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# the Socialist

Issue 1339

9-15 October 2025

formerly **Militant**

# Your Party: Let's build a party to

# FIGHT LABOUR'S WAR AND AUSTERITY

# Defend the right to protest

**K**eir Starmer and his Labour government do not want you protesting. They want to be able to plan the next round of austerity attacks on our public services in peace. They want to continue to get away with making excuses for the Israeli state's brutal attacks on Gaza.

But two years of watching genocidal slaughter unfold continues to motivate hundreds of thousands to march in solidarity with Palestinians. Many will be inspired by the 'Block Everything' mass strike in Italy to defend Gaza. It showed the power of organised mass working-class action (see page 15). In Spain too, school students have walked out. Germany has seen its biggest protests yet. And in France, strikes and protests against austerity have brought down a prime minister. No wonder Starmer doesn't want you to protest.

There are 1,001 reasons to build the fightback against Starmer's Labour. We are fighting for the trade unions to take the lead by organising a weekend demo against Labour austerity. It's TUC (Trades Union Congress) policy, now it needs to name the date (see page 5).

800,000 signed up in support of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party. There are over six million members of the trade unions. A demo properly built for in workplaces, schools and communities up and down the country could be huge. A united working-class fightback would be a counter to attempts by the bosses to stoke racism and division.

Your Party enthusiasm shows the huge potential for the working class to develop its own mass party. Socialist Party members are joining, engaging in the process, making the case for the trade unions as the existing mass organisations of the working class to have a collective democratic voice, and for it to fight for socialism. If you want to help and fight to transform the world then join us!

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The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

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

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editors@socialistparty.org.uk  
020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

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

# Two years of war on Gaza – and what lies ahead



PHOTO: JABER JEHAD BADWAN/CC

Extracts from an article by Judy Beishon, CWI International Secretariat, published on 6 October 2025 [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)

On the second anniversary of the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel and the subsequent prolonged genocidal slaughter in Gaza, the fate of Trump's latest proposals for an end to the war is still in the balance. The US plans to impose a transitional government of technocrats on the Palestinians in Gaza, backed up by outside armed forces – a form of naked colonialism.

Israeli military forces will be allowed to remain inside the perimeter of the Gaza Strip, maintaining control of its borders – a continued blockade, imprisoning the Palestinians and deciding what goods can enter and leave the strip. Israeli prime minister Netanyahu has made clear that Israel has no intention of entirely withdrawing from Gaza and stressed that there will be no possibility of a Palestinian state.

Trump has been caught between US support for Israel and the increasing pressure from Arab states and from domestic opinion in the US, Europe and elsewhere for an end to the war. US representatives initially claimed that the plan had the support of the leaders of a number of Arab and Muslim countries. But when the final outline was released, those leaders could only express conditional support, as the dominating interests of US imperialism and the Israeli regime in it became clear.

### Tony Blair

Incredibly, Tony Blair is to be part of the imposed authority's governance, the same Blair whose hands were drenched in blood in the invasions he led the UK into in Afghanistan and Iraq. As Sky News commented: "Palestinians in general don't see Blair as anything else than a war criminal and a mercenary, and do not expect anything positive coming out from his involvement in a region he has already damaged" (30 September).

and more with their interests, due to the anger from below that is rebounding on them domestically. Also, the Western powers view their closest capitalist ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel, as damaging its own interests by continuing the war and therefore see it as in their mutual interests to intervene.

No element of their interventions has the interests of ordinary Palestinians at heart. A flow of countries has formally recognised a Palestinian state, including recently three Israeli allies in the G7 group of capitalist powers, but the Israeli ruling class has no intention whatsoever of conceding a genuine Palestinian state and neither do the capitalist powers worldwide intend to try to force it to.

- Read the article in full: 'The world impact of two years of war on Gaza – and what lies ahead' at [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)

Committee for a Workers' International  
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[socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)



The imperialist and capitalist powers' intent is just a change in the form of occupation and rule

The first stages of the plan could possibly go ahead, but with a high chance of collapse at any time and a resumption of full-blown war by Netanyahu's government, with Trump's backing.

So devastating and horrific have been the two years of war, that a ceasefire in much or all of the strip, whether now or later, will inevitably be a massive relief to its starving, traumatised and displaced population.

Recognising the relief that a ceasefire will bring, or even more so, an end to the war, doesn't mean in any way supporting a deal imposed from above – over the heads of the Palestinians – by the imperialist and capitalist powers. Their intent is just a change in the form of occupation and rule, because the length and intensity of the war has collided more

### Socialist Party says

- End the war on Gaza, the siege of Gaza and the occupation of all the Palestinian territories. For the permanent withdrawal of the Israeli military from those areas
- The release of the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli prisons and the Israeli captives held in Gaza
- A mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for liberation and the right to self-determination
- The building of independent workers' parties in Palestine and Israel and links between them
- An independent, socialist Palestinian state, and socialist change in Israel, with guaranteed democratic rights for all minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist Middle East
- No trust in capitalist politicians internationally. Fight to build workers' parties that stand for socialism and internationalism

## RECONVENED TRADE UNIONISTS FOR A NEW PARTY MEETING

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025 6:30pm

# WHAT NOW FOR THE NEW PARTY PROJECT?

## TIME FOR A TRADE UNION-LED RESET

Register at [bit.ly/ReconvenedTU4NewParty](http://bit.ly/ReconvenedTU4NewParty)



Petition: [www.change.org/TradeUnions-LaunchANewParty](http://www.change.org/TradeUnions-LaunchANewParty)

# After Manchester synagogue attack Build a mass working-class movement against war and terror Defend the right to protest

## Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

A horrific attack on a synagogue in Manchester on 2 October left two dead, and more injured. The attacker, who was wearing an apparent bomb vest, was shot dead by police, with one of the two victims also caught in police crossfire. The Socialist Party opposes all forms of terror against innocent people, whether carried out by individuals or states. Deliberately carried out on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, the attack has significantly raised fear and concern amongst Jewish people in the UK for their safety.

The attack does nothing to build the working-class unity across ethnic and religious lines necessary to build the most effective movement possible against the genocidal slaughter taking place in Gaza.

Pro-capitalist establishment politicians and parties were quick to respond to the attack by attempting to level responsibility on anti-war protesters, amongst them many Jewish people, who have protested over the last two years against the murderous conduct of the Israeli state in the Palestinian territories. Following the attack, Kemi Badenoch and Nigel Farage alike branded marches against the slaughter in Gaza as 'hate marches'.

### Capitalist system at root of racist division

The root of racist division in society, including antisemitic division, is not anti-war demonstrations but the system of capitalism which Badenoch, Farage and Starmer all defend. Capitalism is a system which has overseen the creation of huge wealth, owned and controlled by an increasingly small minority in society, the capitalist class, while the vast majority struggle to get by. War globally, as well as racist division, is baked into that system.

Attempts by capitalist politicians to play the game of 'divide and rule', including by scapegoating migrants for the consequences of capitalist-driven austerity measures, run like a thread through the history of the system. The day before the attack in Manchester, a hotel in North London housing migrants was subject to an arson attack, followed days



PHOTO: PAUL MATTESSON

It's the organised working class which is capable of generating the maximum pressure on capitalist governments around the world complicit in the slaughter against Palestinians - as well as replacing capitalism with a socialist society based on democratic planning of society's resources and international cooperation

later when a mosque in Sussex was set alight with worshippers inside.

The London Metropolitan Police issued a statement ahead of a protest on Saturday in London on 4 October, organised by 'Defend Our Juries' against the proscription of Palestine Action, which resulted in 492 arrests. "By deliberately choosing to encourage mass law breaking on this scale, Defend Our Juries are drawing valuable resources away from the communities of London at a time when they are needed most", Met Police Commissioner Mark Rowley said.

But who made decisions to direct police resources to peaceful protest against the genocidal slaughter in Gaza? The Met Police and, behind them, capitalist establishment parties, which defend British capitalism's interests - and therefore the status quo in the Middle East.

Feeling the pressure of the anti-war movement globally, Israel's foreign minister Gideon Sa'ar has attempted to intervene into the situation in Britain, urging Starmer on to clamp down further on the right to protest.

Likewise, it hasn't been protesters who have decided to cut funding to 'policing in the community' - that was the Tory and Labour politicians.

Home Office statistics say that in 2019 there were 20,000 fewer police officers employed in Britain compared to 2010 - meaning increased workload on remaining police employees. The Police Federation estimates that real-terms pay for police has fallen by 21% since 2010, meaning that the number of officers taking second jobs has doubled since 2019.

Those decisions, alongside the broader brutal cuts to public services and collapsing wages while the billionaires in Britain continue to rake in super-profits, show up the blatant lie that capitalist politicians take genuine interest in the living standards and day-to-day safety of working-class people.

Socialists call for democratic working-class control of the police, with local forces controlled by democratically elected committees including representatives from trade union and local communities, with oversight and decision-making powers over policing policy and priorities.

Following the attack, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood announced the government's intention to pass legislation through Parliament to give the senior police officers further powers to put conditions on repeated protest actions. This shows

yet again that rather than advancing the struggle for Palestine, acts of individual terror do the opposite and can be exploited by the capitalist state as a convenient pretext to attempt to attack the right to protest.

The question facing the anti-war and workers' movement now is how can these and previous attacks on the right to protest be defeated? While the war in Gaza continues, the sharp crisis of British capitalism is preparing another showdown around the Labour Budget on 26 November.

Chronic low economic growth, high borrowing costs and crippled public services mean that any party defending the interests of the profit-before-all-else system of capitalism will fight to address the crisis of the system by making working-class, middle-class and young people pay for it.

