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YOUTH FIGHT FOR A FUTURE



PHOTOS: BHARATPUR, PAUL MATTSSON AND GAUCHE REVOLUTIONNAIRE

Fight for socialism

CALLUM JOYCE
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Poverty, war, climate catastrophe, and oppression – this is the future that capitalism offers millions of young people worldwide.

This system cannot guarantee even a basic standard of living or decent education to the majority of people. But young people and workers are beginning to organise and fight, demanding 'we want our futures back!'

The heroic 'Gen Z' movement of young people in Nepal this month has brought down a hated government in a matter of days, despite brutal police repression and the killing of protesters. Thousands of students are joining workers on the streets, as strikes shake France. Inspiring movements of thousands of youth in Serbia and Turkey have rocked long-standing governments.

And here in Britain, we are saying 'enough is enough'. Students at schools, colleges, and universities walked out to protest against Donald Trump's visit to the UK on Wednesday 17 September. Many will have been inspired by teachers' strikes during the strike wave.

This campaign, initiated by Socialist Students, shows workers

and young people in the US that we stand with them against the attacks of the ruthless pro-capitalist Trump regime.

But we're also protesting against our government here, which has rolled out the red carpet for the president's visit. Starmer's Labour doesn't speak for us.

This month, millions of students are returning for the new academic year. But they will be greeted with a continuing cost-of-living crisis, rising tuition fees, and an education system cut to the bone, increasingly facing financial catastrophe. We need to organise to fight for what we need – fully funded free education, with maintenance grants that we can actually live on – and demand that the parasitic super-rich pay for it.

Over 800,000 people have signed up to support the idea of a new party, founded by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana. It currently leads the polls among 18 to 24-year-olds.

This gives a glimpse of the potential for young people to organise, alongside workers – the most powerful force in the country, with 6.5 million in trade unions – into a mass democratic organisation to fight back against this hated Labour government and the ailing capitalist system that it defends.

More and more young people are drawing the conclusion that they need to join the fight for our futures – we say, fight to make it a socialist future.

● **Fight for fully funded free education, read about Socialist Students page 3**

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Keir Starmer's food bank Britain

JOE WOOLFALL
SOUTH LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Britain is facing a child poverty emergency. The Trussell Trust's latest 'Hunger in the UK' report notes that over 14 million people, including 3.8 million children, went hungry last year. One in six households missed meals, and food banks are now the 'new normal'.

This scandal is not just confined to those unable to find work from an increasingly limited job market. In fact, three in ten food bank users are in working households. Bus drivers, carers and other workers are being driven into hunger because bosses pay poverty wages while prices soar.

At the sharpest end of this crisis are families hit by the two-child benefit cap, a vicious policy that rips thousands of pounds a year from many working-class households. Scrapping it would immediately lift 470,000 children out of poverty. Yet Keir Starmer's Labour has kept this Tory attack in place.

Starmer, in his 2025 manifesto, promised to end the "moral scar" of food banks. Instead, he has prepared and is preparing more austerity policies in the upcoming budget that will punish working-class people. Necessary steps to end child poverty, such as scrapping the two-child cap, using the wealth of the super-rich to fund it and other benefits and public services, are off the table.

Low pay no way!

The other scandal that forces people to use food banks is poverty pay. Socialist Party members fight for

3.8 million

children went hungry last year

the minimum wage to be raised to at least £15 an hour, with no exceptions as a step towards a real living wage that rises with the cost of living. With Universal Credit payments, the government is subsidising companies paying workers wages that aren't enough to live on. The Labour government hasn't even carried out manifesto pledges to stop bosses paying young workers less than others for the same jobs.

The money is there to tackle poverty and inequality. Look at the sheer amount of wealth accrued by billionaires in Britain since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the record profits being recorded by the super-rich while millions are food insecure and face a housing crisis. But the wealth and resources are in the wrong hands. Inherent to the capitalist system is vast riches for a tiny few and poverty for the rest of us. By running the economy ourselves, with the working class democratically making the decisions about what we want and need, we could eliminate poverty and the need for food banks.

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Gaza faces new Israeli offensive

Build a socialist alternative to capitalism and war

MARK BEST
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

"Gaza is burning", the Israeli military is striking targets with an "iron fist", says the Israeli defence minister. At the time of writing, the Israeli state has launched a ground offensive deep into Gaza City. One of the few places left where people had not yet been forced to evacuate at gunpoint, it has still been bombarded over the last nearly two years by the Israeli military.

Over the summer, desperate to continue the war, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his next bloody phase - the forced displacement of the population of Gaza City into camps in the south of the Gaza Strip.

This will have horrific consequences: the widespread famine

will be made worse, more children and babies will die from preventable disease, and increased numbers of people will face the threat of Israeli snipers to queue for what aid is available. How many more thousands of people will die? How many more people will lose their homes? And how many more billions will be made by arms companies supplying machines of death as a result?

How to fight back

People all across the world will be seeing these scenes on their TV screens, alongside the escalations of reprisals in the West Bank and the Israeli state bombing the Qatari city of Doha, and feel horror and anger at the system which enables this to happen.

In Britain, Keir Starmer has rolled out the red carpet for the warmonger-in-chief Donald Trump. His government arrests pro-Palestinian

protesters while maintaining arms export licences to the Israeli military. While supposedly making plans to 'recognise' a Palestinian state, Starmer has spent days cosying up to Trump, bending over backwards to keep him onside for the interests of British bosses.

The capitalist system, with its war, destruction and poverty, is sick to the core. People across the country will have protested against Trump and all he represents. But we need a real alternative - a party that represents the interests of the majority of us who potentially hold the real power in society, the working class. With a socialist programme that can unite workers to take power out of the hands of a tiny rich elite and democratically run society for us not them, a new workers' party would be a powerful step forward in the fight to end war and capitalism across the world.



Cost of former prime ministers nearly ten million pounds

ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Ex-prime ministers have claimed nearly ten million pounds of public money to run their private offices, information released this week has shown. Former prime ministers are entitled to claim up to £115,000 a year for life to assist in remaining in public life (the Public Duties Cost Allowance or PDCA), but with the chaotic revolving door of prime ministers we witnessed over the last five years, the bill that the public are left with is huge, with Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and John Major alone having claimed over a million pounds each in the last decade. How can such payments possibly be justified?

There are concerns about ex-prime ministers using their position while in power to make contacts that benefit themselves, rather than the public. Liz Truss, for example, as of 2024 figures, claimed £124,642 - a staggering £2,500 for each of her disastrous 49 days in office. She has been seen most publicly on trying to flog her book on tours of America.

David Cameron infamously became a lobbyist for financier Lex Greensill, reputedly making around £3.3 million thanks to his



government links and access to the houses of parliament.

Recently leaked documents from Boris Johnson's office published in the Guardian have raised questions about his use of public funds to staff his office. Johnson gives speeches around the world for which he is paid millions. The files also expose the links he still retains with Prince Mohammed bin Salman - who the CIA says ordered the appalling murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi - and other Middle Eastern billionaires. Links that he made while in office, as the letters published in the Guardian appear to show, have been used to further Johnson's business interests.

Johnson, of course, suggests that there has been no impropriety in his

use of the allowance, but with his history of scandals in office and the number of jobs he has lost through lying, we have to wonder if he even understands the word 'ethics', even if it was written in Latin. What is certain is that Johnson lives on a completely different planet to working-class people. While we struggle to get by, he jets around the world paid money most of us could only dream of while rubbing shoulders with big business and state leaders.

These bloated, lifelong payments are disgraceful when successive governments have told us that there is no money to pay for necessary services for the working class. They prioritise handouts to millionaires over public services time and time again. Let's clear this rotten system out!

SOCIALIST STUDENTS SAYS: FUND OUR EDUCATION, TAKE THE WEALTH OFF THE 1%

Students at universities this year are paying more tuition fees, after Keir Starmer's Labour government increased them for the first time in nearly a decade. Left up to Labour, our fees will rise to over £10,000 by 2029.

And what do students get? Not only are we set to graduate with even more student debt, our maintenance loans don't even cover the cost of housing, let alone other essentials. Even those receiving the maximum maintenance loan this year would need to take 20 hours of paid work per week just to reach a basic standard of living.

Meanwhile, cuts to our education keep coming. Over half of universities are set to record 'deficit budgets' this year, the government's own Office for Students has predicted. Earlier in the year, the University and College Union (UCU) predicted that uni bosses would try and cut over 10,000 jobs, destroying thousands of courses and even entire departments in dozens of universities.

Some vice chancellors are even looking at 'mergers' with other universities. But why should they get to decide this over the heads of thousands of students and staff? Their record is one of running our universities into the ground, in collaboration with successive Tory and Labour governments. We can't trust any of them with our education, because they all accept a capitalist system that puts the profits of the super-rich before the needs of the vast majority – including the right to a decent education.

Workers have fought back

By taking strike action last year, university workers were able to halt planned cuts in several universities. In Scotland and Wales, staff also won millions of pounds in extra government funding through their strikes.

Imagine how much more funding could be forced from the government if there was strike action on all campuses across the country! That's why Socialist Students supports university workers taking strike action, including supporting a vote to strike in the national strike ballot that will open later this term.



Socialist Students members will be on the picket line supporting staff in our shared struggle for funding, not fees and cuts. We campaign for student unions to be democratic, fighting organisations that give us a voice – including committing to building student solidarity whenever staff take strike action for better pay, conditions and funding.

We won't accept their crisis

The university sector is in a deep funding crisis. But the only 'solution' offered by this pro-big business Labour government is to raise fees and encourage even more cuts, pushing the burden even further onto staff and students.

