not legally allowed to strike on that turnout, because the Tory "legacy laws are still there. Despite the promises to repeal them. I say: 'Get on with it!'"

Labour has not delivered workers' rights. Labour has not scrapped any

Tory anti-union law, including the 50% turnout threshold.

But a special Congress has not been convened. The Bakers' Union BFAWU has motion 18 on the agenda at this year's Congress to make this happen.

New party

The arguments made by some that we should stay in Labour to try and persuade the government to change, were not persuasive to the vast majority of people that spoke. For example, Matt Webb, president of the local trade union council, welcomed us to Brighton. He also opened the NSSN rally last year. He compared his 2024 speech of "cautious optimism" after the election of a Labour government to now.

Many of the speakers said that now they wanted to build something new. The bakers' union backs the call for a

new party, and has said the trade unions should be at the heart of it.

Sarah Woolley said: "Austerity didn't end with the Tories being voted out... The real problem is the economic system that puts people before profit."

The bakers' union motion 18 rightly called on the TUC to "work with the Socialist Campaign Group, Independent Alliance and suspended Labour MPs". But this important demand was composited out. Union activists will ask, was this done because some unions want to cover for Labour, and maintain the link with Starmer's party at all costs?

Deji Olayanka, a delegate from the Communication Workers Union (CWU) to Congress, spoke in a personal capacity. He criticised the cut to the bakers' union motion.

Deji said: "We need to campaign in

NSSN lobby says: 'TUC – organise a national demo'

anti-immigrant sentiment and racism... So we in the trades council have been active, mobilising against that."

"We've trained and organised stewards for marches... Southampton Police have been not only ineffective, but actually facilitated the [anti-migrant] protesters."

Stewards "have been effective". 400 people on a Gaza march got the attention of 40-50 racist protesters. "We held the march, despite horrendous intimidation... but we were only able to do that because the role the trades council played in getting those stewards'."

"We're organising our own march through the same area of the city [as the racist protests]. But our demands will be about 'jobs and homes, not racism'... The TUC policy of 'jobs and homes, not racism' was passed six or seven years ago... I think trade unions have a massive role to play in this work."

Paul Kershaw, Unite the Union housing chair, said that cost-cutting led to a baby dying because of mould in Notting Hill Genesis housing. Paul said: "It's a disgrace that the far right can use housing as an issue." We need the workers' movement "to put forward working-class policies, for rent control, for decent living conditions, and for a mass programme of council housing".

Sofia Pandolfi Da Silveira, college student and member of Socialist Students, invited us to help build the student walkouts when Donald Trump visits the UK on 17 September.

Kai, Truth About Zane campaign, has spoken to the NSSN before. His seven-year-old son tragically died in 2014 from floodwater in his home from a contaminated landfill. "Our great Fire Brigades Union... will take motion 50" on this issue to TUC Congress.

After rallying inside, over 100 of us marched along the seafront to right outside the Congress venue, to take our message direct to the union delegates. **Jo Grady, general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU)**, also spoke when we arrived.

"It cannot be right, two years into a genocide in Gaza, that we defend increases in [defence] spending, when we know what it's used for... We're happy to see immediate increases in our expenditure, if it's on our education, it's on our railways, it's on our infrastructure, it's on the NHS."

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Heroic bin workers strike

The room was electric for the bin workers. Both received massive standing ovations.

Danny Taylor, Birmingham bin worker, said: "I'm a proud striking worker".

"Shockingly, these attacks are coming from a Labour council... Now they've gone even further", with workers losing "up to £8,000 a year... If they get away with it here, councils across the country will copy".

Commissioners "blocked our deal months ago... acting under Angela Rayner". She "didn't visit a single picket line. Instead... she congratulated the scab workforce on a 'job well done'."

Birmingham Labour council "doesn't want us back. They've built a service, propped up by agency labour. Workers with no rights, no security, no power to fight back."

"Birmingham City Council boasts about its successful trial of agency-run collection". It "wasn't just unofficial and unsafe, it cost more money."

The Labour council "has thrown everything at us – section 14 orders, court injunctions, police intimidation... private security thuggery, smears in the press, illegal deductions of holiday pay."

But we "have not been broken. We've just rebalotted the members with a 72% turnout, with a 99.5% 'yes' to continue the action."

"That's not just a mandate. That's a roar of defiance."

Rob Williams said: "On Saturday 20 September, if you're doing something, cancel it. Come to Birmingham. Come on the demonstration."