But that objective crisis of British capitalism is preparing huge struggles of the working class against the system of capitalism, including potential industrial action which could dwarf the 2022-24 strike wave under the Tories. It's these movements of the working class which Labour, and the ruling capitalist class behind them, chiefly fear.

### National mass demonstration

At the TUC (Trades Union Congress)'s annual Congress in Brighton in September, a motion was passed calling on its General Council to organise a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity. Such a mass demonstration under the banner of a united working class, linked to defending the right to protest, as well as the demand on Labour to repeal the most draconian anti-trade union laws in Europe, could serve as a launchpad for the industrial action needed to stop further planned attacks on workers' living standards whilst also opposing racist division.

And with Labour already in disarray just over a year into government, such action could leave their planned further attacks on the right to protest on the rocks.

In Italy, over two million workers took strike action over the Israeli military's interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla carrying aid to Gaza, bringing transportation services and schools to a halt.

It's this force of the organised working class which is capable of generating the maximum pressure on capitalist governments around the world complicit in the slaughter against Palestinians - as well as replacing capitalism with a socialist society based on democratic planning of society's resources and international cooperation. Join the Socialist Party to help build such a struggle here in Britain, and with it a political voice for the working class fighting for socialist change.

### Join the fightback

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)
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  - or text your name and postcode to 07958 032 071
- to find out more today!

# BBC documentary exposes racist, sexist Met police

BERKAY KARTAV  
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISER

For many who have experienced police racism and sexism, the revelations in a BBC Panorama documentary won't be surprising. But the secret footage of London Metropolitan Police officers' blatant racism, sexism and bragging about assaults at Charing Cross police station is shocking.

It showed officers talking about shooting immigrants in their heads, dismissing rape claims on the basis that "that's what she says", and calling foreigners "scum", amongst many other racist, sexist and Islamophobic slurs.

One sergeant, known as 'Stampy', stamped on detainees' ankles multiple times, and then bragged about it afterwards, warning the undercover journalist not to talk about it where police station microphones would pick it up.

This scandal comes after many other scandals involving the Met Police, including one which involved Charing Cross police station. In 2022, police officers were found making rape 'jokes' and talking about hitting their girlfriends in a WhatsApp chat.

## Londoners don't trust the Met

The latest opinion poll about the public's trust in the Met was last conducted in 2023 and showed that 51% of Londoners do not trust it. And the direction of travel was downwards. These polls are telling of the growing lack of confidence in the police by ordinary Londoners.

Trust in the Met was dealt a big blow in 2021, when Sarah Everard was raped and murdered by Wayne Couzens, a serving police officer. Couzens had a string of alleged sexual offences but was still allowed to serve in the Met.

In the aftermath, the Met commissioned the Casey report to investigate the police force's culture and failings. The report concluded that the Met

was institutionally sexist, racist and homophobic.

Mark Rowley, current head of the Met, at the time rejected the conclusions of the report that the police force was institutionally racist and sexist. After the most recent revelations, he said the behaviour of those police officers were "disgraceful, totally unacceptable and contrary to the values and standards" of the force - effectively again pinning the blame on 'a few bad apples'.

On 4 October, police arrested hundreds of peaceful protesters who oppose the genocide in Palestine and showed support for the banned Palestine Action group in Trafalgar Square, not far from Charing Cross police station and only a few days after the release of the Panorama documentary.

## Role of the state

This is a good example of the dual role of the police under capitalism. On the one hand they are looked to to defend public safety, but their main role is to defend and maintain the existing order in which the richest in society own and control its vast wealth and resources.

In recent years that has included repressing protests, arresting anti-war protesters and enforcing injunctions stopping striking workers from attending picket lines.

In London, young Black people are frequently harassed by police, targeted for stop and search; over five times as likely to be stopped than white people. Racist policing is also an important tool for capitalist institutions to further spread divisive ideas and divide the working class.

There can be no trust in the capitalist state, or its so-called 'independent bodies', to resolve any of these issues. The Met Police should be abolished, with the establishment of local police forces under democratic working-class control, accountable to local communities and trade unions. These elected committees could then



SOCIALIST PARTY

oversee and direct all police officers in relation to operational matters as well as being responsible for all appointments, promotions, disciplinary measures and dismissals. In this example, that would mean clearing out all these unaccountable, reactionary officers.

Sadiq Khan, London's Labour mayor and effectively London's crime and policing commissioner, has not taken any steps to tackle racist policing.

We need a new party of the working class that can fight police racism and sexism by putting forward a socialist programme - for both working-class control of policing and of the economy. Hundreds of thousands of sign-ups to Your Party announced by

Jeremy Corbyn shows the opportunities that exist. In 2026 there are local and mayoral elections in London. Standing in these elections could be part of a mass campaign against brutal cuts and racist and sexist policing.

But these divisive ideas, and the violence used by the capitalist state to keep capitalism in place, can only be put to bed by getting rid of that very system, to be replaced with socialism.

• BBC Panorama is available to watch online on BBC iPlayer

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A nurse with PPE during the Covid-19 pandemic WHISP/ISTOCK

# Michelle Moneybags and the Covid scam

LINDSEY MORGAN  
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

During the Covid-19 pandemic, millions of pounds of our money was wasted on unusable personal protective equipment (PPE). This week, the government won a court case against the company PPE Medpro for providing unsafe PPE, with damages of £122 million. This was the company owned by the husband of the once-Tory Baroness, Michelle Mone.

Contracts were awarded for vital equipment such as gowns and respirators, then in short supply, through the use of VIP ('Very Important Parasites') lanes. Businesses with political connections got first dibs on ripping us off. Many of these VIPs provided substandard and often unusable equipment to the health professionals that risked their lives, and the lives of their families, to deal with the pandemic. VIPs were prioritised over and above companies which already

produced PPE. Mone approached Michael Gove and Lord Agnew for the contract (who referred her to the VIP lane). At the time PPE Medpro was awarded the contract they didn't even have a factory to produce the promised gowns. Her husband pocketed £65 million, of which £29 million was put in trust for Mone and her children.

Compare pictures of nurses wearing bin bags in 2019 with Mone in 2021 on her yacht, called Lady M, without a care in the world. She even captioned the pic "Living My Best Life". But PPE Medpro is just one of a long line of private companies that leached off our NHS at our expense.

And it continues. We pay for their profits not only with our taxes but often with our lives and health. Massive waiting lists for less profitable operations are a direct result of NHS privatisation which Labour health secretary Wes Streeting plans to expand, egged on by the US healthcare hawks that lobby him.

Huge backlogs in radiology and scanning leave us waiting for answers and treatment as our health deteriorates.

The mental health crisis has been offered no meaningful solutions as austerity and poverty continues for our class.

In 2024 alone, £8 billion was spent on 'medical consumables' (bandages, syringes, etc). How much of that figure was pure profit that could have gone to providing us with the NHS services we need and deserve?

Medical suppliers, pharmaceutical companies and all the assorted private companies must be nationalised. We need our NHS fully re-nationalised and democratically managed and controlled by those who know where the money should be spent - workers and their organisations. When that happens millions of us may then have our chance at living our best lives, in decent health.

# Labour conference

## Starmer's divide and rule attack on workers

NICK HART  
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Just when you thought there wasn't another thing Starmer could flip-flop on, at September's Labour Party conference he revealed his latest master plan to stop the growth of Reform - by copying Reform!

On the Sunday, Starmer was attacking Reform leader Nigel Farage's announcement on scrapping of Indefinite Leave To Remain for foreign-born workers as "racist" and "immoral". But then, just three days later, Labour announced plans to stop the families of people granted asylum from joining them in the UK. In addition, the former 'human rights lawyer' plans to "look again" at ways for asylum tribunals to get around human rights law on torture and degrading treatment.

This comes on top of huge cuts in the number of jobs eligible for skilled worker visas - shutting out everyone from bricklayers, dental hygienists, chefs and over 100 other job roles. The RMT rail union recently protested against the plans, with its

members on London Underground threatened with having their right to work stripped from them.

The government's approach represents the worst of both worlds. It will lead to the families of refugees facing a choice between staying in danger in their home countries or paying even more to people smugglers to help them across the channel alongside their husbands and fathers.

And it won't stop the growth of Farage or the anti-immigrant right. Faced with a choice between a pale imitation and the real thing, workers who are currently thinking of voting Reform are unlikely to be won over by Starmer's newfound eagerness for deportations.

We shouldn't trust Starmer or Farage to decide who has the right to live in the UK - immigration and asylum rules should be democratically decided on and overseen by the working class.

Reform UK, by posing as anti-establishment, is capitalising on the huge anger out there. After years of Tory and Labour austerity

devastating public services and housing, who wouldn't be angry?

Every morning in cities like Birmingham, working-class Reform sympathisers get up and go to work alongside workmates from across the world, and face the same increased workloads and shrinking pay packets. They share the same gripes about the wait to get healthcare on the NHS or the council not sorting potholes and fly-tipping.

It's not wishful thinking that workers from a wide variety of backgrounds can come together and fight back against these problems - one of the biggest victories won by unions in recent years include the 'united nations' strike by bus drivers at National Express West Midlands scoring above-inflation pay rises.

A new mass working-class party, which Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party has the potential to become, could help workers to see their shared interests and make the case that it's the ruling class to blame for our problems, not people like us who happen to have been born in a different part of the world.