Why should we pay the price, at a time when the rich have never been richer? The FTSE 100 biggest corporations in Britain have been paying out around £85 billion annually to their shareholders. Students and staff need to unite in a movement that could put that wealth in our hands in order to fully fund education. That would include making education free for all, by abolishing tuition fees and providing maintenance grants that actually cover students' living costs.

If education was fully funded, university managements would not be

incentivised to invest our tuition fees in arms manufacturers and other shady companies in order to boost income. They would have no justifications for making cuts. Student housing could be massively expanded and improved, with rent controls introduced to ensure no student is paying the majority of their income on a place to live.

Socialist Students initiated the Funding Not Fees campaign last year, as a means to get students organised alongside staff in a movement for fully funded, free education. As well as holding protests on dozens of campuses, a key part of the campaign has been lobbying MPs – fighting for our movement to have a political voice.

That fight could be massively boosted this year. Two MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, have said they will build a new party. Over 800,000 have signed up so far, including thousands and thousands of students.

When Corbyn was leader of the Labour Party, his anti-austerity, anti-war policies enthused hundreds of thousands of young people. A major reason for that was his offer of free education in the 2017 and 2019 general elections.

Now students have the chance for there to be a mass party that will fight fees and cuts, and fund education by making the super-rich pay. At a recent 'Your Party' meeting in Blackburn, Corbyn called for an end

to tuition fees and a return of maintenance grants.

Socialist Students will be joining the new party and doing all we can for it to win the things students and working-class people need to live a decent life. That includes continuing to build the movement for free education on our campuses this year.

If you want to campaign, protest, and build a mass political voice for free education, then join us in building the Funding Not Fees campaign this year.

Join Socialist Students to fight for:

- No fee rises! Scrap tuition fees and cancel student debt
- Living grants, not loans, which rise with the cost of living
- Stop all cuts and closures on campus
- Rent controls in student accommodation
- End low pay and casualisation of staff
- Divestment from arms and big business – no place for profiteers from war and exploitation on our campus
- A political voice for students that fights to take the wealth off the 1% and for socialism



Trump walkout

- To read reports from the day check out the front page of www.socialistparty.org.uk

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- What is socialism and how can we fight for it?
- And many more!
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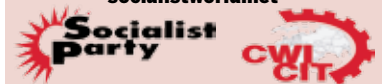
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Josh Asker

socialistparty.org.uk

Mark Best

Circulation manager

Ali Mansfield

Editorial

staff

Scott Jones

Ian Pattison

Paula Mitchell

Mark Best

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

Karl Marx

How to combat the far right – ‘a skip full of lessons to be learned’

A report from a Unite and Socialist Party member who took part in the Stand Up to Racism counter-protest in London on 13 September.

The demonstration called by the far right last Saturday and the counter-demonstration called by Stand Up to Racism provide a skip full of lessons which must be learnt immediately if we are to seriously counter the far right.

It had been obvious for some weeks that the far right-led demonstration would be large and that it would not just be attended by the normal spattering of football hooligans, committed members of fascist organisations, and those simply looking for a fight. In the weeks leading up to the demonstration, the signs were there – even some on trade union picket lines were talking about attending the far-right side on the day. This may be unpalatable, but it is a reality that needs to be addressed. In addition, the make-up of demonstrators is significant. There were families, some perhaps on their first demonstration ever. This is not to overplay or promote the far-right demonstration. Instead, it shows the level of the task facing those opposed to the far right and what needs to be done. Over 100,000 attended the far-right demo. The counter-demo was, it seemed to me, around 5,000.

It was clear beforehand that the numbers on the counter-demonstration were going to be smaller. This meant a serious assessment of the tactics on the day, including holding a rally at the starting point rather than marching and being surrounded by the far right. It also meant that the issue of stewarding was more important than ever.

Instead, there was a grossly mistaken reliance on the police. This became even more obvious as the day went on. Following a rally at the start, the march moved off with the stewarding concentrated at the head of the march. This allowed supporters of the far right to follow the rear. Once we reached Whitehall, it was clear that the weak organisation of stewarding was a problem. Individual and small groups of supporters of the far right were already hanging about in the rally area, which backed onto the far-right rally, with a ‘sterile zone’ in between.

Not far into the beginning of the rally, far-right supporters could be seen on one of the roads leading into Whitehall. Once pushed back, they then came back in larger numbers down another road facing onto Whitehall. By the end of the rally, they had also taken the top of Whitehall (Trafalgar Square). This then meant that all exits were closed. Therefore, by this time, the relatively



Socialist Party members at the counter-protest. PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

small counter-protest compared to the large far-right numbers, was at the mercy of the far right with only the police for protection.

This stalemate remained for some hours until the police opened up a gap allowing the counter-protest to march to Green Park. This was the biggest failure in stewarding. The walk past the far right opened up the possibility of physical attacks with the police only holding one side. At several points, riot units ran past to block off threats from side streets. Once at Green Park, the counter-protest dispersed.

Lessons

There are several lessons. This type of demonstration must be properly and responsibly stewarded. The comparison with demonstrations in Welling, South London in the 1990s when the Socialist Party led the campaign against the British National Party (BNP) is stark. Then, our members physically defended those demonstrations against attack. Put quite simply, if people do not feel safe, they will not attend demonstrations to counter the far right. It is ridiculous that so much faith was placed in the police. The rally point and exits should have been secured by stewards.

The attendance was low for a number of reasons. The Unite speaker and Socialist Party member Onay

Kasab made the point at the rally that fighting racism means building council homes with secure tenancies, rebuilding the NHS and local government services. It means jobs with decent pay. These should have been the key demands for the demonstration. This was not the case.

That is not to ignore the crucial message regarding migrants and asylum seekers. We fight and defend these rights as strongly as ever. But the demands for a demonstration against racism must be led by a slogan such as ‘Jobs and homes not racism’, if we are to reach out to those misled by racist ideas. Our inspiration must be those like Freddie Hampton, US Black Panther, who reached out to some of the most reactionary elements of the white working class with the message that our fight is a joint one against the same enemy.

There are already those within Unite opposed to the leadership of Sharon Graham who are asking ‘Where was Unite?’ This is a cynical weaponising of the issue. Unite had a speaker at the event and the recent TUC fringe, as well as providing much of the finance. Regions and branches were therefore free to build for the counter-demonstration. However, we now need a discussion about how the whole trade union movement – including Unite – can start to play the central role in the

anti-racist movement, instead of simply funding Stand Up to Racism but not taking responsibility for, or having any say in democratic decisions on, how the movement is built.

Crucially, if trade unions are to have a role building for future demonstrations, trade union demands must also be at the heart of the campaign. The Coca-Cola advertising style of anti-racism does not work – it must be a class-based message based on the need to cut across racist division by providing real alternatives, based on jobs, decent pay, rights at work and homes for all.

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SAY NO TO RACIST DIVISION TRADE UNIONS MUST ACT!



The ‘Unite the Kingdom’ march in London on 13 September sounds a warning that the workers’ movement must urgently respond to. Police estimate that 110,000 took to the streets in the largest-ever demonstration called by far-right racist Tommy Robinson. Those that attended, who went far beyond the still small numbers in the organised far right, heard a succession of speeches whipping up racism and division, including from the world’s richest man, Elon Musk. Anyone who the far right were demotivating enough to be in central London that day – whether migrant, Black, Asian, trans, Muslim or others – will have felt intimidated. While the majority of marchers were peaceful, the fascist thugs on it were given confidence by the size of the march. The much smaller Stand Up to Racism counter-demo was surrounded by the far right and had to rely on the police for protection (see report opposite).

This alarming picture does not, however, represent the underlying balance of forces in society. While this demo was bigger than previous far-right marches, there have been much greater numbers on repeated protests over Gaza. And opposition to racism is widespread. For example, only 8% today agree that being white is important to being ‘British’. Polling in January this year shows that only 4% of people have a ‘very favourable’ view of Tommy Robinson, while 52% see him ‘very unfavourably’. That, however, must be shown in action, and the trade unions need to take the lead.

Working-class strength

The strength of the six million-plus trade union movement stems from workers’ ability to organise collective action to fight for their common interests. In 2022-23, when we saw the biggest strike wave since the 1980s, workers from all backgrounds struck together. Increased division and racism does not only effect those that experience racism, it weakens the whole working class. It is essential that the trade unions take the lead in fighting against it.

For a long period, trade union leaders have agreed donations to Stand Up to Racism, and considered their anti-racist duty done. But Saturday’s events showed beyond doubt that this is not a way forward. The trade union movement itself needs to take responsibility for, and democratic control of, the fight against racism. In 2018, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) agreed to build a



PHOTO: YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

mass campaign for ‘jobs, homes and services, not racism’. It is overdue that those words are turned into action.

The fight against racist division cannot be separated from organising opposition to New Labour’s pro-capitalist government. Starmer is the most unpopular prime minister a year after a general election in history. He is hated because Labour has continued with Tory austerity, particularly attacking the poorest sections of the working class. More voters earning under £30,000 a year have abandoned Labour and said they will vote Reform than any other section of society. No surprise that those who have suffered from the continued two-child benefit cap, the cuts to the winter fuel allowance and to disability benefits are looking for a means to express their rage, and that some have picked up Farage and Reform as a means to do so.