Joel Mayfield, Sheffield bin worker, striking for over a year for union recognition at Veolia, said that they'd appealed to Sheffield Labour-led council for help. "But in the same way they contract out the service, they contracted out the blame. 'Not our problem'."

"Real activism, the real trade union movement... that's where you learn real knowledge about the trade union movement, class struggle."

"It doesn't just come from books. It comes from lived, breathed experiences, conversations with strikers on picket lines."

"A similar display of inter-union solidarity is needed, in the form of a national demo against Starmer's government, and his planned cuts. And it's up to the TUC to back such a demo."

"We want rights for workers from day one, not with a qualifying period. We want to abolish the punitive thresholds and draconian anti-strike laws. And we call for an end to all zero-hour contracts, not just exploitative ones."

NHS maternity services, from the frontline



PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

JUDE
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Catastrophic events at maternity units in England have exposed the shocking number of maternal and neonatal deaths that should and could have been prevented.

In response to these deadly failings, Starmer's Labour government has commissioned yet another inquiry to discover what contributed to the tragic sad deaths of mothers and babies.

I guarantee the report will identify failures and will include that the recommended 1:1 ratio of midwives to labouring women is not being achieved. Many historical enquiries and research have shown that 1:1 midwifery care in labour reduces poor outcomes.

Whilst these deadly failings are still fresh in everyone's mind, the appalling truth is that soon-to-be-qualified midwives and nurses are unable to find positions in the NHS. They are unemployed!

Those of us who have undertaken nurse or midwife training are acutely aware that the first six months after qualifying are massively important to your future practice. This is much easier if it is in the facility in which you trained and are familiar. We have the highly trained staff but refuse to employ them.

The inquiry currently being commissioned will lay bare the lack of

training and shortage of staff as a causative factor. I would wage a bet these recommendations will be forgotten and not acted upon. The government will not want to give extra funding to implement the improvement. There is a perpetual cycle of failings then inquiries then not implementing their findings.

To add insult to injury, there are thousands of doctors who cannot access training posts in their chosen area. For those wanting to become GPs, trainee places have all been drastically cut. Money awarded to general surgeries has to be ring-fenced to employ nurses or other allied professionals but not doctors.

Many doctors are leaving in droves for Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc. Those same doctors have studied at UK medical schools for at least five years and worked in resident (formally junior) doctor roles for at least two years, only to find they cannot continue in their chosen field or any other clinical area. Historically, psychiatric trainee positions have always been undersubscribed but not in 2025, they too are now oversubscribed.

More than 33,000 doctors are chasing less than 13,000 available posts. This is horrendous for the present day, but what about the future?

Has health secretary Wes Streeting considered the long-term consequences of his actions? A workforce plan has been promised but as yet has not materialised.

The health secretary recently published his ten-year plan for the NHS which involves moving care from hospital to the community. My extensive experience of managing a community midwifery service for a large county gives me some insight into 'hospital at home'. This system requires more staff and will cost a lot to roll out. But it will also require well-trained experienced staff. Where will these professionals come from?

But don't worry, Wes's ten-year plan will give us all an improved NHS app and AI will sort everything!

There are currently 121,000 full-time vacant positions in the NHS. I have endured the savings that departments in the NHS have had to make, it's common practice to keep vacant posts empty. It's highly likely this is what's happening while nurses and midwives are unable to secure a position to consolidate their training. The effect on staff morale is massive. Everyone is aware that employing these nurses, doctors and midwives would really make a difference.

The current government has imposed massive 'savings' on every trust in the country. This is continuing the brutal Tory austerity on the NHS and expands the use of private companies within the health service.

No doubt any future failings will be wrongly attributed to doctors', nurses' and other NHS staff's industrial action, and not the thousands of unfilled vacancies within the NHS.

Food inflation hits a new high

TOM PORTER-BROWN
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

With the current rate of food inflation the fastest it's been in the last 18 months at 4.2%, more and more working-class people are having to cut back on groceries. This is coupled with an energy price crisis due to hitting working-class people for the fifth winter in a row.

Countries Britain imports fruit from are seeing their growth and production rates drop courtesy of the climate crisis. This leads to reduced stock and supermarket bosses increase prices to maintain their profits.

It used to be the case that working-class people were making a choice between heating and eating but even that is going to feel like a non-option for many workers going into winter this year. The rate of food inflation is expected to hit 6% later in the year and this will hit the lowest-paid hardest.

Bosses of retailers such as Tesco and Sainsbury's claim to 'do everything we can to limit price rises for households'. But they continue to make massive profits from sales and underpay their staff. Many claim Universal Credit to make ends meet; the government is effectively subsidising supermarket bosses paying poverty wages.