SIMON DAWSON / NO 10/CC

# Unison Labour Party 'democracy' 'Why is our union handing millions to Labour?'

AMY SAGE  
SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER IN UNISON

At this year's Labour Party conference, a motion on Palestine moved by Unison general secretary Christina McAnea was passed, calling Israel's actions in Gaza a genocide. The motion demanded an arms embargo, suspension of trade with Israel, and that the UK government "employ all means reasonably available" to stop the slaughter. It was a strong statement and a sign that pressure from below is forcing even the more right-wing trade union leaders to reflect the widespread anger at Labour's stance backing the Israeli state's destruction of Gaza.

But passing a motion is one thing. Turning it into real change is another. Labour conference decisions aren't binding. They can be ignored or watered down by the party leadership and Keir Starmer has shown again and again that he's willing to do both.

From public ownership to repealing anti-union laws, past conference decisions have been ignored if they clash with the Labour leadership's attempts to represent the interests of big business bosses.

## Still not delivered

Labour was elected promising to bring in a raft of pro-worker reforms, but over a year later they still haven't been implemented. Big business has piled on the pressure in an attempt to water down promises like banning zero-hour contracts and rights at work from day one of employment. And all the Tory anti-union laws are still on the books, including the un-democratic strike ballot thresholds.

Unison is one of Labour's biggest donors. Yet the party leadership routinely ignores the union's positions on key issues, from Gaza to NHS privatisation to pay. That a motion moved by the general secretary herself can be brushed aside shows that

the union has no real democratic influence on the party.

Unison members' money could instead be used to help build a genuine political alternative, one that stands for working-class interests and socialist policies, not the priorities of the bosses and the banks. Unison, and every trade union, should use their political funds to only support those politicians and candidates who genuinely fight for our class. Workers' money shouldn't bankroll a party that backs austerity, anti-union laws, and imperialist wars.

Instead of pleading with Labour's leadership, the unions should take the next step by building a new mass workers' party, rooted in the trade unions and that stands openly for socialism: for public ownership, workers' rights, and international solidarity. It's time for the organised working class to break with Labour and build its own party, one that stands firmly on the side of workers, not the bosses.

# NAME THE DATE FOR A NATIONAL DEMO AGAINST LABOUR AUSTERITY

## LOBBY THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL



MARY FINCH

PAULA MITCHELL  
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At its annual congress in September, the TUC (Trades Union Congress) voted unanimously to call a national weekend demonstration "against Labour austerity, as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people".

The TUC has tremendous potential power. Six and a half million workers are organised in trade unions, and the TUC brings most of those together. A serious campaign could mobilise hundreds of thousands of workers and their families and supporters onto the streets, applying pressure to this unpopular Labour government, and giving confidence to workers to fight for their unions to take the next steps towards national strike action in defence of jobs, pay and services.

So it is official policy - and we must now fight to make it a reality. A demo on Saturday 22 November would be the ideal day, just before Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves's Budget on 26 November.

The decision about what to call was deferred to the next meeting of the TUC General Council, which meets on 22 October. The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has called a lobby to demand the TUC names the date.

This lobby is an important step in mobilising the pressure of trade union members on their leaders to build the industrial and political fight necessary to defend workers from Labour's attacks.

• Lobby the TUC General Council - 9am Wednesday 22 October at TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

## LOBBY TUC GENERAL COUNCIL

Called by the National Shop Stewards Network

9am Wednesday 22nd October

at TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

# NAME THE DATE for a TUC national demo against Starmer's austerity 2.0

nationalshopstewardsnetwork shopstewards.net

# NEU executive meets – increase the pressure on Starmer’s Labour

DAN WARRINGTON  
NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The first meeting of the new academic year of the National Education Union (NEU) executive was held on 26 and 27 September. Day one featured an induction for newly elected executive members such as myself, followed by elections to the various committees.

## Demonstration against Labour austerity – TUC name the date!

In response to a question raised by Socialist Party member Sheila Caffrey, general secretary Daniel Kebede committed to call for a date to be named for a national trade union-led demonstration against Labour austerity at the next meeting of the TUC General Council.

The TUC (Trades Union Congress) has agreed in principle to call such a demonstration. In the face of continued attacks on funding to public services by Keir Starmer’s government, the TUC needs to ramp up the pressure and call a demonstration to demand Labour properly funds our services.

## Teacher pay

The executive also heard that the teacher pay review panel will be meeting next year, but that the Labour government is making it clear that there will be no new funding for pay deals, and is looking at reducing pay protection and protected non-teaching time. The NEU will be opposing these attacks, with discussion of the union’s approach scheduled for the next meeting of the executive in October.

## School and college support staff – Unions should work together to organise workers

In another decision related to the TUC, the executive gave Daniel Kebede approval to write to Paul Nowak of the TUC laying out the NEU’s plans with regards to recruiting school support staff to the union.

The executive agreed to hold a Special Conference in early 2026 to debate beginning active recruitment of support staff in the spring term. Kebede stated that this is not about ‘poaching’ members from other unions but rather organising to unionise the majority of support staff who are currently not in any union.

This comes on the heels of a TUC decision to censure the NEU for pursuing recognition as part of the SSSNB (the collective bargaining body the government is setting up to negotiate school support school pay and conditions) – a move opposed by the leaderships of sister unions GMB and Unison, which already have collective bargaining rights for school support staff. The NEU has a growing number of school support staff members but does not have collective bargaining rights for those workers at a national level.

The leadership of the NEU,

including Kebede and the NEU Left grouping, which includes the SWP, had previously signed up to an agreement which curtailed the ability of the NEU to organise support staff. Socialist Party members opposed this at the time and, while we welcome the change of approach from the leadership, we pointed out that members have already expressed their support for organising support staff at NEU conference.

We continue to argue that the best approach is to appeal for discussion with the other unions, at a national and local level, for a united front against the employers and the government. We have proposed a meeting between the executives of the unions.

At a time when austerity threatens thousands of school support staff jobs, unions in education should be focused on building union membership and organising education workers to win on pay, funding and workload. The Socialist Party calls on the members of the NEU, GMB and Unison to work together and find a resolution to strengthen the trade union movement in schools and colleges.

## Equality and sector conferences – working together gets the boot

In a bizarre turn and after heated debate on the issue, the NEU Left faction voted to limit attendance to the NEU Equalities and Sector Conferences to one conference per member per year. The rationale for the change was that there are too many members attending multiple national conferences and not engaging with the union at a local level. However, applications to these conferences already need approval from local districts and priority is given to first-time attendees.

Until that time we stand in solidarity with striking NEU staff. Rather than limit engagement with equalities and sectors conferences, it is our view that districts should explore ways to encourage greater involvement in the local structures of the NEU. As it stands, the likely outcome of the executive’s decision will be to silo each equalities conference, creating unnecessary barriers.

While the NEU Left faction holds a majority on the executive, there was significant opposition to this move, which culminated in the decision being a recorded vote, meaning each executive member can be held accountable for the way in which they voted. It was heartening to see many new members of the executive get up to speak against. The opposition to the NEU Left majority is growing and making the demand for a more democratic union.

## Unite union staff dispute

The ongoing dispute between NEU management and union staff represented by Unite hung over the Daniel Kebede’s address. The result of an internal restructure of NEU staff, the dispute saw Unite members take strike action against the NEU earlier in September. Though strike action



School support staff in different unions fighting together, in Tower Hamlets HUGO PIERRE

for the week ahead had been postponed to enable talks, the tone from Kebede was far from conciliatory. Socialist Party members hope for a negotiated resolution to the dispute. Until that time we stand in solidarity with striking NEU staff.

## Bristol school staff prepare to strike over stolen pay

Every year, cost-of-living pay increases are agreed for school support staff and backdated to April – apart from in Cathedral Schools Trust (CST), where the academy chain has been pocketing the money for April-September every year!

Many school support staff are on minimum wage, paid term-time only, and need to have more than one job to make sure they can cover the bills. These essential staff roles include lunchtime supervisors, cleaners, admin staff, support for children with special needs, pastoral librarians, nurture, language support and teaching assistants.

They have been in negotiations with school leaders this year to recoup these stolen wages. The joint union pressure from the National Education Union (NEU) and Unison led to this back pay being paid for 2025 and agreed going forwards. But some staff have had this taken from pay packets for up to 15 years!

Roz Keir, NEU rep at Bristol Cathedral Choir School says: “The trust have had opportunities to give us the back pay but to date have only paid us this year’s amount. We don’t want

to strike, but we need the money that is owed to us. Support staff are vital to keeping our schools running and are already underpaid for their incredible work.”

Sheila Caffrey, assistant secretary of Bristol NEU, commented: “The trust claims that all support staff are valued and essential to running successful schools, but having reserves of £1.5 million while your lowest-paid staff aren’t receiving their full pay is dishonest and disrespectful. We remain committed to negotiations to support our members and education at CST and hope that this can be rectified soon.”

With successful strike ballots, both unions have agreed seven strike days across seven schools later this term, starting 5 November, if CST management don’t repay this money and ensure that these key staff have fair pay and conditions in line with support staff across Bristol. A ballot is running in two more schools, and action is being prepared in the remaining five schools in the trust, including in North Somerset.

EDITED VERSION OF BRISTOL NEU PRESS RELEASE

# University workers across four unions to ballot for industrial action

BEA GARDNER  
UCU MEMBER

Four university unions have announced they will be coordinating an industrial action ballot of their members in Higher Education (HE). The stated aim is that any strike action agreed will be organised jointly.

All five unions that participate in collective pay negotiations with the university employers’ association are in dispute over this year’s pay claim of just 1.4%. Members have already resoundingly rejected the offer in a series of consultative ballots. In Unite, 89% of members voted to reject the pay offer and 86% voted in favour of strike action.