In reality, Farage supports brutal austerity and attacks on the working class. Back in 2011, he actually organised a ‘pro-austerity’ demonstration. Just a few hundred people attended. Meanwhile three quarters of a million marched on the trade union demonstration against Tory/ Liberal Democrat austerity, followed by a one-day public sector general strike of two million workers. The trade union movement needs to do the same again. Alternatively, if trade union leaders continue to try

Nigel Farage speaking at a pro-cuts, anti-working class protest in 2011. PHOTOS: PAUL MATTSOON



to act as cover for the New Labour government, they will be putting out the red carpet for Reform, and leaving room for racism and division to grow further. The resolution agreed at this year’s TUC conference to call a national anti-austerity demonstration needs to be made a reality, by seriously mobilising for a national Saturday demonstration – before the 26 November Budget – under the slogan ‘no to Labour austerity, no to racist division’. This act alone would transform the situation. All trade unionists should call on their unions to demand the TUC takes this step, and to coordinate with others to ensure it happens if the TUC does not act.

At the same time, the need for the working class to have its own political party is urgently posed. The 800,000 who have answered Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana’s ‘your party’ call is a sign of the possibilities. This too is a potential force that could mobilise hundreds of thousands on the streets for the national demonstration that is needed. It could also provide an alternative to Reform at the ballot box. In next May’s local and Wales Senedd elections, voters are going to be looking for a means to express their rage at continued attacks on the working class. Reform is the main weapon many can see at the moment. But if Corbyn and Sultana’s call has led to a party – organised democratically and with a fighting socialist programme – it would be possible for it to win councils on a programme including mass council housebuilding, rent controls, refusal to implement cuts to local services.

Already 67% of Reform voters think Jeremy Corbyn is ‘for working people’. The launch of a party that was prepared to use their positions in councils to wage a real campaign against New Labour government austerity, instead of Reform’s racist posturing, would mark a huge step forward in uniting the working class in a common struggle against the capitalist elite.

TUC votes for demo against austerity: Now name the date!

ROB WILLIAMS

SOCIALIST PARTY WORKPLACE AND TRADE UNION ORGANISER

“Starmer, Starmer, it’s a fact - You’re a Tory tribute act!” This was the chant that met attendees at the annual Trades Union Congress (TUC), as union reps and activists, including a whole number of delegates, spilled out from the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) rally on Sunday 7 September and marched towards the conference centre.

Another chant - “No ifs, no buts, TUC fight Starmer’s cuts” spelled out the demand that the TUC should pass the motions from the TUC Disabled Workers and Trades Councils conferences. Those motions called for the TUC to “organise a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people.”

They were eventually reached in the last session of Congress, and were the most concrete expression of the strategy of struggle needed by the unions to face down Starmer and Reeves’s cuts agenda, and at the same time give workers a lead when the populist and far-right appear to be on the move.

Need to campaign for demo

Congress voted for the motions unanimously, but the top table issued a verbal statement that the TUC General Council would be “consulted” on the “most appropriate action” to call. Union reps and activists, especially those who attended the Disabled Workers and Trades Councils conferences, along with working-class people facing the brunt of Starmer’s attacks, will be expecting the TUC to call a national Saturday demonstration.

The demand was made from Sunday’s NSSN rally: The TUC should pass the motions, but then name the date - proposing Saturday 22 November, just before the Budget on 26 November. The bosses are lobbying Starmer’s Labour government in their interests, and the trade union movement must mobilise to put our demands forward: No to austerity, make the rich pay!

To name the date must now be fought for in every union national executive, union branch and trades council.

Division starting: fight or cover

The debates at Congress show why it will be necessary to launch a campaign to get the TUC and the unions call a demo.

This was the second Congress under the Starmer Labour government. The majority of union leaders have been happy to hitch up to Starmer’s wagon, but the reality of his first year in office has led to the beginning of a polarisation between those unions who have been in battle with Starmer



NSSN lobbying the 2025 TUC. MARY FINCH

and those covering up for him - still a majority at the TUC.

A whole number of union leaders barely mentioned the fact that we are currently under a Labour government! But given the anger of union members, even those union leaders were not confident to argue against the motions calling for a national demo. But there is a real danger that they, along with the TUC leadership, will look to kick it into the long grass.

Unions such as Unite, the Fire Brigades Union and the RMT transport union called out Starmer, Labour mayors and councils for their cuts and their failure to take on the rich. Unite Executive Council member Kathy Smith said: “Labour’s message to us is that workers will always pay the price, but the really wealthy are left untouched... It is a crisis when the profit margins of the corporations rocket by 30% when the rest of us are living with the effects of the cost-of-living crisis.”

In the debate about Labour’s Employment Rights Bill, some delegates praised the steps forward by Starmer rather than condemning the refusal to deliver for workers. Not one speaker raised his failure to deliver on his promise to scrap the undemocratic 50% strike ballot threshold, 14 months after his election win. The Prison Officers’ Association (POA) motion demanding the return of their right to strike, refused by Starmer, was passed unanimously.

But POA members will now want real solidarity from the rest of the unions on this.

The debates over the funding crisis in councils best expressed the contrasting approaches of the main unions. Incredibly, the motions from Union and Unite on the same subject were separated from each other by a day - presumably the TUC leaders didn’t want Unite general secretary Sharon Graham moving Unite’s motion just before the first Labour guest speaker (Solicitor General Elie Reeves, sister of chancellor Rachel Reeves) addressed Congress. Later in the week, a Unison delegate paid tribute to “Our Ange” - Angela Rayner, forced to resign as deputy prime minister just before Congress over her property tax issues.

Unite’s role

In contrast, in her speech Sharon Graham hammered Labour for their attacks, especially on the Birmingham bin workers. “A Labour council, backed by our Labour government using Thatcher’s anti-trade union laws to try and break picket lines. Spending millions on scab labour and injuncting those same picket lines.”

She also warned: “In July of this year, the government amended their own legislation laid down in the Employment Rights Bill so that councils in debt under S114 notices will be able to legally fire and rehire their workers - our members. That same

government amendment will also allow any public sector worker to be fired and rehired if the public sector organisation can show financial difficulty...”

“Some in Labour have asked why am I attacking a Labour council? I say to them, because they are attacking workers... And any fines we get, from supposed broken injunctions on picket lines - every single penny of it will come out of our Labour affiliation.” With reports of a recent massive fine for ‘contempt of court’, this is another crucial moment for Unite and its link with Labour.

The draconian strike-breaking measures of Birmingham Labour council, backed by Starmer, have pushed Unite into the clash with Labour. Its policy conference in July passed a motion, initiated by Socialist Party members and close allies, that has opened up a discussion in the union, one of the biggest affiliates, about its relationship with Labour.

With Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana launching ‘Your Party’, it is essential that Unite - and all unions - are at the fore of the fight to build a new workers’ party to give a beacon of hope to working-class people.

Trades unions should act now for workers’ party

In a press interview with the Guardian on the eve of Congress, Sharon Graham said: “They have one year to get this right because Nigel Farage is on their tail.”

But the union leaders need to act now. In 2017, Jeremy Corbyn gave a glimpse of what is possible, when as Labour leader his anti-austerity general election manifesto won up to a million voters from UKIP. Imagine what could be achieved by a new mass workers’ party, with the authority of the unions, on a fighting socialist programme on polices such as nationalisation, free education, a revitalised NHS and no-cuts needs-based council budgets.

A BFAWU bakers’ union motion included a demand that the TUC “work with the Socialist Campaign Group, Independent Alliance and suspended Labour MPs” - a welcome step in opening up the debate on a political alternative for workers. But this demand was squeezed out in the compositing process (in which motions on similar issues are merged into one), avoiding an awkward decision for some unions. But this kind of bureaucratic manoeuvring by union leaders won’t be able to prevent this essential debate taking place in the workers’ movement.

This second TUC under Starmer is in a period of increased workers’ struggle, as disputes such as the Birmingham bin strike and the RMT rolling strike action on London Underground show. Just a few days before the TUC, workers at tech giant TikTok launched a struggle against redundancies and for union rights, put under the spotlight by the motion moved by Socialist Party member

Deji Olayinka on behalf of the Communication Workers Union and its 5,500-strong United Tech and Allied Workers (UTAW) branch. A new generation of fighters is coming into class conflict.

It is essential that socialist militants put forward the industrial and political programme and approach needed to strengthen the fighting elements in the unions and pose the way forward in this stormy period.

Urgent model motion from the National Shop Stewards Network

This union NEC/branch/union branch committee/trades council welcomes the unanimous vote at this year’s TUC Congress for the motions from the TUC Disabled Workers Conference and Trades Councils Conference.

We fully support the demand in the motions: “For the TUC to organise a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity, as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people”.

We welcome that this is now official TUC policy and call on our union NEC to demand that the TUC name the date for such a demonstration.

We believe that Saturday 22 November - just before the Budget on 26 November - would be an ideal day for this demonstration, to demand no to austerity, make the rich pay!

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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 PCS members. The full reports of this and the other meetings, and the full motion text, can be read here: ‘Trade unionists discuss how their unions can fight for political representation’ at socialistparty.org.uk



Around 50 members, reps and activists attended a meeting for Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union members interested in Your Party on Tuesday 9 September.

Former union Vice President Dave Semple chaired the meeting, which was addressed by current National Executive Committee (NEC) member Fiona Brittle, as well as receiving a specially recorded message from Jeremy Corbyn.

Key themes included the need for a workers’ party, with a basis in the trade unions, and the need for an active anti-austerity, pro-worker, socialist political strategy on the part of PCS. The union’s political fund, which under the law must be renewed by membership ballot every ten years, goes to ballot in October this year, with little done by the current union leadership to explain its importance to members.