Supermarkets see groceries and food as a source for profits instead of a basic resource humans cannot survive without. To prioritise what we need instead of what makes a profit, we cannot leave supermarkets, food manufacturing and distribution, and agriculture in the hands of the bosses.

We need a socialist solution to the rising cost of food. The private companies that dominate the food industry should be nationalised and run by workers ourselves democratically in the interest of the whole working class. We could use the profits hoarded by the bosses to invest, to ensure groceries are affordable and high quality.

It should also be said that it's corporations and their respective bosses that are responsible for the climate crisis damaging workers' and farmers' ability to produce food. The fight for affordable groceries has to be linked to the fight for a solution to the climate crisis. This means fighting for the socialist transformation of the world and running society as a whole on a democratic basis which can provide us all with a decent standard of living without damaging the environment.

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PHOTO: FRANKIE FOUANTHIN

Fire union says: cancel Trump visit – its unsafe!

Labour's continuation of Tory austerity is hitting us all, when we struggle to get the healthcare we need, try to find somewhere to rent that we can afford or, use overstretched expensive public transport.

But, as the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has warned, it is impacting the government's ability to safely throw fancy parties for visiting dignitaries. Buckinghamshire fire and rescue service is being told by Keir Starmer to deploy vehicles and crew to Chequers country house while Donald Trump visits. Stations and fire appliances are under threat from cuts in Buckinghamshire already, and the FBU has warned that taking staff away from vital duties elsewhere will make the public less safe.

Steve Wright, FBU general secretary says: "Keir Starmer must cancel this state visit." We agree, but we are also preparing for Trump to be met with young people letting him know he's not welcome!

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Gaza: Build mass struggle to end war

SEAMUS SMYTH
EAST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY REGIONAL ORGANISER

In Gaza, families face relentless bombardment and deprivation. Schools and hospitals have been destroyed, thousands have been killed, and the population lives under a permanent shock. Following a shooting in Jerusalem on 8 September, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said: "The Palestinian Authority must disappear from the map". A new offensive has already destroyed dozens more buildings in Gaza City and there is regular bombing of civilians in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

Israel school students strike

The new school year in Israel began not with classrooms full, but with classrooms locked. At nearly 70 different high schools, thousands of students staged a one-day strike, refusing to carry on as though life were everyday, while hostages remain in Gaza and while the Palestinian people faced an onslaught. Gates were chained, lessons boycotted, and even in Tel Aviv, students blocked traffic on the Ayalon Highway. "Enough of this destructive government," their banners read.

These young people took it upon

themselves to act, but this is not the first time that young Israeli students and workers have taken action against Netanyahu's rotten coalition government.

On the 17 August, hundreds of thousands joined a nationwide protest demanding an end to conscription, the release of hostages and an end to the war.

The student walkout, as well as the massive protests that happened prior, point to a deeper truth: ordinary people - whether in Israel or Palestine - are the ones paying the price for a war driven by capitalist interests, as the shooting in Jerusalem shows. The war isn't making Israel any safer for ordinary people.

By connecting their call for a hostage deal to a rejection of endless war and austerity, students are emphasising the need for a different future free from war and corruption.

The Socialist Party argues that workers and youth, Israeli and Palestinian, have no interest in continuing this cycle of bloodshed. That requires building an independent organisation of struggle that will fight for a socialist alternative: for democratic public ownership and control, and a future based on genuine equality for all.

The courage of these students deserves support. Their defiance could show the spark of a movement that could unite across borders to challenge both Netanyahu's regime and the capitalist system that breeds war.



Abertridwr Library occupation and injunction win against closures

MARIAM KAMISH
CAERPHILLY SOCIALIST PARTY

Following an occupation by protesters of Abertridwr Library on 6 September, solicitors HE Evans has won an injunction for the campaign in the High Court in London. The council has to reopen the ten Caerphilly local libraries for the duration of the judicial review. Scandalously, Caerphilly Council had decided to close all ten threatened libraries in the middle of the review - and we were determined to try to stop them.

Campaigners began to assemble from 10am - whole families with children. One thirteen-year-old said tearfully, "I don't want them to close the library". But this was a day of celebration, as well as determination. Children and adults browsed for books, used the computers, played with the soft toys, followed the librarian round in a gleeful treasure hunt.

Judicial reviews are not a reliable instrument for stopping cuts - the courts favour local councils - but some do win. And we've brought our judicial review on the basis of the impact on working-class families, young people, older people and disabled people - not on a point of procedure.