Now the University and College Union (UCU), Unison, Unite and EIS in Scotland have announced they will be coordinating a ballot for industrial action from 20 October to 28 November. No doubt members of GMB will be wanting to participate in the action too.

This is the first time in recent years that an industrial action campaign has been coordinated between the main campus unions. It is something that Socialist Party members have been campaigning for. Combined, the unions have over 120,000 members, representing university workers in a range of academic, technical,

research-based, administrative and maintenance roles. If members vote ‘yes’ and beat the 50% turnout thresholds, then the whole university sector could be brought to a halt, with entire campuses shut down. This has the potential to significantly strengthen the impact of industrial action.

For that to happen, however, there needs to be a serious campaign to prepare members to vote ‘yes’ and to back the action. Given the dire health of university finances and the mass redundancies that took place last year, members need to see how the fight for pay is linked to the fight for full funding and job protection.

## Pressure on Starmer

UCU members in further education are also balloting at the same time. Keir Starmer’s government may attempt to distance itself from the disputes, arguing these are disputes with the education bosses, not the government. But the reality is that Starmer is facing the prospect of a post-16 education sector strike before the year is out. That is something he will not be able to ignore when, quite clearly, the funding of post-16 education is a government matter; the government’s delayed university funding reforms are set to be announced as part of November’s Budget!

There is also the potential to build



UCU university strikes 2023, here in Leeds LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

solidarity between staff and students, who are also angry about fee hikes while courses and staff are being cut.

The coordination of the unions this time will be a boost, particularly to UCU members who have often fought alone in recent years, but also to Unison members who have taken action on a branch-by-branch basis largely separate from action taken in UCU.

But that confidence is at risk of being undermined by splits within the leadership, particularly within UCU, the union with the most members in Higher Education. 20 Higher Education Committee members voted to ballot but 19 voted against, including those organised in the ‘UCU Commons’ faction who are general secretary Jo Grady’s closest supporters. Having lost the vote, they are already saying that the six-week ballot window is not enough to pass the 50% turnout threshold, attempting to demobilise the campaign before it’s even got started.

It is therefore more important than ever that all those who want to fight for full funding, job protection and pay come together and put maximum pressure on the leadership to back the action, while building for the action from below. Union members must have democratic control of their disputes, and we need representatives prepared to implement our decisions.

## Johnsons laundry workers strike

Unite members at the Birmingham laundry of Johnsons Workwear have taken two days strike action, the first in nearly 40 years, against low pay that has left them on little more than minimum wage.

Workers explained that all they are asking for is a 72p-an-hour rise, from a company which awarded its CEO £600,000 worth of shares. They were quick to point out that the share price is only what it is due to their efforts loading and cleaning everything from protective gear used by foundry workers to abattoir uniforms with animal remains on.

Workers described how the demands of meeting the deadlines for these were getting more intense as staffing levels had fallen over the years, with bonuses and works outtings cut back to just an insulated travel mug!

As one worker put it: “Like everywhere, we’re seeing the rich get richer off our work while we get poorer”.

## Get all the latest union news



NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net



PHOTO: STEVE SCORE

## Leicester uni strike forces talks on redundancies

STEVE SCORE  
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Determined strike action by University and College Union (UCU) members at Leicester University has forced management to finally agree to talks about threatened compulsory redundancies and £11 million proposed cuts to the staffing budget.

This is even though senior figures earning over £100,000 a year cost £10 million to the pay bill themselves!

Management had taken an aggressive ‘union-busting’ approach, saying they would not only deduct all pay for days lost due to strike action, but a further 50% pay if staff do not volunteer to cover student recruitment activities and rescheduled lectures cancelled due to the strike.

In contrast, the university spends an average of £46 million a year on capital expenditure and £1.5 million on external consultants.

UCU members are not only defending their jobs but defending education at the university. Socialist Students members, alongside other students, have been down regularly to support the picket lines, despite the failure of the student union to support the strike.

## Ofgem PCS strikes make breakthrough

JOHN WILLIAMS  
CARDIFF SOCIALIST PARTY

Workers at Ofgem, the government energy regulator, members of PCS union, went on their second round of strike action between 29 September and 3 October, fighting for fair pay, job security and better agreements.

Pickets on the first day brought some good news! Due to the strike action they took in August, there’s been a key breakthrough on pay, and workers said the employer has agreed to protect the permanent pay system. The proposed agreement was on the table for weeks, it took strike action to get them to agree to it. This hasn’t gone unnoticed from the wider layer of Ofgem workers. Since the strike action, the branch has gained more than 100 new members. It’s clear the campaign has had an effect.

There’s still more that needs to be resolved. They’re still demanding job security, and proper industrial relations to make sure any changes affecting the workers will be carried out properly.

Socialist Party members and Cardiff Trades Council delegates supported pickets every day. On one day there was a flourish of support. A key organiser in UCU who works at Cardiff University stopped to offer solidarity. Then a rep from the local RMT branch walked by, and someone who works at the local Unison building!

NICK CHAFFEY

SOCIALIST PARTY SOUTHERN REGIONAL SECRETARY

As the horror in Gaza has unfolded, millions across the world have marched in anger demanding an end to the war and national self-determination for the Palestinians. In Britain, mass demonstrations in London and across towns and cities, hundreds of thousands have marched month after month. Two years on, how has the Gaza movement reshaped politics and the outlook of workers and young people in Britain? What lies ahead and how can we build the socialist movement to end war and capitalist crisis?

The roots of this conflict and other capitalist wars raging across the world, now and in the past, stem from the inherent nature of the capitalist system. In a system of periods of economic growth, recession and crisis, rooted in the nation state, capitalist states are compelled to defend the interests of their own capitalist classes. Increasingly, the capitalist crisis globally brings capitalist interests into deeper conflict, spilling over into trade wars and brutal military wars that are unfolding around us, including the horrific war of national oppression on Gaza by the Israeli regime.

Though the huge scale and impact of the anti-war demonstrations has not been able to halt the genocidal slaughter, it has had reverberations in Britain and beyond. For two years, mass demonstrations through London have been sustained. This is an unprecedented protest movement, with an impact similar to the protests against the 30-year-long Vietnam war. The protests and the war have had a big effect on people's outlook, especially among young people exposed to the horror of war and capitalist crisis. Looking for answers, many have been attracted to the ideas of the Socialist Party.

The movement has contributed to the historic defeat of the Tory government in the July 2024 general election. But it has also contributed to the undermining of Keir Starmer's capitalist, pro-war, pro-cuts Labour Party, following its slavish support for Israeli state terror. Despite Starmer's more recent token recognition of a Palestinian state, his government still grants export licences to British arms manufacturers to supply the Israeli state's murderous onslaught.

In the face of mass opposition, both Tory and now Labour governments have attempted to cut across the movement with increased repression, fearful of its political radicalising effect in opposition to the establishment. One of the latest repressive measures has been to proscribe protest group Palestine Action as a 'terrorist' organisation, its tactics have included occupying and sabotaging

arms manufacturers in Britain linked to the Israeli state. Hundreds have been arrested for peacefully expressing support.

Attempts by reactionary Tory then home secretary Suella Braverman to mobilise the far right to 'defend the cenotaph' and ban a march in November 2023, led to a humiliating climbdown. It provoked the largest of all the anti-war demonstrations, and led to her being forced to resign. We wrote in the Socialist: "Though one Tory sacking is a start, it is not enough. This movement poses the potential to bring down the whole rotten Tory government. But to do this it has to continue to build and spread. The Socialist Party is campaigning for the trade unions to play a leading role in this movement, which would add enormously to its power."

"We also raise the need for a trade union-led electoral alternative to Starmer's anti-worker and pro-war policies at the next election. Socialist Party members will continue to push for the workers' movement to take steps in this direction."

### Radicalising effect on society

This movement has had a radicalising effect on all layers in society but especially amongst the Muslim working-class communities across Britain. Support for the Palestinian struggle has grown also amongst young people. There were school walkouts and protests in December 2023, including on the issue of draconian attempts by school leaders to prevent students wearing badges in solidarity with Palestine. Student encampments were set up on numerous university campuses, inspired by similar developments in the US. Anger over Gaza, and the role of Donald Trump and Keir Starmer, was a key factor motivating the school and college walkouts against Trump's state visit to Britain this September, led by Socialist Students.

At the beginning of the war in 2023, as leader of the opposition, Starmer provoked huge anger by stating his belief that the Israeli state has a right to cut off power and water to the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza.

Despite leading in the polls ahead of a general election, in the two months to March 2024, Labour lost 23,000 members. Starmer's refusal to call for a ceasefire in Gaza was cited as a reason for the resignation of scores of Labour councillors, including leading to the party losing control of councils. The effect was greatest in areas with larger Muslim populations, where the pressure of the mood from constituents on the issue was more sharply felt.

The results of the May 2024 local council elections showed how the

# Two years into a mass anti-war movement HORROR IN GAZA RESHAPES BRITAIN



PHOTOS: PAUL MATTHEWSON AND SOCIALIST PARTY

Gaza movement had shifted voters. Socialism Today in June 2024 reported: "Most recently opposition to the war on Gaza led to an 18% drop in Labour's vote in May's local elections in areas where more than a fifth of the population identified as Muslim, according to a survey of 930 wards conducted by Southampton University researchers." In the July General Election, in the 92 constituencies where those from a Muslim background make up more than 10% of the electorate, Labour's vote fell by 34% on 2019.