PCS policy, agreed by the union’s delegate conference, is that the union can stand and support candidates who back the union’s campaigning programme. PCS has never stood a candidate, occasionally supporting Labour candidates, including some who have voted for cuts that harmed our members.

Attendees also raised the need for a more vigorous anti-war, anti-racist strategy on the basis of current union policy: Pay, jobs and homes, not racism.

The question of whether to call for an electoral pact with the Greens was raised. One person explained how he’d both signed up to ‘Your Party’ and was a member of the Greens who’d voted for Polanski. Others pointed out that wherever Greens have been in government, they have voted for cuts. It was also pointed out that Polanski was elected with just over 20,000 votes, which was dwarfed by the potential support for Your Party.

The earnest view was for a democratic party that would not abandon workers, the way Labour has. How to achieve that is why the discussion on the structure of a new party is also important.

Some support for ‘One Member One Vote’ was voiced. Fiona and other Socialist Party members in attendance put forward the need for a federal structure. Dave Warren from Swansea pointed out how, in the union, branches elect delegates to represent them at the next level of the union. The trade union movement had to fight for the same approach in a new workers’ party.

The meeting concluded with agreement to produce materials for the forthcoming PCS political fund ballot, and to meet again after the next PCS NEC meeting, to hear a report on a motion to the NEC on political strategy that has been proposed by Fiona Brittle and Marion Lloyd. In the meantime, it was agreed to use the NEC motion as a model for branches to put to the NEC urging it to act.

Extracts from the motion to the NEC, to be used as a model in PCS branches

This NEC notes:

1) The 2012 78.9% decision, by a membership ballot of our union, to “stand or support candidates in national elections that would help to defend members’ jobs, pay, pensions and public services”

This NEC agrees to:

1) Report back to the next NEC how every member of our parliamentary group voted on the disability benefit cuts, and on whether they supported the Early Day Motions over the dismissal of our reps at Benton Park View, with a view to reconstituting our parliamentary group based on those MPs who support PCS policies

2) Invite Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana to meet with the NEC to discuss how a new workers’ party could be founded that included PCS demands in its programme and with democratic structures - with representation for supporting trade union organisations

3) To contact the Unite EC, the UCU NEC, and the executives of other relevant trade unions, to propose a joint meeting to discuss the issue



Civil servants in PCS are still having to strike despite the Labour government - here at the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government, September 2025. ROB WILLIAMS

Wales trade union conference on political representation

Trades councils across Wales have agreed to call a conference to discuss the crisis in political representation for the trade union movement.

Driven by issues such as the Labour government’s attacks on disability benefits and response to the massacres in Gaza, trade unionists in Wales say they are also angry at the “anti-union behaviour of some Labour-run councils” - especially in Birmingham against the bin workers - and the “unacceptable response to our concerns from local Labour MPs”.

There is concern that the main beneficiary of this alienation from the Labour Party is Reform, “hiding its anti-trade union, right-wing economic agenda”.

Trade union branches, regional

and national bodies are invited to endorse this event to open up a discussion. As a number of unions are affiliated to the Labour Party, representatives of the Labour Party and Labour members of the Welsh Senedd have been invited, but trade unionists are encouraged to express their views, including recommending support for other parties if they wish.

The trades council organisers say: “We think we need a full and free discussion on the way forward for our movement. We do not believe we can hide away from political involvement but need to discuss how we can best engage with the political process to advance the struggle against austerity and pro-big business policies.”

Wales trade union conference on the crisis of political representation

Saturday 18 October 11am-3pm
Holiday Inn, Castle Street, Cardiff CF10 1XD

Endorsed by:

Cardiff Trades Union Council, Swansea Trades Union Council, Newport Trades Union Council, BFAWU, Cardiff Council Unite branch, Cardiff Rail RMT branch, GMB Wales Ambulance Service branch, Cardiff General Unite branch Unite community Cardiff and Area, PCS ARMS branch, Disabled People Against Cuts Cymru

CAPITALIST NET-ZERO 'DOOMED' - FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

JAMES COLLETT

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Tony Blair made an unwelcome return to the headlines this Spring when his thinktank, the Tony Blair Institute (TBI), slammed net-zero policies aimed at ending fossil fuel emissions to stop the climate crisis. "Any strategy based on either 'phasing out' fossil fuels in the short term or limiting consumption is a strategy doomed to fail", his foreword to the White Paper said.

The report and Blair's introduction are, inadvertently, an admission of the profit-driven capitalist system's inability to take meaningful action to prevent catastrophic climate change.

The paper concedes that, in the last 15 years, "production of fossil fuels and demand for them has risen, not fallen, and is set to rise further", that COP UN climate summits "will not deliver change at the speed required", and that none of the efforts of capitalist nations to cooperate on climate change have been effective.

The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, founded in 2016 by Blair and named with characteristic modesty after himself, claims to be a "new policy platform" focused on "re-energising the centre ground, African governance and Middle East policy, and fighting religious extremism", as well as combating "frightening authoritarian populism".

The word 'hypocrisy' is inadequate: life for the working-class and poor in Africa and the Middle East has been turned into a nightmare by the imperialist policies of the capitalist class, which Blair represents, and the wars started or supported by him and his ilk, while religious extremism builds its base on the misery caused by those wars and policies.

As for the "centre ground" of politics, it has been irreparably discredited by the anti-working-class war-mongering policies typified by Blair. The "frightening authoritarian populism" to which Blair refers trades on exploiting the anger of working-class people who have been consistently betrayed by Labour and other capitalist politicians. If Blair really does find authoritarianism "frightening", it can only be regarded as curious that his consultancy firm accepted \$13 million between 2011-2016 for advising Nursultan Nazarbayev, at the time president of oil-rich Kazakhstan, famous for killing protesters and routinely using torture. The TBI itself has enjoyed funding from the

reactionary government of oil-rich Saudi Arabia. Hypocrisy saturates the pages of the TBI's White Paper on Net Zero.

It asserts that more greenhouse gases are being emitted by China, India, and the neocolonial world, and congratulates Western countries for reducing emissions. It celebrates the 2006 Stern Review (commissioned by Blair when he was Prime Minister), which argued that "the economic costs of inaction would be significantly higher than the cost of taking early and decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions". The TBI implies that the Stern Review contributed to the EU and UK "decarbonising" during this time, which Blair calls the "Optimism Era".

This "Optimism Era" was in fact the tail-end of the era of increasing globalisation, in which western capitalism moved industrial production to low-wage economies. Therefore, while emissions fell in the advanced capitalist countries, they were enormously increased in China, India and the neocolonial world to the benefit of the Western capitalist classes. At the same time, governments engaged in the charade of 'emissions trading', whereby richer nations sell 'carbon credits' to poorer ones. If the 'embodied emissions', i.e. the greenhouse gases 'exported' mainly to China by western deindustrialisation, are added to the western powers' figures, there has been only a small cut in greenhouse gases by Europe and the USA.

The TBI paper goes on to complain that the "Optimism Era" was rudely interrupted by "geopolitical uncertainties (including the Brexit vote in 2016 and the US-China trade war) and stagnant economic momentum" - and blames these factors for the lack of international cooperation on climate change. The TBI deliberately ignores to the inescapable trends of capitalism: Brexit and the US-China trade war are not aberrations; neither is the economic crisis or any of the other factors which prevent co-operation between capitalist nations. The multiple crises pushing the world into deeper turmoil and escalating national tensions are symptoms of capitalism's long-term decline.

Capitalism

The capitalist class has abandoned its historic role of investing profits to advance productivity, science and technique. Now entirely parasitic, the capitalists prefer to gamble on the financial markets and privatise public services, which they then run into the ground. Their banking crises and other failures are continually bailed out by the state while productivity stagnates, wages are driven down, new ways to scam the working class are concocted, and capitalism becomes



PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

more predatory, more wasteful and more destructive.

With capitalism in crisis, national tensions are increasing as each nation ruthlessly pursues the interests of its own capitalist class. More than any other question, global climate change demands a response based on international cooperation. Governments everywhere are moving instead to increasing nationalism, protectionism, war and military spending (the arms industry is another major contributor to climate change).

The TBI also closes its eyes to capitalism's inherent short-sightedness. There is a very obvious reason for the failure to reduce fossil fuel usage: the profit motive. Capitalism means production for profit: the capitalist class is motivated to produce commodities solely in order to make profit, which it does through the exploitation of both the working class and natural resources.

Some companies embellish their public image with 'greenwashing', but the bottom line is always the same: they want to make more profit in this quarter than they did in the last, pay big dividends to their shareholders, big bonuses to their executives, and conquer more market share. Capitalism is, by definition, an unplanned system in which a tiny minority (the capitalist class) prioritise their own short-term goals and live extravagantly at the expense of the majority (the working class) to the inevitable detriment of the environment. This in itself makes a planned transition to a green economy impossible on a capitalist basis.

Green alternatives to steel, cement and aviation fuel are available but, the TBI laments, too expensive to be profitable. In other words, production for profit is an established impediment to the utilisation of technology which could vastly reduce emissions.

Carbon capture, meanwhile, is promoted as 'central' to tackling climate change. This is disingenuous at best. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) involves capturing CO₂ emissions before they enter the atmosphere, but in 2024 this removed a tiny fraction of the 38 billion tonnes of CO₂ that were emitted through human activity. CCS is fraught with dangers, including the question of safely storing CO₂ once it's been captured. Incredibly, much of the CO₂ captured through CCS is used by oil companies which pump it into depleted oilfields to extract residual reserves of oil! Clearly we can't trust the capitalists with this technology, and, predictably, its implementation is limited by cost. Bolting carbon capture equipment onto industrial smokestacks adds roughly 25% onto the operational costs of the business.