We were occupying Abertridwr Library - but on behalf of all ten libraries. At 1pm when the doors closed, we explained: "These closures are

a cynical act by the council. Up till now, we've done everything by the book. Now, we're taking them to the court of public opinion."

Supporters came down with food during the afternoon, but council staff had locked the doors and they couldn't get in.

Four police officers showed up to see us off. But we quoted the law at them and they didn't try to remove us, though they kept warning they would eventually have to stay as long as we did, which wore a couple of the protesters down.

We'd agreed from the start that whatever we did, we'd do it together. We were also aware that not all the protesters could stay indefinitely. So, we announced that we'd leave at 5pm. When we got outside, we found the librarians had been sent home and other council staff had taken over.

We can chalk that one up to experience. But our four-hour occupation has sent a defiant message. With thousands of views on social media, the word is getting out there. We say: fight every cut, every closure, every attempt to give our libraries and playing fields away in Community Asset Transfers.

And we're serving notice on councillors, both Labour and Plaid Cymru. If you won't defend us from the cuts, stand aside for genuine socialists who will!



The occupation!
PHOTO: NIKOKI WEERAKON



THE SOCIALIST INBOX

● Hands in the till

The Angela Rayner tax-dodging scandal reminded me of an incident when I was admitted to the Brighton Labour Party election candidates' panel in 1988.

A right-wing Labour candidate called me aside for a pep talk. The first item on the agenda was how to 'maximise' my expenses. This is in the days before councillors received allowances and there wasn't much money to be made anyway.

Some of Labour's public representatives have had their hands in the till for ages. Any principled socialist wouldn't buy anything that required tax advice in the first place. Another reason why we need a new workers' party.

CLIVE WALDER, BIRMINGHAM

● Bob Vylan

Bob Vylan played at Burn It Down festival Torquay on 28 August, packing out The Foundry on a Thursday night. Bob Vylan achieved notoriety at Glastonbury where Bobbie the vocalist chanted "Death, Death to the IDF".

Most of the audience were young and those I spoke to were all workers. Palestine flags, resistance to racism and solidarity with trans people were there of the set.

"Blah blah blah...That's alright; but I want to fight!", the lyrics to 'Pretty Songs' say.

How do we fight, and what are we fighting for?

The young people at the gig won't have found many answers, and probably weren't looking for them just then! But in their lives all of them and many others are looking for a way to fight back against capitalism.

Bob Vylan were supported by punk rapper Hyphen, who I spoke to in the merch tent before his set to ask if he would mention Torbay Trades Council's protest against the genocide in Gaza, which we were holding the next morning. In fact during the gig, he gave me the mic and got me to announce it myself!

Sure enough, at 12 midday, a few young punk fans determined to push through the driving rain and their hangovers to stand with us by the Harbour, holding handmade placards. Devon Socialist Party members sold seven papers and made a couple of good contacts.

DUNCAN MOORE, TORBAY

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



PCS leadership meets as attacks on government departments rain down

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN PCS

Will there or won't there be a national campaign by the Public and Commercial Services Union PCS against Labour government attacks? That's a question of leadership.

The pressure on civil servants by Starmer's Labour is mounting. Job cuts are gradually finding their way to every government department, and a programme of office closures, begun in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), is likely to expand to other government departments. Flexible working is under attack.

There could not be a more important time for genuine leadership at the top of PCS, but the recently elected National Executive Committee is, with honourable exceptions, incapable of providing it.

The NEC met on 2-3 September. General secretary Fran Heathcote submitted her latest paper on the national campaign, which contained a total of zero recommendations on how to achieve the aims set by PCS conference.

Heathcote's approach does not give members the confidence needed to decisively fight and win. Unsurprisingly given that no strategy is proposed, there can be a low turnout to meetings. This low turnout is then used to 'prove' a lack of a mood.

Coordinate the struggles

As always, PCS Broad Left Network (BLN) supporters on the NEC – Marion Lloyd, Fiona Brittle, Bobby Young and Rob Ritchie – proposed a much-needed alternative, committing to



PCS members at the Houses of Parliament on strike, September 2025. ROB WILLIAMS

a campaign to build up members' confidence, linking up the disputes across government departments. It was vetoed by the president, Martin Cavanagh.

Across several areas where BLN supporters and allies hold senior union posts, disputes have begun or are about to begin. If the NEC is not prepared to give a lead, we must coordinate these struggles.

PCS members that are in dispute at the moment – from MyCSP to Ofgem, from MHCLG to Houses of Parliament – need to work together to unite these struggles, and to coordinate

with battles that are emerging: in the Department for Education, in Scottish Government, and beyond.