In May, a glimpse of the potential to develop the movement politically in readiness for the general election was shown in results for Socialist Party members standing under the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition banner. National Election Agent Clive Heemskerck reported: "The highlights of the campaign were the results in Southampton council's Bevois ward

and the Deepdale ward in Preston, with the TUSC candidates' scores of 32.2% and 31.3% respectively rattling the local Labour Party as our 'No to cuts! No to war on Gaza!' message struck home. Bevois was the safest ward for Labour in Southampton before May 2nd - but not now!"

Nadia Ditta in Bevois, Southampton, like many, had been attracted to our socialist anti-war message and our bold challenge to Starmer's Labour. On the eve of the May elections she wrote: "It's events that trigger us, that make us say 'enough is enough' and to fight for our rights. For me, it was the Israeli state's war on Gaza - supported by both Tories and Labour. Every day in my community people are fighting their own wars - wars to keep a roof over their heads and to keep food on the table."

After the local elections, looking ahead to the yet to be announced 2024 general election,

the Socialist Party argued: "What is needed is a mass democratic workers' party, based on the organised working class, with socialist policies. That is not likely to be achieved before the general election, but further steps to prepare the ground can be taken now. It is entirely possible that a bloc of workers' MPs, including Jeremy Corbyn and others, could be elected and from day one force Starmer to at least look over his left shoulder."

Whilst Jeremy Corbyn and the trade union leaders did not take up the idea and lead in bringing together a broad anti-war, anti-cuts electoral challenge to Starmer's Labour, the general election results did vindicate our perspectives and affirmed the potential to build a new mass workers' party, with the re-election of Corbyn and the four independent Gaza MPs.

Based on the mass Gaza demos and the huge strike wave of 2022-23 - the largest for 30 years, which at its height

saw over 500,000 sign up to 'Enough is Enough', led by strike leaders Mick Lynch (RMT) and Dave Ward (CWU) - a trade union-led platform could have won even greater support and seats. It was a missed opportunity and would have put the working class in a stronger position to fight against Starmer's war and austerity.

The 2024 general election also clearly showed that Gaza has not been the only event that is shaping the lives and outlooks of working-class people. The historic collapse in support for the Tories reflected anger at 14 devastating years of austerity, and also the failure of their divisive, anti-migrant, 'stop the boats' incantation, to save them. Over that time, living standards have fallen, public services have been cut savagely, schools, the NHS and local councils hit hard, which have left working-class communities as wastelands.

Since the global financial crisis of

2007-08 there have been 18 years of austerity, driving down living standards through cuts in wages, pensions, benefits and vital public services. As the system faced an existential crisis, the banks were bailed out using state resources and the bill was sent to the working class. The capitalists and their political parties, including Tony Blair and his pro-capitalist Labour Party, defended the 1%.

It was as a reaction to this that Jeremy Corbyn was elected as Labour Party leader in 2015, opening up the possibility of Labour being transformed into an anti-cuts mass workers' party. With its 2017 manifesto calling for nationalisation, council housing, NHS funding and free education, Jeremy won the sharpest rise in votes for any party since 1945. Whilst he mistakenly failed to drive the pro-capitalist wing out when the chance was there, and as a consequence was himself driven out by Starmer's right wing, he retains enormous authority. Add to this, his prominent support for the Gaza movement. It is no wonder that hundreds of thousands, in just a few weeks, signed up to the proposed launch of a new party with Zarah Sultana in August.

At the general election, Starmer's Labour government was elected by just 18% of the electorate, the lowest share of the vote of any government since 1918. And it has become much more unpopular since.

There is huge anger at continued austerity, attacks on pensioners' winter fuel payments and disabled people. A Labour government attacking the working class is driving fault lines between Labour and the organised workers in the trade unions. Significantly, the seven-months-long Birmingham bin strike brought this to a head at the policy conference of Unite the Union - Labour's biggest affiliate with over 1 million members. With just four abstentions, its 800 delegates voted for a Socialist Party initiated resolution, to review their links with Labour and suspend Angela Rayner and Birmingham councillors from the union.

### Your Party

This is the background to the launch of Your Party by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, that could now potentially fill the vacuum with a mass anti-war and anti-cuts workers' party. That would be a huge boost to the anti-war movement and would have ripples beyond Britain to the Middle East, where rotten regimes sit on top of burning anger in the 'Arab Street'.

A new party that takes off will need to face up to the challenges of filling the vacuum with a concrete programme to oppose war and cuts, with candidates across the country in next May's elections. It will open a confrontation with Labour and the entire capitalist class and media who will feel their interests threatened.

To be successful, Your Party must base itself on the power of the mass trade union movement, and its power in the workplaces, where workers come together and prepare to take collective action in defence of their interests. That power also needs to be taken into the anti-war movement.

The magnificent strike action of Italian dockworkers that spread to many other sections of workers across Italy

on 3 October, with 2 million demonstrating against the further export of arms for Netanyahu's genocide, and in support of the Global Sumud aid flotilla, shows a glimpse of the power of the organised working class. Throughout the anti-war movement, the Socialist Party has pointed to this potential power, arguing for the trade unions to put themselves at the head of the anti-war movement. Not just by mobilising their members to attend demonstrations but, for example, by convening meetings of shop stewards in industries related to the manufacture and distribution of arms to Israel, to discuss what steps can be taken.

The pay dispute of Unite members opening up at Leonardo's arms factories, many of which have had protests outside in solidarity with Palestinians, shows the potential for future common struggle of the anti-war and anti-cuts trade union movement.

The elections in May are an opportunity to harness the anger at Labour and the capitalist establishment. Your Party could potentially win hundreds of councillors and even take control of councils. That in itself would be a huge boost to the confidence of millions. It would open up decisive battles to deliver real change via the significant powers local authorities have to deliver many of the positive aspects of Corbyn's 2017 general election manifesto on jobs, housing, rent controls and restoring vital services. The effect of this would be to cut across Reform and the far right, as Corbyn's 2017 manifesto did, winning 1 million votes from Ukip.

The nightmare in Gaza continues, capitalist crisis deepens globally under the new era of Trump 2 and his tariff wars. But the outrage over Gaza is reshaping Britain in the consciousness of millions of protesters, workers and youth who are experiencing a rotten system first hand. Increasingly they are open to the ideas of a new socialist society and socialist world. They are the key conclusions we must draw and grasp every opportunity to build and strengthen the socialist opposition to win the important battles that lie ahead.

## COME TO SOCIALISM 2025

15-16 November in London

A weekend of discussion and debate

socialism.org.uk

Come and discuss: 'How can the wars against the Palestinians be stopped and a genuine and free Palestinian state be achieved?'

One of over 30 discussions at Socialism 2025



# £22,725 raised for socialist fightback in Britain £27,500 raised for socialist struggle worldwide

ISAI MARIJERLA  
SOCIALIST PARTY TREASURER

The donations we receive show the support for our ideas – fighting for a socialist world, free of war, oppression, and exploitation. We expose the lies of capitalism – that there is no money for public spending or for a real pay rise for all, or that austerity is the only choice.

No, it's a political choice made by right-wing politicians defending the bosses, big business, and the capitalist system. Last year, UK billionaire wealth increased by £35 million a day to £182 billion. This is enough to cover the whole of Manchester in £10 notes, almost 1.5 times over. There is more than enough wealth.

### What do we need?

We say take the wealth of these greedy, exploitative billionaires, and use it for the majority for the jobs, homes, and services we need. But to do this, we need to fight for it.

Socialist Party members have organised local campaigns and meetings, fighting for what we need. Our campaign stalls on fully funded NHS services always receive a positive response.

We also had many people approaching us to discuss our ideas on how to turn Your Party into a new mass workers' party, with real



democracy and accountability. Our demand that the new party must have a socialist programme is getting people engaged. Readers of the Socialist paper have donated after reading about developments in Your Party, as we put forward what is needed.

We also received donations at anti-war demonstrations, university freshers' fair activities, and at our public meetings. Socialist Party members have also raised funds in other ways.

A member, for example, donated £50 from a music gig they participated in. Others have organised car boot sales, summer BBQs, socialist walking tours, Women's Rugby World Cup sweepstakes, and many more.

As well as our fantastic fighting

fund collection, we have also hit our £25,000 target to support the work of the socialist international organisation we are part of – the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI). Socialist Party members in England and Wales have raised over £27,500 towards that.

### Struggle across globe

We are boldly fighting for socialism across the globe. With powerful mass demonstrations taking place in France, Italy, Spain, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, Greece, and Madagascar, there is no shortage of struggle.

The funds we raise are used to build the socialist ideas needed for these movements to win, and to fight for a system that puts the majority's interests first.

There is no rest for the struggle for socialism. The start of this month starts another quarter, and the target to raise £25,000 has been reset.

The current quarter is normally our busiest. This is when we host the biggest serious socialist event of the year – Socialism 2025.

Help us kick start by making a donation today.

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

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND				
AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025	FINAL FIGURES
Northern	983	800		123%
South West	2,539	2,100		121%
North West	1,395	1,200		116%
Southern & SE	2,639	2,400		110%
East Midlands	2,126	2,050		104%
London	5,104	5,000		102%
Yorkshire	2,322	2,650		80%
Wales	1,886	2,400		79%
Eastern	715	1,300	55%	
West Midlands	1,369	2,700	51%	
Other	1,647	2,400	69%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,725</b>	<b>25,000</b>		<b>91%</b>



## Why I became a socialist – a Nigerian perspective

OLAOTAN  
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

They say reading the bible eventually makes you an atheist. I could say the same about capitalism!

Living in a capitalist society, and experiencing its relentless assault on working people, coupled with its many contradictions, made me a socialist.

In Nigeria, I watched a land of breathtaking human and natural potential, systematically fail its people. We are a nation where the lights are perpetually off for the majority, where the wealth of our soil flows into the pockets of a tiny elite, and where the term 'public good' feels like a cruel joke.