Research into these technologies is necessary, but must be carried out under the democratic control of the working class - even then, it is no substitute for the transition to a green economy.

The "resistance of the fossil fuel industry" to decarbonisation is rather casually mentioned by the TBI, but it strikes at the heart of the matter: fossil fuel companies will not voluntarily give up profits. The same is true for the mining industry, agribusiness, etc. - and for those companies which purport to manufacture 'environmentally friendly' goods: companies that make electric vehicles, for example, don't care if the materials they use in production are mined in an environmentally devastating way, as long as they can advertise their vehicles as 'green'.

Greenwashing and the cynical exploitation of Net Zero by companies and governments fuel the idea that Net Zero is inherently anti-worker. Carbon taxes, including Ultra Low Emission Zones, hit the working class the hardest. The poorer you

are, the more you spend proportionately on travel and energy bills, and it's workers who suffer when, for example, steel plants are shut down on the deceitful pretext of "reducing emissions".

The resentment this inevitably produces is jumped on by right-wing populists like Reform UK MP Richard Tice, who boasts that Reform is the only party that wants to scrap "net stupid zero". Tice is a millionaire. Reform is backed by millionaires and billionaires, members of the capitalist class who see that the traditional capitalist parties are failing and hope Reform will cut regulations and allow them to make more profits.

Reform's interests lie with the capitalists, not workers: they aren't interested in cutting our bills or saving jobs. In reality, it's capitalism that's inherently anti-worker: it always makes the working class pay. This is true of any capitalist party, including Reform.

Moreover, it's the working class and poor who suffer most from the effects of climate change. Droughts, floods and heatwaves wreck the lives, not of the rich, but of the working class - and no longer only in the neocolonial world. After 200 were killed by flooding in Valencia last year, the King and Queen of Spain toured the area and had mud thrown at them, amid shouts of "murderers". The capitalist class is responsible for the climate emergency, and is responsible for placing the burden of it onto workers. It turned out that the Valencia Emergencies Unit had been shut down in 2023 as a 'superfluous expense', worsening the loss of life. Reform's ambition to take a 'DOGE-style' approach to local government could easily have similar effects in Britain, as Trump's cuts have in Texas recently.

Trade unions

A genuine alternative must be put forward by the trade unions. While being the only union prepared to fight the closure of the blast furnaces, Unite mistakenly failed to raise the demand for nationalisation of Tata Steel. Nationalisation is key to any green transition that protects jobs: you can't control what you don't own. The Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group has produced a report which demonstrates in detail how a million green jobs could be created. This is the basis on which trade unions should campaign. Trade unionists, socialists and climate activists must play a key role in the building of a new mass workers' party which rejects the limits dictated by capitalism, fighting for a socialist, internationalist programme.

The major corporations and banks must be taken into public ownership, under democratic working-class control and management, as part of a socialist plan of production. Socialism means the transformation of society from a system based on production for profit to one based on production

for need. It means taking power out of the hands of the billionaires and running society ourselves - in our own interests, which also means in the interests of the environment.

Instead of profit-hungry monopolies deciding how much we should pay for electricity, the working class should decide collectively, through elected committees of workers and consumers. Instead of subsidising polluting water companies that charge extortionate bills and fail to maintain infrastructure, we should nationalise those companies and provide clean water as a public service.

Tremendous wealth is produced by the working class but is currently stolen from us by the bosses in the form of profit. The scale of this wealth is attested to by the colossal fortunes of the super-rich. That wealth could be used to fund not only the decent jobs, housing, healthcare and education we need, but also massive investment in renewable energy, free public transport and a huge expansion of transport networks. Without the millstone of the capitalist class around our necks, we could divert scientific research away from arms manufacture and towards socially useful innovation. A planned economy would allow us, for the first time, to use the full force of scientific and technological development to nurture rather than exploit the natural world - and there is no limit to the heights which human inventiveness may reach once the majority of the world's population is freed from the scourge of poverty. There is also no limit to the level of international cooperation possible once the barrier of capitalist competition is eliminated.

The capitalists like to characterise socialism as 'utopian', but it's the notion that capitalism can save the environment which is utopian. The capitalist class stands before us as the main obstacle to overcoming the fundamental challenges facing humanity, including climate change. "The choice is clear," Blair tells us, "innovate and cooperate or face a future of escalating climate chaos." As the level of innovation and cooperation needed is totally unrealisable on a capitalist basis, Blair's warning, though far from intentional, confirms the prognosis made over a hundred years ago by Rosa Luxemburg: the future, she wrote, is a choice between "either socialism or barbarism".



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Starmer's government crisis resumes

Build the socialist opposition

JOSH ASKER
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Only French president Emmanuel Macron is more unpopular than Keir Starmer, out of the leaders of the G7 group of rich capitalist nations. Starmer has a net approval rating of minus 44%. Both are less popular than the Japanese prime minister forced to resign last week, after less than a year in post.

Strikes and protests erupted in France on 10 September, set to escalate with all unions having called action for 18 September. Workers have been joined by youth angry about yet more austerity. France is on its third prime minister this year, Macron's party unable to put together a collection of politicians to vote through the latest budget (see pages 12-13).

Britain's capitalists will be gnawing their nails with concern, watching events unfold across the Channel, because they are looking at their future. In both nations, the capitalist class faces a crisis whereby its traditional parties have seen their support disintegrate on the basis of governing in the bosses' interests, carrying out brutal austerity.

For two years, trade union leaders have failed to organise a mass expression of workers' anger at Macron's austerity in France. Now that anger has exploded onto the surface, as it will inevitably in Britain. Socialists have a vital role acting as a lever to organise pressure on the leadership of the trade unions to act (see page 6).

Since the return of politicians to Westminster, Starmer's government has resumed its crisis. Angela Rayner's tax affairs and Peter Mandelson's mixing with Jeffrey Epstein will only confirm in the minds of workers that this is a government like those before it – riven by cronyism, acting in the interests of the bosses. Starmer's lavish dining with Trump and the king hammers it home.

For huge sections of the working class, any illusion that Starmer's Labour was going to bring reprieve from brutal austerity is dead. As the Socialist Party has pointed out, it came into office elected by a lower share of the electorate than any government in over 100 years. It has got way less popular since, of which Labour politicians are acutely aware.

Austerity Budget looms

But Starmer's government stumbles on. Milestones include the planned 26 November Budget, in which the capitalists are insisting the working class is made to pay. A recent Financial Times editorial menaced: "Leaders may prefer to delay hard choices, but if they cannot muster the willpower to rein in spending, then markets will impose it for them – swiftly, decisively, and on terms no government would willingly choose".

Another milestone is the May 2026 elections, in which Starmer's government will face the electoral consequences of working-class anger against it.

It is those contending class pressures which will continue to drive further splits and divisions in Starmer's government and in the Labour Party. Starmer's cabinet reshuffle is him lining up loyal austerity lieutenant's for another brutal budget.

The deputy leadership election, triggered by Rayner's resignation as party deputy leader, will not be contested by candidates that can be described in any way of being on the left. The chosen candidate of the Labour left, Bell Riberio-Addy, got just 24 nominations, failing to meet the threshold of 80 – a threshold doubled in one of Starmer's first moves as leader, as part of a raft of changes to prevent a left challenge.

Nonetheless, the deputy leadership election will be a conduit for discontent within Labour's ranks, its ever-diminishing membership

but above all its MPs and councillors concerned for their comfortable positions. It will further bring to the surface all of the growing splits and divisions.

Lucy Powell is the candidate set to win support from those wanting to express discontent, against Starmer's cabinet member Bridget Phillipson. Powell however, is not an insurgent figure, she has served as a shadow cabinet member under Ed Miliband and Starmer, and was one of those who resigned from Jeremy Corbyn's shadow cabinet as part of the 2016 'chicken coup'.

There will be those, including trade union leaders, who will argue that the workers' movement's best interests are served by getting behind opposition candidates in the leadership of the Labour Party, firmly consolidated in the hands of the capitalist class.

In fact, the workers' movement's best interests are in the working class having its own independent political voice. To defy the demands of the capitalist 'markets' for yet more brutal austerity, it will in the course of struggle need to be won to a socialist programme including taking the vast wealth and resources out of the hands of the super-rich capitalist bosses, nationalised under democratic workers' control and management.

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' announcement has raised the sights of hundreds of thousands to the possibility of a new mass workers' party developing. The crisis of the capitalists' political representation is a huge advantage, but it has to be pressed home by the working class building its own new mass party, armed with a socialist programme.

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'Your Party' structure: How to build a workers' party

As we go to press, all those who have signed up to 'Your Party' have received an email entitled 'Be part of history', giving an outline of how the current leadership grouping are planning to found the new party in the coming months.

Transforming an 800,000-strong mailing list into a democratic socialist party is a difficult task, but the process outlined is not a way to achieve it. There appears to be no place for elected representatives of trade union bodies, socialist organisations or working-class community groups to be represented at a founding conference. Nor is it proposed that members of the new party at local level will be able to elect delegates via local branches. This would have allowed them to choose the delegates who best

represent their collective views but instead 'delegates' are proposed to be randomly chosen by lottery.

The Socialist Party will engage in the proposed debate on these issues, including at the regional assemblies, putting forward the steps needed for the development of a workers' party with a socialist programme, and for the federal structure that would best enable that at this stage.

We will step up our campaigning for a workers' party with a socialist movement, arguing for trade union organisations to put proposals to 'Your Party' on the steps needed for it to develop in that direction.