Trans rights motion finally heard

At PCS conference in May this year, the leadership deleted motion A57 and blocked 25 emergency motions from the agenda on the basis of 'legal advice' following the Supreme Court ruling on trans rights. President Cavanagh blocked the attempt by a clear majority of delegates to get the motions back on the agenda. Motion A57 expressed strong support for

trans members in the face of the Supreme Court judgment and the way it has been misused. Heathcote and Cavanagh made a statement, which was published on the union's website on 17 May, that implied trans women should use male toilets and trans men use female toilets while at conference.

BLN supporters, working with members of PCS Proud (the union's LGBTQ+ network), submitted a motion on this issue to the NEC in May, but it wasn't taken for discussion until the September NEC! The motion criticised the leadership for the

way 'legal advice' had been misused to shut down debate. It also sought to force the withdrawal of Heathcote's statement. BLN supporters voiced concern about the intention of Heathcote to unilaterally review all previous PCS policy to make sure it is compliant with a particularly narrow reading of the Supreme Court judgment, without seeking a mandate from Conference to do so.

All four BLN supporters currently on the NEC voted for, as did the two Independent Left supporters, and the one independent socialist – but the motion was defeated by the NEC's Left Unity/Democrat majority.

One positive was that the NEC agreed to condemn the Labour government's decision to proscribe Palestine Action.

Leadership dodging political strategy

But once again, the motion on the vitally important issue of political representation was not taken. Socialist Party members Marion Lloyd and Fiona Brittle had put forward a motion to develop the union's political strategy at the July NEC.

The motion urged the NEC to invite Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sulтана to discuss how PCS could be involved in building a new workers' party, as well as to contact other unions exploring the same issue. For the second time, this motion was not discussed.

● A meeting of PCS members to plan how to campaign in the union for a new workers' party was taking place as we went to press. A report will follow next week

Yorkshire workers fight low pay in NHS SubCos



LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

"Equal work, equal pay!" chanted workers at Airedale General Hospital in Keighley, West Yorkshire, as they staged a protest on 8 September demanding NHS rates of pay.

They are employed by AGH Solutions, an NHS wholly owned subsidiary company (or 'SubCo'). It is one of several SubCos set up by hospital trusts across Yorkshire in 2018-19.

A SubCo is a private company set up by an NHS Trust, to which they can transfer in-house support services and staff, buildings and land. Most trusts that have created SubCos have done it to try to make savings. The SubCo means they can pay lower wages, and avoid VAT.

In many areas, including in

Yorkshire, the bosses were forced back by campaigning and strike action, or the threat of it, but in a number of smaller hospitals like Airedale the managers were able to push ahead.

Disgracefully, under Starmer's Labour government, instead of fully funding the health service, NHS England has told all NHS trusts that they should normally transfer support services and staff to SubCos to reduce costs.

The highest paid director of AGH Solutions earns over £151,000 a year, meanwhile their workers not only don't get NHS pay rates, but also don't receive the pensions, sick pay, Sunday-working enhancements, etc, that NHS workers have.

Strike action is due to take place on 12, 15 and 16 September.

Fighting TikTok union-busting



TikTok has announced hundreds of redundancies for workers in content moderation and its Trust and Safety department – with bosses citing the use of AI as justification for the redundancies.

Dozens of workers demonstrated in front of TikTok offices against this attack on jobs on 4 September.

Workers saw through TikTok's clear act of union-busting, as the redundancy notice came just one week before a vote on trade union recognition for a Communication Workers Union branch. Jobs are already being advertised at a fraction of the pay in other countries. TikTok's own report states that "Human insight plays a crucial role in the content moderation process".

Several people came out of the offices to join the demonstration, and were met with an appeal to join the union, pointing out that union-busting tactics show the bosses recognise the power of workers organising together. Despite yearly revenue growing 38% last year, there was a sense of further attacks on the way: "If this is how they treat core staff in safety and moderation jobs, imagine what else they're willing to cut." But demonstrators showed a defiant mood to fight back.

ALI MANSFIELD, CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Nationalise Lindsey Oil Refinery



Workers from the Lindsey Oil Refinery in Lincolnshire lobbied parliament on 3 September to keep the plant functional. They heard their reps and Unite general secretary Sharon Graham call for new owners, after current proprietor Prax and its owner Sanjeev Kumar had their UK assets frozen due to alleged 'irregularities'. The plant is not operating right now and 420 jobs are potentially at risk.