### 'Logic' of capitalism

My political awakening began with the realisation that our suffering was not an accident, but by design. The so-called 'corruption' we decry is not a cultural flaw, it is the logical outcome of a capitalist system – creating a ruling class of billionaires and politicians who feast on the labour of the masses.

I went to the university, studied hard, and did everything society told me to do to have a good life – only to graduate into a non-existent job market.

I started to realise that my friends' poverty was not a sign of their 'laziness', but the direct result of wealth being transferred from their pockets through exploitative wages, privatised public assets, and spurious bank charges, into the vaults of the already wealthy.

The oil we had become a curse for the people of the Niger Delta, as the environment got decimated with oil spills, while the largesse of the oil was siphoned off to elite pockets, both local and foreign.

### Turbocharged problems

I travelled abroad, and expected to see the benefits of capitalism in the so called "saner climes", according to Nigerian journalists, only to witness capitalism on steroids. The same issues in Nigeria, but turbocharged. I walked into a cost-of-living crisis in Britain, which coincided with record profits for energy companies, while citizens were choosing between heating and eating.

Seeing this machinery of extraction up close, I could no longer believe in the myth of the 'self-made' billionaire, or the fairness of the system that creates them.

I joined the Socialist Party, because it is the only political tradition that names this system for what it is, and offers a clear alternative – a society where the vast resources of nations are owned and controlled democratically by working people, who create all wealth.

For the sake of Nigeria's children, and for the dignity of every person everywhere who works, we must build a world run not for profit, but for people. That is a future worth fighting for, and socialism is its name.

Do you agree?  
**JOIN THE SOCIALISTS**  
socialistparty.org.uk/join

## Labour re-introduces some maintenance grants

### Fight for free education, make the super-rich pay!

ADAM POWELL-DAVIES  
SOCIALIST STUDENTS ORGANISER

The Labour government has announced that it will bring back maintenance grants for tens of thousands of students from 'low-income backgrounds' who opt for so-called 'priority courses'.

Labour has not yet announced how much grant money students would receive, nor whether the grants would be paid on top of the existing maintenance loan allowance. But if the introduction of grants means that some of the poorest students have more money in their pockets, and leave university or college with less debt, then that is a victory.

Reintroducing maintenance grants, even in this very limited current form, was mentioned nowhere in Labour's general election manifesto last year. This latest announcement has to be seen as a concession to the widespread anger that has developed against Labour since then, as millions of working-class and young people correctly see Starmer's government as doing nothing but continuing the Tories' war and austerity agenda.

### Jeremy Corbyn

Labour's hand has also been forced by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' announcement. As leader of the Labour Party, Corbyn inspired millions of young people with his offer of free education: scrapping tuition fees and introducing maintenance grants for all. A new party fighting for free education as part of a socialist programme to transform young people's lives today would gain massive youth support – and Labour knows it.

Just the prospect of a new party fighting 'for the many, not the few' has Labour under pressure. At the same time, there is the prospect of a new round of national strike action in further and higher education, as the University and College Union (UCU) launches ballots this month (see page 7). Now is the time for students to join the fight – to go on the offensive and fight for what we need by making the super-rich pay, not workers and young people!

We could start by demanding the government rolls out its maintenance grant plans immediately, rather than waiting until 'the end of the Parliament' as is currently planned. We should also demand that grants are made available for all courses, not just so-called 'priority courses' deemed most important by big business and their politicians.

Another important battleground will be the level of grants paid to students. The current level of maintenance support for students is

Socialist Students marching with the University and College Union (UCU) against austerity



wofefully inadequate, whether that comes in the form of a loan, or as a mixture of a loan and a grant (as is the case for Welsh students studying in Wales, for example). A student receiving the maximum maintenance loan would still need to work 20 hours per week to meet a "basic standard of income", according to the Higher Education Policy Institute.

### 'Working every hour'

Explaining the targeted rollout of maintenance grants at Labour conference, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson declared: "Students' time at college or university should be spent learning or training, not working every hour". Great! In which case, let's make sure that maintenance grants are made available to all students.

Let's also make sure these new grants cover the full cost of living and studying. That would also stop student loans saddling us with a lifetime of debt after we graduate.

The shareholders of the FTSE100 companies get payouts of around £85 billion every year. Instead of charging a levy on international fees to provide grants to a fraction of 'home'

students, students should unite in a mass movement to demand free, fully funded education for all, paid for by taking the wealth from the super-rich.

### Funding Not Fees

These are the kinds of ideas Socialist Students societies will be fighting for on campus with the 'Funding Not Fees' campaign this term. As part of this, we will be organising lobbies of MPs ahead of the 26 November Budget, for them to raise an amendment calling for free, fully funded education, including the introduction of living maintenance grants for all students.

We will also be raising the campaign in Your Party meetings between now and the founding conference, to make sure the call for free education forms a key part of a new mass socialist party giving a voice to young people and the working class.

Join the student fightback  
**JOIN socialist students**  
socialiststudents.org.uk/join



Socialist Students marching against war and austerity at Labour conference THEO SHARIEFF

## Struggling with rent, over 50 join Herts Uni Socialist Students

MORGAN TRITTON  
HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We ran two campaign stalls across freshers' week, and were the only political society on campus. Over 50 new people signed up to Herts Socialist Students.

### Far right and new party

At our stalls, students voiced concern about the rise of the far right, following the 'Unite the Kingdom' march, and increasingly seeing England flags across small towns in Hertfordshire. Others were excited about the idea of a new party that amplifies the voice of students, especially scrapping tuition fees and cancelling student debt.

Many wanted to meet other socialists, and build a community on campus. There was frustration with political apathy on campus, but real enthusiasm to take action locally, especially through our campaigns to

improve democracy in our student union, and to end violence and harassment against women at Herts.

18 students attended our first meeting, discussing 'what is socialism?' Almost everyone attending was completely new to organising.

The main issues brought up by students in the discussion were struggling to pay rent or find accommodation; rising tuition fees and inequality in education; mental health and community isolation; disillusionment with mainstream politics; and wider crises of climate chaos, endless war, and the growing power of the super-rich.

There was a lot of enthusiasm in our first meeting to get organised, defend our right to protest, and to fight for socialism to end all wars. A number the new people will be joining the Socialist Students contingent on the national march for Palestine on 11 October in central London.

## We need free education

COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF KING'S COLLEGE LONDON YOUR PARTY SOCIETY

Extortionate rent. Delayed, expensive travel. No network to lean back to. These are some of the challenges that force students to give up their dream university. So what can universities and student welfare groups do to really help young people get into the university they aspire for?

Student accommodation must stop operating like a business. The maximum student loan (£13,348) cannot cover the average annual rent (£13,595) anymore, according to Unipol and Higher Education Policy Institute. Commuting is not always an option either – in cities like London Zone 1 travel alone can cost £44.70 per week.

### Cost of living

Schemes like King's Affordable Accommodation Scheme (KAAS) offer some relief, but only 20% of rooms participate in the scheme. Demand outpaces supply, despite campaigns to raise this to 40%. Similarly, hardship funds at King's – such as the King's Student Fund – exist, but budget expectations often ignore the realities of the cost-of-living crisis.

This inadequacy of existing affordability schemes forces students to use up their loan on rent and

seek alternative sources of income to cover their other living expenses, especially when parental financial support is limited. But that comes at a cost – missing out on studying and socialising and constantly stressing. On top of that, with more than 50% of students relying on part-time work during term time, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by this cost-of-living crisis.

### Housing

Universities' responses should be not only to offer more affordable housing, but increase hardship funding and reflect socio-economic background in admissions. A truly impactful long-term policy for working-class students, however, must also bring back free education and maintenance grants.

Every student deserves an equal chance to pursue their dreams instead of being penalised for their background. And when education equality is achieved, that's when we will live in a fairer society.

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

## Starmer on the telly? Quick! Get out and sell the Socialist

BILL REED  
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Not a single copy of the Socialist went unsold in West London last week. We sold 66 papers – with many buyers telling us that the sight and sound of Keir Starmer at Labour's conference had been a factor.

We sold 23 in 40 minutes at Ealing Broadway on the day of Starmer's speech, and 12 the day after. Obviously, some people had a premonition that they would need a Socialist

to get through Labour's week, as we sold 18 and 11 on the Saturday and Monday before.

If the Labour Party on TV wasn't enough motivation to buy, perhaps our slogan 'Can't stand Trump, can't trust Starmer' had an effect. Many people gave us a thumbs up, even if they didn't stop to buy.

What is certain is that there are many more people prepared to buy the Socialist than we can ever meet. How can we expand our sales to meet this hidden demand?

Here's another slogan: 'Sell more, more sellers.' It is surprisingly easy to sell our paper. We are very proud of our analysis of society and our perspectives. Let's make sure more people get to read them.

Like what you've read?  
**SUBSCRIBE TO THE SOCIALIST**  
socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe



# WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

### WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ENVIRONMENT

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy, and ending the problems of early obsolescence – where products are designed to 'wear out' and be replaced - and unrecycled waste.

- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to carry out a major switch to clean, green energy, without any loss of jobs, pay or conditions.

- A democratically planned, massively expanded, free to use, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.

- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards

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

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.

- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!

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

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

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

# Housing campaigners launch tenant and resident union

## Come along on 11 October

**PAUL KERSHAW**  
UNITE THE UNION HOUSING WORKERS BRANCH  
CHAIR

Rents are rising ahead of inflation, despair is widespread, and in the private sector, tenants' security is dependent on the whim of their landlords. On Saturday 11 October, housing activists are meeting to discuss establishing a national tenant and resident union. The aim is not to replace existing organisations, but to bring campaigns together.