• Further material on 'Your Party' and the fight for a workers' party can be found at socialistparty.org.uk

'Your Party' meetings



PHOTO: LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Waltham Forest discusses 'the streets' and the ballot box

LINDA TAAFFE
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

The packed meeting was optimistic.

Socialist Party members spoke about the opportunity for the new party to fight the cuts by standing in May's local elections. We have already stood as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates, independent of the capitalist parties, over decades, on policies that Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana would agree with.

But that was criticised by members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who said it was not the time to go for elections. With Reform banging at the door, what a short-sighted comment! Are we to stand aside and let them in to run our council, as they do now in ten other councils?

Or will these people recommend we vote for the Greens, who are not putting up any real fights against cuts anywhere they are in control, despite their radical-sounding phraseology.

Another said they didn't want Labour Party Mark 2. We wouldn't want a Labour Party as it has operated under Tony Blair and Keir Starmer.

But, at its foundation, the Labour Party reflected the policies of the working class and trade unions. In 1918, under the wave of support for the Russian Revolution, Labour adopted the famous Clause 4, calling for mass public ownership. Workers today would welcome a clause like this in the Your Party constitution.

Times have changed. But there are many things we would want to emulate, like the mass involvement



PHOTO: PAUL MATTHESSON & UK PARLIAMENT/CC

of trade unions. We don't just visit picket lines in solidarity. We want union branches to become political, and campaign to affiliate as a body – not just as individuals – to Your Party.

In order to carry out policies to drastically improve our living standards, we need to be in power. The first line of power is the local council.

Liverpool lessons

In the 1980s, when the Liverpool 47 Labour councillors actually took the lead in the campaign against the massive cuts to an impoverished city by Margaret Thatcher's Tory government, they showed us how to organise a whole city in support of its council.

They consulted regularly with the local District Labour Party and trade union delegates from across the city, sometimes up to 600 representatives. This organisation also called street demonstrations of 50,000, and even a citywide general strike to support the council building 5,000 homes and taking on thousands of new council workers.

When the SWP criticised our election stand, they countered it with 'street campaigns'. But council work and the streets are not separate activities.

We want to stand in the elections next year, so that if the new party gets a majority, it can cap and freeze rents, take over empty houses and offer to the homeless, stop evictions, and vote against any more cuts to our public services, and many other things. We will need to mobilise campaigns to defend those policies.

The Greek Syriza party went from attracting a few votes in elections to becoming the government. It is a real possibility that the same could happen here. For me, it should be unthinkable that Your Party will not stand in elections in 2026, or in the next general election.

TUSC discusses 2026 elections

The latest meeting of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee was dominated by discussion on the next steps that could be taken to consolidate Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's call to establish "a new kind of political party".

Another immediate task, the committee agreed, was to help to get the new party ready for the elections that will be held on 7 May 2026. This discussion centred around a briefing document prepared by the TUSC national election agent, Clive Heemsker, 'Ideas About The Next Local Elections' (available at tusc.org.uk).

The main point emphasised was the enormous possibilities that are there. The new party could win seats in the Scottish parliament and Welsh Senedd, and councillors in almost every one of the 70-plus English local authorities with elections in 2026. In some councils it could expect to hold the balance of power after the 7 May polling day. And even, in some of the authorities that are up for election in this particular four-yearly cycle, win majorities and form administrations.

This, however, the meeting agreed,

represents both an opportunity and a challenge. A substantial presence in local government for the new party could be a powerful bridgehead, a catalyst force, for a movement against the Austerity II agenda that the Starmer government is set on, compelled by the perilous position of British capitalism to further attack public spending including local council services. But only if the new party and its candidates are clear on what needs to be done.

As the TUSC discussion document explains, councils can make a difference, and have the powers to stand up to central government austerity. Imagine the impact of even a handful of councils, and a bloc of new party councillors across the country backing them up, using their powers on housing, education, social care, leisure, children's centres, transport and so on to transform people's lives – and to combine together to demand the proper funding that local services need.

But the converse is also true, of the damaging impact that could be made if councillors go along with austerity, however reluctantly they do so.

It happened under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party, when council Labour groups remained as strongholds of the right-wing within the party. The resulting continued experience of cuts being made by these town hall Blairites in the name of Labour undermined Jeremy's anti-austerity message, particularly amongst working-class voters in 'left behind' Labour constituencies. The new party cannot afford a repeat, of the promise of a new politics turning into more of the same.

That's why a discussion amongst supporters of Jeremy and Zarah's 'Your Party' call on how to approach the 2026 local elections is a vital task; just as the new party supporters in Scotland and Wales will be discussing their election platforms for May.

Read the discussion document online

tusc.org.uk



Socialist Party members campaigning ahead of a Your Party meeting in Brixton, south London. Read report online socialistparty.org.uk

LONDON SP

Chesterfield and north Derbyshire discusses democracy and trade union voice

LOCAL SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS SAY:

150 people attended a meeting of 'Your Party' supporters, organised by local activists in Chesterfield and north Derbyshire.

Ian Hodson, bakers' union BFAWU national president, introduced his union's history in the development of the original Labour Party – to give workers a voice in running the country. His call for a planned economy and for Your Party to be unequivocally socialist was well received.

Ian also said he favoured a One Member One Vote (OMOV) system. But the meeting was broken up into much smaller groups before the main

discussion, meaning there was too little time to properly discuss how to organise democracy in a party of over 800,000.

Some believe that building a new party 'from the bottom up' can only be achieved by OMOV, and that a federated structure, featuring more trade union involvement, for instance, automatically means a top-down party. Neither is correct!

The bakers' union supports the formation of a new workers' party. And has said that the trade unions should be at the heart of a new party.

The bakers' union has said that a new party "must be built the right way. Not by coronation, but through

collective decision-making... If the new party can learn anything from our journey, it's this, trust the workers. We're not here to follow. We're here to lead."

A federal structure, where the bakers' union and others could affiliate, would give an expression to the collective voice of trade unions.

Jon Dale - Socialist Party in Bolton - began to raise this in the one minute he had to speak. Jon called for further discussion at future meetings.

Individuals voiced their own particular area of 'interest' when they reported back from the small discussion groups. This included:

- oppose all cuts, closure, and privatisation of council services
- reject council tax increases
- greater emphasis on climate change, and how councils can incorporate policies locally
- fight for united working-class struggle against racism, sexism, and all forms of oppression

These are the demands that a new party could raise, standing in the local elections next May.

Others recognised the socialist aims of education and health to be available free of charge from cradle to grave.

Chesterfield Socialist Party member Dave Gorton said Ian Hodson's correct call for a planned economy required the organised working class – six and a half million in the trade unions in Britain – to fight for it.

Those present elected a small interim steering committee, including Socialist Party member Dave Gorton. Dave called for the steering committee to draw up plans to leaflet workplaces about future meetings.

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FRANCE ROCKED BY STRIKES AND PROTESTS

On 8 September, as expected, French prime minister François Bayrou lost a confidence vote in France's National Assembly. Meanwhile, a groundswell from below grew towards a day of strikes and protests across France on 10 September. The following editorial, translated from French, was published by **Gauche Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Left - CWI in France)** in a special supplement of their paper, *L'Égalité*, on 3 September.

The mobilisation that led to 10 September is shaking the government. Calls for strikes are multiplying. The desire to unite and fight is growing among workers. Pressure is mounting in the trade unions for our side to engage in a showdown with the capitalists and their government. All unions are now calling for a strike on 18 September.

The end of François Bayrou as prime minister opens yet another page. A new chapter of political crisis that calls on us to unite and say: 'Macron, that's enough!' A massive workers' struggle has the potential to oust him and his entire policy of serving the capitalists and the ultra-rich, uniting to replace him with a government that defends the interests of workers and the majority of the population. To pursue such a policy, a government with a firm programme against capitalism will be necessary.

President Macron and Bayrou thought they were being clever when they announced the 2026 budget at the beginning of the summer. But their 44 billion euros of cuts and the theft of two full days' wages from workers, far from provoking the resignation they expected, lit the fuse. Even though this year the dire figure of six million unemployed was reached, if there is enough work to make people work two more days, it means there is work! We need jobs for all the workers who are deprived of them, instead of making workers toil ever harder with wages that do not allow us to live, and pay for energy and rents that keep rising!

With Macron, it's always the workers who pay. But we remember that the country's 40 largest companies made 150 billion euros in profits last year. And in the first half of this year alone, 72 billion euros. They make all these profits because they exploit workers more and more.

The vast majority of the population can no longer stand these policies, which are worsening social conditions and making society increasingly violent and unjust. We are right to revolt. Nearly three out of every four people in France are in favour of Bayrou's fall. Perhaps even more significantly, 67% of people want Macron

to resign. It's an entire policy that is rejected, not just the prime minister (especially given the rate at which they succeed one another)!

Where did 10 September come from?

The 10 September mobilisation began somewhat spontaneously with a petition and on social media. Initially, it was mainly about taxes (à la gilets jaunes - the 'yellow vests' movement) but it quickly expanded to include protests against budgetary measures - particularly the elimination of two public holidays - and the working and living conditions of the majority of the population.

Even though it's spontaneous, it doesn't come out of nowhere. Attempts to resist and fight are constant. This summer included. There were two million signatures against the Duplomb law (allowing use of a banned pesticide) tailored for agribusiness capitalists. The movement against the genocide in Gaza has never stopped; demonstrations continue everywhere, and so does the general revolt, growing with the genocidal violence.