Unite is demanding that a new

owner is found by the Labour government. But at least one rep called for the nationalisation of the plant, which Socialist Party members agree with. We call for nationalisation of the entire energy industry, under democratic workers' control and management, as part of an environmentally sustainable socialist energy plan which could transfer jobs without loss of pay, terms and conditions. KEVIN PARSLOW, UNITE WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL BRANCH SECRETARY

London tube strike 'for our fair share'

Members of the RMT on London Underground are taking five days of rolling strike action in a dispute over pay and working hours.

Socialist Party members visited picket lines around London on Monday 8 September and heard from strikers how they felt about their hours of work and the lack of any work-life balance, including getting hardly any weekends off work.

Jared Wood, London Transport regional organiser, spoke to BBC Radio London ahead of the strike:

Fundamentally, what our members are saying is that they want a fair share of the success that they have generated on the London Underground.

These are the people that kept the tube running during Covid. And since then we've got passenger numbers back to pre-Covid levels. We've done that with 2,000 fewer staff overall, and by working around the clock: 1am finishes, 4am starts.

The transport commissioner himself has referred to an extraordinary chapter, where London Underground has generated three years of consecutive financial surplus. Our members are saying that with all of that success delivered, they just deserve to have previous commitments that have been made by London Underground delivered.

And they deserve some recognition of the damage that long-term shift work does, and a little bit more quality time away from the job to recover from that.

Transport for London (TfL) is well aware that our policy is for a 32-hour, four-day week, and we think there's nothing wrong with workers aspiring to that at this time. But we're prepared to talk to TfL



Above: Tube strikers at Hainault, east London. MARTIN REYNOLDS



Below: RMT members on the Docklands Light Railway are also on strike. CHRIS NEWBY

about any meaningful step towards that objective.

They say there's no money around, and yet there's a surplus forecast for this year of £166 million. They've just saved £100 million on pension contributions. A tiny fraction of that money would resolve this dispute, and we would go back to generating £50 million a day for the London economy.

Our members keep this system running, and go to extraordinary

lengths to do that, day after day after day.

We were ready to keep talking to London Underground all of this week and the weekend, if necessary, to try and resolve this. But we went to see them on Wednesday, and left after just 40 minutes, and then received a letter stating that London Underground has taken its final position, and they are not prepared to entertain discussions around the points that we're putting

points that we're putting

University workers to ballot for national action against meagre 1.4% pay rise

BEA GARDNER UCU MEMBER

The University and College Union (UCU) has announced that 65,000 members based in universities across the UK will be balloted for industrial action over the 2025-26 pay offer.

This is what delegates voted for at the Higher Education Conference in May, when a series of motions passed calling for a return to a strategy of UK-wide action to link the fight for pay and jobs with a campaign for full funding. Over the summer, members from all five of the higher education unions involved in the pay negotiations voted to reject the offer of a 1.4% pay increase, which is now being imposed.

However, activists within the UCU, including Socialist Party members, have had to fight for those decisions to be implemented and for coordination with the other campus unions.

It is therefore positive that the UCU Higher Education Committee agreed

last week to ballot for action. The UCU statement also indicates that for the first time in recent years, there are plans to coordinate the ballot and any industrial action that follows with the other campus unions.

We now need to push for the ballots to be properly prepared for and built, with full resources to branches to help get the vote out, so the anti-union 50% thresholds can be beaten.

The potential is there for the sector-wide, cross-union fight back in higher education that we need. If all the unions come out together, the total closure of university campuses and functions is posed, which would maximise pressure on the employers and the government to act. We need our union leadership to fully back members in this fight, and to agree on a strategy for action that members have confidence in.

A fuller article discussing the different issues involved and how the campaign can be built will follow



UCU members in universities were part of the 2022-23 strike wave. PAUL MATTHESSON

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

Join the fightback

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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





WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Trade unionists fighting in their unions for a new party

Meetings have taken place in several 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 an extract from the report of the meeting of Napo members. The full reports of this and the other meetings can be read here: 'Trade unionists discuss how their unions can fight for political representation' at socialistparty.org.uk



The 'Napo For A New Party' meeting on 1 September was the first of its kind since members met to discuss how to build support for Jeremy Corbyn's policies in the union when he was leader of the Labour Party.

Napo represents workers in probation and family courts. The meeting had a variety of attendees, with new young members alongside current and former vice-chairs and National Executive Committee members, retired members, and both probation and family court workers.

Attendees were keen to express anger at the Labour government. Labour has continued Tory austerity, harming all public services including probation and Cafcass (family courts). It has kept the repressive Tory anti-union laws that sabotaged Napo's ballot on industrial action. We were just short of the 50% turnout threshold, but with over 90% backing strike action 97% favouring action short of strike!