Suz Muna, from the Social Housing Action Campaign (Shac), said this about the event:

"We've had a very positive response. The in-person tickets of 150 seats are now sold out and we have a waiting list for cancellations. However, an online link is available so people can still join by Zoom. If in-person is the better option, people can contact shac.action@gmail.com for a seat.

"We have over 60 organisations supporting the initiative, including national campaign groups like Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), and housing campaign groups. Most gratifying, however, is that the majority of backers are tenant and resident associations. They are desperate for an organisation to support, empower, and amplify their local campaigning, and have therefore actively supported what we are doing.

"Our vision for the union is that it will be run democratically by and for tenants and residents. This is what distinguishes it from the various landlord and government 'tenant voice' initiatives that aim to carefully control the agenda and work programmes of their forums.

In his personal blog, 'The Housing Sector', one activist describes how he started by raising basic problems, like leaks and windows that wouldn't open. Not only were the problems not resolved, but the social landlord went to great lengths to silence him.

When he started sharing his experience on social media, he found he was not alone.

He describes how he has become convinced of the importance of building a union across tenures. He says: "So look – whether you're sceptical, uncertain, afraid, or ready to embrace the idea of a union. Whether you're a resident who needs one, or someone still figuring out where you stand, now's the time to join the debate.

"If you can attend the Shac event on Saturday 11 October, please do. It would be great to have you there. If you're watching online – brilliant. Take part. Share your thoughts. Add your voice."

- Find out more at shaction.org



PAUL MATTSOON

# PROTEST AT THE SPYCOPS INQUIRY THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 9AM

International Dispute Resolution Centre  
St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4

as the inquiry into undercover policing returns for live in-person hearings



## Interview

# Black History Month: Play celebrates Grunwick strike

'We Are The Lions, Mr Manager' is the story of super-exploited workers in London at the Grunwick film processing factory strike of 1976 to 1978 and the inspirational strike leader Jayaben Desai.

Most were migrant Asian women. They demanded trade union recognition and the reinstatement of sacked colleagues.

David Maples spoke to actor Rukmini Sircar, and actor, writer and Socialist Party member Neil Gore, about Townsend Productions' new play 'We Are the Lions, Mr Manager'.

### Why are you reviving a play about a strike 50 years ago?

Neil: We produced it originally for the 40th anniversary and so we're reviving it for the 50th anniversary. It felt the time was right. It's good that it's the 50th anniversary so we can commemorate the strike. It's good to do that, but it's also a very appropriate time to do it with the period having so many similarities.

The landscape is similar in lots of ways with the economic downturns, with Labour governments, with the rise of the far right - the National Front in the early mid 70s and now with other formations. The state of the nation is pretty similar.

The show has a lot of things to say about now. As much as you know the history in terms of immigration, politics, trade unions, it is masterful. That's why we're reviving it, as a means to talk about today's precedents.



TOWNSEND PRODUCTIONS

### Neil, you get to play Mr Manager...

Neil: I play Malcolm Holden who was the manager in question who kind of started this whole event really. It is complete ineptitude but he started it and it snowballed to become a massive moment in British trade union history. It became one of the biggest events in a century.

He was responsible for it really but

he wasn't expecting that. Asian women were seen as weak, quiet and obedient and so on. He didn't expect a fight back.

I also play lots of other characters. I play Jack Dromey from the TGWU union who later became a Labour MP. I also play a fellow called John Gouriet from the National Association for Freedom. They were a right-wing think tank full of military types and land owners and that sort of

● We Are The Lions Mr Manager tours nationally from 11 October. More details from townsendproductions.org.uk



thing. They were advising the management about how best to break strikes and how to get one over on the trade union movement by using the courts and the legal system. So they play a quite a big role in the story. There's lots of elements to it. I'm very busy!

### Townsend Productions are known for their creative approaches so what can we look forward to in this production?

Neil: Well there's a lot of music involved in the show. We've become more technically savvy so we were able to present big stories with talented actors but also with the use of technology. There's music, sound and projection which helps the storytelling.

The telling of the story is very creative because the sense of a mass movement is generated through the audience. We've got more recently to inviting friends and choirs to come and join us. They join us at various points and help bolster not just the picket line but the sound and the connection with our audiences.

# Foster carers: More than 'just cooking dinner and watching TV'

**NIKI MARANGOS**  
FOSTER CARER, NORTH LONDON

Foster carers have expressed anger and frustration after a UK government representative told a court that their role is little more than "welcoming children into our homes, cooking dinner, and watching TV on the sofa with them."

"This is outrageous and insulting," said one foster carer. "It completely misrepresents what we do. Fostering is not a casual evening on the sofa, it's 24/7 trauma-informed, trauma-responsive care for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and loss. Reducing our work to cooking and TV is deeply wrong."

Foster carers provide care because they genuinely care, often at personal cost, sleepless nights, emotional strain, managing crises, and financial challenges. They should have the same rights and protections as other professional carers.

The comment was made during the employment tribunal hearing in the landmark case – Oni and Others v London Borough of Waltham Forest and Others – which could



SILVRNIT/CC

leapfrog directly to the Supreme Court. The case brought by the National Union of Professional Foster Carers (NUPFC) argues that foster carers should be legally recognised as workers, giving them protections, such as minimum wage, holiday pay, and rights like whistleblowing and against discrimination. The Labour government is disgracefully trying to block this.

Martina, a foster carer involved in the case, said: "We do this work because we care. But caring does not mean being left unprotected or disrespected. This portrayal is outrageous." Failing to recognise foster carers as workers risks burnout, and instability for children in care.

### FosterWiki survey (2023):

- 76% of carers report declining mental health, due to the demands of fostering
- 63% experience financial hardship
- 82% felt undervalued
- Nearly 70% warned that fostering is becoming unsustainable without urgent reform

# Little Owls, Leeds: Nursery privatisation pushed back again



PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

**IAIN DALTON**  
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY AND SAVE LITTLE OWLS NURSERIES CAMPAIGN

Parents and carers in the campaign are celebrating. Now ten nurseries will stay with the council, out of the 12 the Labour council originally tried to privatise.

Through campaigning and lobbying, over the last year and a half, parents and carers, and our supporters in the trade unions, have pressured the council.

We see the future for the two nurseries that Labour is still privatising. The intended operators of Shepherd's

Lane Little Owls nursery announced a whopping 24% price hike.

I was interviewed on behalf of the campaign in the local newspaper, radio and regional TV. As the campaign continues to point out, Leeds Labour councillors have always had a choice.

They can either continue to privatise, with a detrimental effect on parents, carers, and their children. Or, instead, they can work with us, and the trade unions representing nursery workers, to campaign to demand the funds necessary from central government to ensure high-quality, affordable nursery provision.

# Mass protests bring down government in Madagascar

SCOTT HUNTER  
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Madagascar has been rocked by waves of protests, the largest of their kind on the island in over 15 years.

Demonstrations began on 25 September, following the arrest on 19 September of two local politicians in the capital Antananarivo who had planned a protest over chronic power and water supply outages. Beyond the initial demands, the movement is now calling for the resignation of President Andry Rajoelina and action against corrupt judges and government officials. The movement has already forced Rajoelina to dissolve

his government, but the demonstrations have continued with the demand for the president himself to resign.

Following similar recent movements in Nepal and Morocco, the demonstrations in Madagascar also have a youthful character. They have been coordinated through a group called Gen Z Mada, primarily on Facebook and TikTok. Gen Z Mada has now formed a steering committee to organise further protests. The make-up of this committee is not yet clear, complicated by the need for protesters to hide their identities in the face of increased state repression.

Several trade unions, including

the country's largest, Malagasy Trade Union Solidarity, have also come out in support of the movement. At the same time, capitalist figures such as former President Marc Ravalomanana and opposition leader Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko have also supported the demonstrators.

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 75% of people living below the poverty line (according to the World Bank) and only one third having access to electricity. Clearly, the youth of Madagascar are unwilling to accept these conditions any longer and are showing their willingness to struggle for a better future despite state repression. Already, 22 have been killed and over 100 more seriously injured.

If and when Rajoelina resigns, young people and workers will have to decide what kind of society they want to build and confront the question of how to get there. So far, the demands of the movement have focused on the resignation of Rajoelina and 'cleaning up the system'. That system is capitalism! And it cannot be cleaned up; it must be put in the bin.

This is the urgent question confronting workers and youth in Madagascar, and all over the world. The trade unions should not just support the youth movement but come out alongside them and play a leading role in fighting for system change. Workers' action - up to and including a general strike - would not only bring the Rajoelina government to its knees but also demonstrate with spectacular force who really runs society.

Also posed is moving from an ad hoc online movement to building a truly democratic mass party of workers and youth where tactics, strategy and programme can be discussed. Such a party must say no to the involvement of the capitalists and yes to a government of representatives of workers, the poor and oppressed! Only the workers and youth can build a socialist Madagascar and a socialist world, linking up with the working class of the region, Africa, and globally.



Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar  
PHOTO: CLAUDIO CENTONZE/EUROPEAN UNION/CC



France has had five prime ministers in the three years since the 2022 presidential election won by Emmanuel Macron.

The latest was the most short-lived. Sebastian Lecornu lasted just 26 days. His appointment was preceded by mass protests and strikes erupting, and was punctuated by the latest 24-hour stoppage on 2 October.

"France is not only ungovernable, its public finances are in a mess, the economy is weak, social tensions are rising and the markets are jittery", an editorial for the Financial Times in London puts it, branding Lecornu's departure "a humiliation for the president". The capitalist class faces deep political crisis.