France Insoumise ('France Unbowed', led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon) played an undeniable role. It has continued to agitate for the need to oust Bayrou - applying constant pressure, with eight motions of censure filed, and a very clear call to strike on 10 September and build the fight to oust Macron.

At last, 10 September comes after two years in which the trade union bureaucracy has not called for a single national day of collective strike action. All of these elements combined find expression in this first day of national struggle. There's a feeling that the struggle is rising, in the face of those in power who are afraid.



Budget, salaries, working conditions: same fight

The 10 September was quickly seized on by workers to assert their own demands. In several sectors, calls for strikes have emerged. This is particularly thanks to the combative trade unions and trade unionists who are fighting to build the strike in their company, locally in their city, or in their entire sector. Things are moving every day and the struggle continues to build.

The calls are for specific demands: against low wages in the private sector, understaffing in hospitals or in education, against layoffs, as in metallurgy or commerce, against new attacks, as on unemployment benefits or in energy, and so on. All these demands are linked to the rejection of the budget because they reject the same political stance.

A united front of workers to stop these policies

What lies ahead isn't a fight to stop the 2026 budget or 'just' over the two public holidays, etc. What is wanted, is the

reversal of all the attacks that have been inflicted on us. The movement against pension reform showed that a fight limited to the withdrawal of one measure can't win. There is enormous pressure for a united front of workers against all of Macron's policies. That's what needs to be built.

The strike will be all the more powerful because it unites all workers. In discussions, at work, in general assemblies, let's discuss our demands. This doesn't divide us. On the contrary: it strengthens us, it shows that we are determined to build a struggle that will win concrete improvements.

Gauche Révolutionnaire calls for:

- Not a single euro in budget cuts, let's get back the gifts given to the bosses and the profits of the top 40 companies. Let the capitalists pay for their own crisis!
- Hands off public holidays! For reduced working hours without loss of pay or 'flexibility', until there is no more unemployment
- A decent wage: plus €300 salary increase now for everyone and an increase in the minimum wage
- No to the high cost of living! For lower prices and price freezes
- Decent housing for all, lower rents and requisition of empty homes!
- Pensions at 60 years old maximum and 37.5 years of contributions. Hands off the pay-as-you-go system!
- Zero job cuts! For the public ownership of companies that lay off workers, under the control and management of workers
- Massive hiring of staff and budget

increases in public services! Stop commissioning to the private sector: public services are not about making money

Strengthen the balance of forces: for three days of strikes in a row!

10 September varied across locations, but it is a first strike. What is needed is for it to demonstrate potential and create momentum on which to build the pressure. A first strike necessarily means that the next stage must be bigger. Otherwise, our strength won't be demonstrated; and that's what is needed to broaden the strike. So we must raise our voices.

The unions have already decided to call for a one-day strike on 18 September, this time inter-union, then some strikes on 23 September. This is not a strategy. What is needed, is for the strike on the 18 September to be a three-day strike, public-private all together. Including a Saturday, because many people work on Saturdays, especially in sectors that are suffering from particularly low wages, imposed part-time work, and thousands of layoffs, such as retail, who those not working on that day could go to support.

21 September is already a day of mobilisation globally against war. It fits in with the movement against

Macron. Enough is enough with stealing from workers and destroying our public services for the armed forces and the profits of the war industry.

By building on the momentum of 10 September, the greatest number of workers can join the struggle, discuss their demands and how to defeat the strike movement and defeat Macron. And a three-day strike could serve as an ultimatum: if the demands are not met, if Macron does not back down, then on 23 September an unlimited national strike will be called. This is the kind of strategy with which the movement's strength could be built to be equal to the attacks and the establishment power we face. It isn't a blueprint, but proposals that Gauche Révolutionnaire brings to the debate in the struggle.

A movement armed with a plan will also give young people the impetus they need to join the struggle, to come and demonstrate with us... It's not anger they lack, it's confidence and a demonstration of the strength of workers to change things. A strength that is never greater than when we're on strike, because that's when we show who really makes society go round and raises the question of who should lead it.

Goodbye Bayrou, now let's get rid of Macron!

Bayrou's departure is a virtual certainty. The French capitalists are

desperate to survive the global crisis of their system, and they are counting on Macron to attack workers and save their profits.

We don't yet know what manoeuvres Macron will use to continue with his policies: dissolve the National Assembly now, or later so that the legislative elections coincide with the municipal elections; delay by keeping a resigning government in place to draw up the 2026 budget (and quietly issue a bunch of decrees, as Bayrou did until 8 September).

The only thing that's certain is that Macron's power is weaker than ever. And a weak enemy is easier to fight. This political crisis is a good time to assert our interests: let's build and expand the fight together to oust Macron!

What government to pursue what policy?

Objectively, the situation already raises the question of power, but in the discussion, only the capitalists and their defenders have a voice.

Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella's far-right National Rally party wants to, once again, appear to be in opposition. Even though Bayrou could only be installed thanks to their approval, they have basically validated his entire policy. Without mentioning the racism of Gérald Darmanin (Justice minister and member of Macron's Renaissance party) or Bruno Retailleau (Interior minister and member of the conservative Gaullist party Les Républicains), Le Pen and Bardella have always been in favour of destroying public services and cutting wages. Clearly showing whose side they are on, they immediately distanced themselves from the movement of 10 September, precisely because the strike put a workers' response on the agenda.

The PS (French Socialist Party) is showing its hand. Its leader, Olivier Faure, after saving Bayrou's skin on numerous occasions, sees himself as Macron's prime minister and is already promising 14 billion euros in budget cuts and reassuring the capitalists: we will indeed "reduce spending" (and therefore continue to destroy public services) and give 10 billion euros to businesses. And they promise that they will not resort to Article 49-3 (an article of the constitution allowing the government to force through bills without parliamentary approval). As if we could believe them! We have no confidence in these people to pursue a different policy.

And unfortunately, elsewhere in the workers' movement there are also those who justify their own defeatism and lack of confidence in workers and who play no role in the current political situation, claiming that the fall of Bayrou changes nothing, or that the slogan 'Get rid of Macron' is not workers' business.

But it is not nothing that a government falls because of a movement that has not yet even begun. It is not for nothing that Bayrou organises his departure himself because the idea of a strike is rising! It is absolutely workers' business who is in power, because our camp needs a political response to the political and economic crisis. It is a political battle that we are waging.

Confronting capitalist interests

So, the movement and workers themselves must ask the question of what kind of power we want, for a government of our own that pursues policies to satisfy the needs of the majority of the population. This means challenging the interests of the capitalists, the most fundamental of which is that they own all or almost all of the main sectors of the economy.

A government that will renationalise privatised public services; that will put into public ownership, under the control and democratic management of workers, the companies that lay off workers; but also that will create public service monopolies, also democratically managed by workers and users, by nationalising the major sectors of the economy, which will operate to meet needs and not make profits.

Those who are leading the current struggles, with the support of parties that oppose capitalism, trade union and community activists, and young people, will be able to form the basis of such a new government.

We need a party too!

The struggle that is opening up poses these perspectives. But they are absent from the political debate. Why? Because our camp, workers and youth, does not have an independent political voice. We too need our own party!

Not a fake party of careerists and bureaucrats, no, a real party of workers and youth, a democratic, mass party; a living, democratic organisation, to debate collectively, and to organise to defend a firm programme against the capitalists. This would be the best way to defend a perspective of our own government; to take political and economic power out of the hands of the capitalists and put an end once and for all to their nightmarish system, by establishing socialism.

Down with capitalism!

Macron personifies capitalist arrogance and contempt so much that he is at the heart of everything. Through him, it is the capitalist system itself that is being called into question: exploitation, the dictatorship of profit, and everything that goes with it - inequality, racism and division, the absence of democracy, war. This system has no human face. It must be overthrown. The fight for a socialist economy free from private ownership of the means of production and exploitation is the order of the day.

Gauche Révolutionnaire invites all those who wish to mobilise with us to do so, so that these perspectives are widely debated. Strengthening the struggle, strengthening the political consciousness and organisation of workers and youth, proposing a programme to end capitalist barbarism by building socialism - this is what we are fighting for.

• Since the article was first published, Macron has appointed a loyalist, Sébastien Lecornu, as prime minister. In an attempt to cut across the movement, he has promised to row back on plans to cut bank holidays. Strike are set to go ahead 18 September



SOCIALISM TODAY



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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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



WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!

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

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

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

- For 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 provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.

- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.

- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.

- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.

- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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Chris (second from right) PHOTO: SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Why I joined the Socialist Party Keir Starmer was the final straw

CHRISTOPHER MAHON
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

I became politically motivated after Keir Starmer became Labour leader, reading about his purges of the left from the party.

Labour under Starmer no longer felt like home. I began to feel politically homeless.

During that time, I had a social worker helping me. They directed me to the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) website.

What I read, I liked. I eventually met the local Socialist Party branch in Swindon, through its work in TUSC.

Ever since joining, I have felt more energised and confident that things can be done, things can be changed. After attending Socialist Party national congress this year, I was fully convinced that we have the correct

ideas, and must fight to win over the working class.

Right-wing populism is a con, one that centrists like Keir 'kid-starver' Starmer are happy to sign up to for the sake of keeping his capitalist bosses happy. He will eat it up and tell us its good for us in the face of war, genocide, and the growing far right.

There is a well-founded belief that politicians are all in it for themselves. We need to show though that we are different, that we are looking to free the working class, not subjugate them for the purpose of profit.

I believe in the humanity of socialism. We must see the humanity in people.

The announcement of the intention for a new party formation under Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana is a step in the right direction. But we must have a voice in this party to keep it oriented towards the working class and openly socialist in nature.