And members added that Labour has continued the horrendous Tory attacks on refugees and asylum seekers, diving headfirst into the racist rhetoric that was discussed at last year's Napo AGM, with a panel on opposing racism.

The meeting mainly focused on practical aims. Napo's 2025 AGM on 16-18 October will have a motion going to it from the Family Court Section that directly calls for discussion with other trade unions on establishing a new voice for the working class - Motion 21: 'Enough is enough - we need new political representation.'

We agreed to build support for Motion 21 in our branches and to hold

another online meeting to follow up on progress in late September. We also intend to hold a Napo For A New Party meeting at the AGM itself.

More Napo members have joined the group since that meeting, making it clear that the question of working-class political representation will be a feature at the AGM and in the union going forward.

Extract from motion 21: Enough is enough – we need new political representation

AGM resolves:

- To contact sister unions with an invitation to enter discussion on establishing a new political voice for the working class
- To invite pro-worker MPs including Jeremy Corbyn MP and Zarah Sultana MP to attend a National Executive Committee meeting for a discussion about how they can support our union's demands for decent funding for probation and Cafcass
- To encourage Napo members to stand in elections, linking up with other trade unionists, to campaign for our union's policies

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



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' - 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

West London: Lively debate on the way forward



West London PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

DARA FITZGERALD
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Over 30 people attended a Socialist Party public meeting to discuss the fight for a new workers' party in west London. Socialist Party National Committee member Jared Wood was the main speaker, giving an introduction about the importance of trade unions being at the heart of fights against the far-right and cuts to councils and services - not just supporting Labour come what may, as some other trade union leaders wish to do. He also spoke about the failures of Labour to give a proper fight to the far right, and instead kowtowing to anti-asylum rhetoric.

Jared then turned to the 'Your Party' formation. While it's a great step forward that a political alternative to Labour is coming together, with independent meetings popping up across the country, the character and structure of the new party will be key initially. The Socialist Party argues

for a federalist structure that will allow different groups to work together in the same party, and the involvement of the trade unions in an integrated way is also vital.

Bill Reed chaired the proceedings and after Jared had given his contribution, he opened the floor to questions and contributions from the audience. The discussion was lively with attendees interacting with each other and debating points such as Trump's effect on politics, why Reform is rising in popularity, the importance of talking to people but also having different viewpoints in the new party, and standing up for the oppressed.

A big round of applause followed Jared's closing remarks, and from speaking to people at the end there was a great buzz and response. Over £150 was raised for the Socialist Party fighting fund, and we had a long list of names of people who left details about wanting to get more involved. A very successful night all round!

Coventry socialist meeting overflowing to discuss 'Your Party'



Coventry PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

MAX MCGEE
WEST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISER

Coventry Socialist Party hosted a public meeting with 65 in attendance on 3 September. The room was overflowing into the corridor outside! Visitors and existing Socialist Party members turned out to hear Dave Nellist, Coventry's socialist former MP and councillor, address the crowd, outlining what the Socialist Party believes is necessary, for the working class to have its own independent political representation.

To underline the developments of the last 15 years, Dave recalled the effects of the world economic crash of 2008 as the starting pistol, and Gordon Brown's Labour government bailing out the banks to the tune of £400 billion. Successive Labour and Tory governments have come for our jobs and services to make us pay.

Dave made the point that it's no surprise at the huge levels of support for Corbyn and Sultana's announcement for a new party. Mass rallies of 'Enough is Enough', at the beginning of the strike wave in 2022, were in some areas the biggest meetings since the 18 million-strong anti-poll tax movement in the late 1980s that brought down Thatcher!

But the trade union leaders who launched it sought to turn the movement towards Labour and it dwindled away. What has changed now is that Labour is in government with an ever-worsening record on an ever-higher tightrope. Starmer's government is already in turmoil and unions are moving away from Labour.

Questions from the floor asked about the potential democratic structure of 'Your Party'. In a trade union, members have a say, but their democratic organisation means they

can act collectively. One option is a federal, representative democracy, which Socialist Party members in the meeting explained our support for, that could include delegates from youth and student organisations, trade unions, community and anti-war campaigns, as well as political parties like the Socialist Party.

Another idea being discussed is referred to as 'one member one vote', in which members are asked en masse to respond to questions, for example. While this can superficially feel democratic, that process actually allows those who set the questions to control the discussion. Far better for decisions to be made on the basis of a full discussion and debate.