Macron was first elected in 2017 claiming to be 'neither left nor right' but has used increasingly authoritarian methods and ruthlessly carried out the policies of the capitalist class. Now, without his party having a majority in parliament, he has been unable to pass the latest austerity budget seeking to make the working class pay.

The latest phase of the political crisis has included a breakdown of relations with the traditional conservative party, on which he has relied for support.

Macron could try again to cobble together a government, dissolve parliament and trigger new elections, or otherwise allow a 'zombie government' to stagger on unable to pass a budget.

Workers in France have seen their strikes play a role in bringing down prime ministers. It is a weapon that can be used again to further show the power of the working class. The struggles could develop to bring an early end to Macron's five-year term. Elections, whenever they come, will more sharply raise the need for the working class to have its own mass workers' party with a socialist programme - a key demand of Gauche Révolutionnaire, the Socialist Party's sister party in France.

• For more on events in France and internationally visit [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)

# Italian workers strike in defence of Gaza



HUGO PIERRE  
REPORTING FROM ITALY

The Israeli state's capture and arrest of aid workers, peace campaigners, workers' representatives and parliamentarians on the Global Sumud Flotilla has sparked a general strike across Italy. The flotilla vessels, which were aiming to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza to deliver humanitarian aid, much of which was collected from working-class areas, to the people of Gaza, were boarded at gunpoint in international waters by the IDF. This follows the IDF's campaign of harassment of the flotilla at various points on the journey, using small-scale incendiary devices.

The flotilla stopped in Genoa, in August, where port workers had organised a mass demonstration of 50,000 throughout the city. They had pledged to boycott handling any goods bound for Israel if the flotilla

was not able to successfully complete the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. The Israeli state's siege, bombardment and starvation of the Palestinians has enraged Italian workers and youth. They also oppose the right-wing Meloni government's continued backing of these genocidal actions.

USB (Unione Syndicate de Base), a grassroots trade union federation, backed the port workers by declaring a general strike on 22 September. It was clear, in the run-up to the day, that port workers across Italy, alongside transport and school workers, were preparing for action, as USB general secretary, Guido Lutrano, called for unified workers' action on the day. This forced the largest trade union federation, CGIL, into organising its own partial action on 19 September.

The 22 September strike closed ports, stopped national and regional train services, and closed schools

across Italy. Demonstrations in over 80 cities and towns mobilised tens of thousands of workers, pro-Palestine activists and youth. These strikes, organised in compliance with the Italian anti-trade union laws, broke the logjam holding back the Italian working class. Many now see the plight of the Palestinians also as a proxy for their own struggle against austerity, underemployment and precarious working. Youth see this as a fight for their future. As one USB leader put it: "Let's stop Israel, let's stop this government... this day gives us hope", as he called on members to start a militant campaign against the Meloni government's school privatisation.

## 50,000 demonstrate in Genoa

Port workers have openly challenged Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's rule. One of her government's first acts was to make the blocking of goods from Italian ports illegal, with punishments including imprisonment. This hasn't stopped workers repeatedly targeting Israeli military shipments.

With two days' warning, the USB, alongside other smaller trade union federations, and then the CGIL, called a general strike on 3 October. The news of the flotilla's capture, which included a Genoese port worker, sparked an immediate response by the youth. University buildings were occupied on some campuses, and impromptu sit-ins and marches took place in others. School students marched in cities including Genoa on the eve of the strike day.

In Genoa, workers assembled to block all access to the ports. Shipping was essentially suspended for 24 hours. There were other assembly points across the city from 8am.

Thousands of youth marched or made their way to assembly points alongside workers to march through the city.

Workers and youth are assembling in Rome for another major demonstration. This will lift workers' confidence to boycott transporting all shipments to Israel despite the threats.

The USB organised an international meeting of port workers to raise the prospect of solidarity action in other Mediterranean ports. This international solidarity would not only be an important lever to ensure the success of future flotillas but could potentially be a big factor in bringing an end to the war.

The organised working class and youth in Italy now has the opportunity to force Meloni from power. Landini claimed he even had papal sanction to act. He was reportedly told, "It is time to make noise, time to give voice to those that don't have one". The mass action of the working class and youth on 3 October is a powerful voice that needs a programme to defeat the right-wing regime ruling on behalf of the elite. This elite has no answers to the crisis of capitalism engulfing Italian society.

The strikes bringing together the workers and youth will open up a new battle for a workers' electoral list, based on this mass action, to stand on clear socialist policies.



PHOTOS: HUGO PIERRE

# West Ham – Thousands protest to reclaim their football club

CIARÁN O'DONOGHUE  
WEST HAM SUPPORTER AND NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Thousands of West Ham football fans gathered by the directors entrance to the London Stadium on 20 September to call for the resignation of David Sullivan and Karen Brady from the club's board of directors.

This protest follows last year's successful campaign to reinstate concession tickets, which were cruelly removed by the club. This would have meant that pensioners, as well as young and disabled people, would have had to pay full price.

Both this campaign and the recent protest were led by fan group Hammers United, with members of the Socialist Party standing alongside them at many of these protests

At the most recent protest, there were chants of "sack the board", "support the team, not the regime", and "you sold our soul for this shit hole". The latter is a reference to the club's move from its beloved Upton Park stadium to the rented London

Stadium in Stratford, ripping West Ham out of the working-class community it was founded in.

The club rents the stadium, which is owned by a holding company of the Greater London Authority (GLA). The rent doesn't cover the operating costs of the stadium, so the GLA subsidises it. Matchday catering is run by Delaware North, an American multinational company, which charges fans extortionate prices for food and drink.

At Upton Park, West Ham was seen as having one of the best atmospheres of any football stadium in the country. West Ham share their football ground with an athletics stadium, something that fans didn't have any say in, which hinders the matchday atmosphere.

If Sullivan sells up and Brady resigns, it will be yet another huge victory fought for and won by the fans. But what will come next?

A minority owner of the club is Daniel Kretinsky, the Czech billionaire who has already done his absolute best to gut Royal Mail - cutting

jobs and reducing the service days. He would mean more of the same rot. These issues aren't unique to West Ham. Capitalist greed runs rife in football.

The increasing costs of tickets, food, drink, and travel are making football increasingly inaccessible to the working class. The owners of Premier League clubs hoard all wealth, while clubs like Morecambe have to fight for their very existence.

The Socialist Party says we need to kick the billionaire owners out of football. Control and ownership of clubs should be in the hands of fans, players, staff, and the local community, through democratically elected committees.

The greed and corruption in football under capitalism needs to end. We must fight for socialism, and to reclaim our game.

• Read 'West Ham: Stop rip-off tickets and reclaim our game' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)  
• 'Reclaim the Game' - [leftbooks.co.uk](http://leftbooks.co.uk)



# Nigeria Solidarity: Support activists on trial

On 9 October, Adaramoye Michael Lenin, a member of the Democratic Socialist Movement, the Socialist Party's sister party in Nigeria, faces trial - alongside a number of other activists, including Mosiu Sodiq - charged with treason, which carries the death penalty. It is now over a year since the Tinubu government arraigned the defendants as the trial date has been pushed back time and again.

We are asking for another urgent push getting protest letters sent (which can be sent by as many individuals as possible to [hc@nigeriahc.org.uk](mailto:hc@nigeriahc.org.uk), copying in [info@justice.gov.ng](mailto:info@justice.gov.ng), [info@njc.gov.ng](mailto:info@njc.gov.ng)), trade union motions passed, and signatures added to the petition. Updated material for all of that can be found at [nigeriasolidarity.com](http://nigeriasolidarity.com)



£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



# the Socialist

Issue 1339

9-15 October 2025

formerly **Militant**

# How can Your Party be a party of working-class struggle and socialism?



PHOTOS: PAUL MATSSON & UK PARLIAMENT/CC

## Come to **SOCIALISM** 2025

15 and 16 November

A weekend of socialist ideas



Buy your tickets at [socialism.org.uk](http://socialism.org.uk)

10% discount on all ticket types



**W**e live in a crisis-ridden system. How many of us find ourselves in perpetual despair at the state of the world? The genocidal war on Gaza, the declining state of our public services, the continued cost-of-living crisis and the attacks on democratic rights, to name just a few pressing issues.

Yet how many of us are armed with ideas about what can be done?

The mainstream political party conferences taking place this autumn definitely don't provide any answers. Socialism 2025 is different. On the agenda at Socialism 2025 is a socialist programme for the issues we face: the housing crisis, NHS waiting lists, education cuts,

discrimination and oppression, and the war on Palestine, to name a few.

It is also a forum for debate and discussion, where all those who want to change the world can come together to discuss the best means of achieving it. It will be an important congregation of organised trade unionists, socialist campaigners, students and activists.

Socialism 2025 takes place just two weeks before the proposed founding conference of Your Party. The centrepiece Saturday evening rally is entitled 'How Your Party can be a party of working-class struggle and socialism'. Hearing from trade union leaders and socialists about the campaign to root Your Party in the powerful force of working-class struggle

to best take on Starmer's Labour and Farage's Reform.

Every session at Socialism 2025 will point towards what the alternative to this rigged, crisis-ridden system is: socialism. There will also be a series of workshops offering a deeper dive into the ideas of great Marxist and socialist thinkers, as well as working-class history and lessons from previous struggles, including the Arab Spring.

So whether you are brand new to the ideas of socialism or a stalwart of fighting for socialist change, you need to be at Socialism 2025. It will be the antidote to despair and the best preparation for the tumultuous events looming in 2026.

**BEA GARDNER**

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p13



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