In these turbulent times of darkness, confusion, war, and poverty, we must shine like a beacon of hope.

Obituary – former striking miner Rob Smith

JON DALE
MANSFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Mansfield Socialist Party member, Rob Smith, has sadly died aged 62. He was a retired miner, who went through the 1984-85 strike. He suffered a serious injury when underground that affected him for the rest of his life, although he returned to underground work after the injury.

Rob grew up in a strong trade union and socialist household. His father was an active member of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Bolsover Constituency

Labour Party, at a time when most of its members were miners and other trade unionists, and its MP was the left-wing Dennis Skinner. Rob said if his dad had still been alive, he would also have joined the Socialist Party.

Despite poor health, Rob attended our meetings and came to Socialist Party campaign stalls on his mobility scooter. He enjoyed the Socialism 2024 weekend, and had booked his ticket for Socialism 2025 this year.

Rob had no family. Socialist Party members send condolences to all his friends.

With six million others waiting for NHS treatment Fight for a fully funded, fully public health service

CHRISTINE ASHER

I am one of the 6.23 million people on an NHS waiting list. At every stage since my symptoms started, I've felt the weight of a system under strain. The NHS hasn't met its 18-week treatment target since 2015. When I was asked to select which hospital I wanted to be referred to, one had an average wait for a first appointment of 564 days (80 weeks). Because some people are waiting for multiple appointments or operations, the total number of cases on the waiting list is actually 7.3 million.

I've been told my case is urgent, yet miscommunication between the overstretched GP surgery and the hospital department means that, at present, I haven't been offered an appointment or any diagnostic testing until January 2026. At best, it feels like my life is on hold. At worst, it feels like I'm losing what could be precious time if treatment is delayed further.

It doesn't feel safe, and for some, it isn't. £14.7 billion a year is spent by the NHS treating people who have been harmed by mistakes made

during their care, according to a report by Imperial College London.

Immigration, disabled people, an ageing population, all are used as scapegoats by capitalist politicians of all shades.

But the NHS isn't in the state it is because too many people are using it. It's in the state it is because of scandalous, chronic underfunding and privatisation. Decades of political choices made in the interests of allowing the super-rich to get richer, instead of investing in the services all of us need.

The UK has less medical equipment and fewer beds than any other comparable country; Japan has ten times more CT scanners and MRI units than the UK. We also have fewer doctors and nurses than those same comparative countries, with 1 in 5 doctors thinking of leaving their profession and 1 in 8 considering leaving the UK to work abroad.

Big businesses, including the pharmaceutical industry, want to make a profit out of our health system. They lobby for more privatisation, arguing not for funding but instead to argue

for a private health system, so they can rake in the profits.

No health system dominated by capitalist interests delivers for those who use and work in it. Free at the point of use is something hard won and to be defended. Yet, in and of itself is not enough – we need a fully funded, and democratically controlled health service so everyone can have access to quality health care.

Wealth in Britain is heavily concentrated - the top 1% of households have significantly more wealth than the bottom 70% of the population combined. Just 50 families have as much wealth as half of us combined. That means the majority of us using and working in the NHS are in the same boat, while the super-rich are not.

We need to unite and demand the funding for the services we need, paid for by the super-rich. Our fight would be strengthened if the working class had our own political party, that could be putting forward the policies we need instead of policies in the interest of profits for big business.

Oil refinery canteen workers strike for better pay



NICK CHAFFEY
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

26 canteen workers responsible for feeding the vast 2,500 workforce at Fawley oil refinery, the largest refinery in Britain, are striking against a below-inflation pay offer from their employer Compass.

While the lowest-paid workers

While Compass management refuses to negotiate and bullies its canteen workers with threats of redundancies, the Fawley workforce has begun a solidarity boycott of canteen and vending machines.

Fawley refinery, owned by ExxonMobil, makes huge profits. It has been the scene of other strikes recently when contractors successfully took action for the full payment of their bonus. This industry provides essential resources to the economy but in the hands of private corporations the only motive is profit - every penny of it squeezed from the labour of its increasingly low-paid workforce, as wages fall and the cost-of-living climbs.

National refinery capacity is in crisis with Grangemouth gone and Lindsey refinery under threat of closure. Fawley will be one of four remaining. A national campaign on the future of oil refineries by all trade unions needs to address the pay and conditions of all workers and fight for nationalisation to secure the future of all jobs.

On the basis of nationalisation, this industry could supply cheap energy and products for society rather than super-profits for a handful of corporate shareholders, as well as securing permanent, well-paid jobs for all who work in the industry. Under democratic workers' control and management, the future of the industry could ensure the rapid transition to renewable energy while protecting all jobs for the future.



Indonesia PHOTO: MENURTIKARANTAN

Indonesia: Anger intensifies in protest wave after worker killed by police

In August, the Indonesian movement against the cost-of-living crisis and a hike in housing allowances for politicians escalated further following the killing of Affan Kurniawan, a motorbike taxi driver. Affan was run over by a police vehicle on 28 August during a wider violent crackdown on the protest movement.

President Prabowo Subianto has only been in power for ten months and has implemented austerity. Cuts are hitting education, with 35% slashed from higher and basic education budgets, hurting students and pushing contract teachers into precarity. Public health services and disaster relief have also seen cuts of up to 50%. Infrastructure projects like roads and drainage - vital for everyday people - are abandoned, while

billions are poured into prestige projects for the ruling elite.

Across regions and layers of society - from workers demanding higher minimum wages, to youth and students fighting for free education, to communities demanding fair housing rights, democratic reforms, and the repeal of the Omnibus Law - the demands are surfacing as clear expressions of class struggle. They expose the growing divide between the capitalist ruling elite and the exploited majority.

Read more by Sosialis Alternatif (CWl Malaysia) at socialistworld.net

Nepal: Explosive youth-led struggle erupts

Thousands of protesters, mainly young people, have taken to the streets in Nepal to protest against the ban on social media platforms by Prime Minister Sharma Oli. For young people who have endured an existence of mass misery, joblessness, and hopelessness, the ban on social media platforms has become the straw that has broken the camel's back.

The ban was lifted days later, but by then protests had swelled into a mass movement. Angry crowds set fire to parliament and government buildings in the capital Kathmandu, forcing Sharma Oli to resign.

Youth unemployment as of 2024 stood at 20%, while over 700,000

young people annually seek work outside the country. The employment programme initiated by Sharma this year successfully employed just about 3,300 out of over 800,000 who applied.

The explosive struggle in Nepal shows that the conditions for the development of revolutionary situations exist and that the need for the working class to enter the struggle with a socialist programme is vital.



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWl) is the international socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to. The CWl is organised in many countries. We work to unite the working class, and oppressed peoples against capitalism, and to fight for a socialist world. socialistworld.net



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BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

99.5% - the vote for continued strike action in a recent Unite rebalot of the Birmingham bin workers.

The Labour council has threatened 'fire and rehire' of bin workers unless they accept up to £8,000 of wage cuts. As they approach this crucial deadline, the rebalot result shows the determination of these workers to see this battle through.

Strikers are aware that this isn't just them versus the boss, but that they're taking on Birmingham Labour councillors, government-appointed commissioners, and Starmer's Labour government, mobilising the forces of the police and courts against them.

There are now rumours of an enormous £250,000 fine on the union. Unite general secretary Sharon Graham has rightly threatened

that any fine will be paid by money that would otherwise have gone to the Labour Party.

The demo called by Unite for 20 September is an important opportunity to show the huge solidarity that exists in the wider trade union movement and working class.

The Labour council and government want to crush this strike. But events of the last two weeks show this is a government reeling in crisis. The whole union movement must now come to Unite's aid with support and solidarity.

It is especially essential that Birmingham council unions Unison and the GMB make such a commitment, explaining to their members that a defeat for bin workers would open the door to the same attacks on them. A mobilisation across the whole region and wider is also vital. The

government needs to understand that it is taking on the might of Unite and the whole trade union movement.

Political pressure is also a key part of the struggle. Birmingham City Council holds its local elections every four years, so the 2026 elections will be the first time since 2022 that workers in Birmingham can express their anger against the relentless cuts and attacks by the Labour-run council.

The Labour council is seen as incompetent in the eyes of the working class locally. But in reality this council and government are doing the bidding of the capitalists not the workers.

The brutality of the Birmingham bin dispute was the trigger for the emergency motion passed at Unite conference, on the initiative of Socialist Party members and allies.

An overwhelming majority voted to suspend Angela Rayner (then deputy prime minister) and any Birmingham Labour councillor attacking the bin workers from Unite membership, and open up a discussion about the union's relationship with Labour.

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's announcement of 'Your Party' opens the opportunity for trade unionists to fight for a party that represents their interests, including the necessity of pro-worker candidates in the 2026 elections. In stark contrast to Angela Rayner visiting the scab workforce, Jeremy Corbyn visited each bin depot picket line.

Imagine the discussions this could open up in Birmingham about what programme local council candidates should stand under, with the inclusion of bin

and other council workers in that debate. The first demand of Birmingham bin workers on potential candidates would be that they pledge the immediate withdrawal of all attacks, instead of wasting taxpayers' money on agency staff and union-busting.

In the face of the devastating cuts in Birmingham, workers should demand that council candidates would set up a trade union-led inquiry into the 'bankruptcy' of Birmingham City Council and an immediate end to the mass selling of council assets. For a no-cuts needs-based budget, working alongside local union branches and the community to build a city-wide campaign to fight for the funding needed from central government.

BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p14