The debates about what next for 'Your Party' and working-class political representation will continue. Come and discuss that and more at Socialist Party public meetings.

Enfield meeting points to no-cuts council budget

JOHN DOLAN
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist Party hosted a local meeting in Enfield on the way forward for 'Your Party'. The attendance illustrated the potential for a new workers' party and several young speakers in the discussion said this was their first political meeting. Four people asked to join the Socialist Party at the end of the meeting and

others gave their details.

Socialist Party Executive Committee member Isai Marijerla introduced the discussion and explained the potential for a mass party and how it can be democratically run involving young people in particular.

Khalid Sadur from Enfield Community Independents spoke of how fast their group had developed; initially as a response to Gaza but now putting a radical socialist alternative.

He explained that canvassing experience showed that Reform voters can be won over if presented with an alternative.

Paul Kershaw, Chair of Enfield Trades Council, proposed that the meeting agree to prepare a 'Peoples Budget' for Enfield before next year's election. This would set out what council budgets based on need in the community rather than ongoing austerity cuts would look like. Like Unite nationally, Enfield Trades Council has adopted a policy of opposition to all cuts, calling on councillors to campaign to protect their communities rather than implement yet more cuts.

There was open discussion with different viewpoints expressed and people left with an appetite for more.



Enfield PHOTO: IAN PATTISON

SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party
September issue includes...

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

Issue 1335

11-17 September 2025

formerly **Militant**

VICTORY TO THE BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS

WE NEED A NEW WORKERS' PARTY

Rally for the Brum bin workers

20 September, 9:30am assemble for 10 start.
Unite the Union offices, Birmingham B7 4EH

Unite the Union has called a national demo in support of the Birmingham bin strikers on Saturday 20 September. Let's make that the biggest demo possible of working-class solidarity.

Danny Taylor, Birmingham bin workers Unite rep, spoke at the National Shop Stewards Network rally at the TUC on 7 September

"Brutal attacks are being inflicted on our members in the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Shockingly, these attacks are coming from a Labour council.

Our fight began last August when Birmingham City Council (BCC) scrapped the Grade-3 safety critical role, a loss of up to £6-8,000 per person. And now they've gone further, trying to remove the HGV driver team-leader role through 'fire and rehire', again a loss of up to £8,000 a year.

Government changes to the Employment Rights Bill have handed 'bankrupt' councils the right to fire and rehire at will. If they get away with it in Birmingham, councils up and down the country will copy it.

Once again it's frontline workers being made to pay for failures at the top.

We know whose side Labour is on

We almost reached a deal but it was blocked by government commissioner Max Caller, who was on £1,200 a day, acting under Labour deputy prime minister Angela Rayner. Let's not forget, Angela Rayner came to Birmingham and didn't visit a single picket line - instead she went to congratulate the scab workforce on a job well done.

But Max Caller has gone. Sharon Graham is now in talks with the new commissioner and the government - that's happened because we stood strong.

The so-called options being given to members are a sham. They're forcing 'voluntary' redundancies, pushing workers into life-changing decisions without the full facts.

It's a stitch-up. BCC doesn't want us back. They've built a service propped up by agency labour; workers with no rights, no security; a workforce supplied by an agency whose earnings from BCC have doubled to £8 million.

What success?

The council boasts about its 'successful' collections. But they cost more money and are unsafe. Their own social media shows agency staff in shorts, T-shirts and trainers - no hi-vis, no PPE.

26,000 tonnes of waste were piled high on our streets in the summer. Recycling rates have collapsed to just 15%. There have been no recycling collections at all, and no garden collections, forcing £2 million to be paid in refunds to residents. Millions have been lost from trade waste contracts. And yet another council tax rise is looming for ordinary people. That is not 'success'.

We escalated to all-out strike in March and for six months we've held strong. In that time, the council has thrown everything at us, including court injunctions, police intimidation on the picket lines, and smears in the press.

But members have not been broken. We've just reballoted, with a 72% turnout and a 99.5% 'yes' vote to continue action.

That's not just a mandate, that's a roar of defiance. Support from the union, other unions and organisations like the NSSN - this is the solidarity that BCC fears."

The Socialist Party says:

• The Labour council and government want to crush this strike. But Angela Rayner's resignation is just the latest sign of a government in crisis. The whole union movement must now come to Unite's aid with support and solidarity to win this dispute

• Unite conference voted to open up a discussion about the union's relationship with Labour. Since then, hundreds of members have met to campaign for Unite to play a central role in building a new workers' party. Pass the motion found at the QR code in your Unite branch for a special policy and rules conference

