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# the Socialist

Issue 1340

16-22 October 2025

formerly **Militant**

# THEY SAY THERE'S NO MONEY...

# BUT THE RICH STAY RICH!

## Take the wealth off the 1%

**If you save every single penny you earn for the next 52 years you could become one of the richest 10% in the UK.**

Mind, to do this you would need to be an average wage earner on £37,430 a year. Oh! Also, living rent free surviving on fresh air!

These figures come from recent research by the Resolution Foundation which highlights the growing wealth gap between rich and poor. Unsurprisingly, the report tells us "wealth mobility in Britain is low - people that start life wealthy tend to stay wealthy, and visa versa."

Of course, no working-class person can save everything they earn. However, for a growing number of workers, disabled and young people a lack of any savings is a huge issue.

A fifth of adults have less than £1,000 tucked away in savings, including one in ten adults who have no savings whatsoever.

This leaves millions dreading any unexpected one-off costs. A car breakdown, broken washing machine, even your kids having a growth spurt and needing new shoes can push families over the edge. Meanwhile the cost-of-living crisis tightens its grip.

Prior to Starmer's election, some hoped that life under Labour would be better than it was under the hated Tories. However, 15 short months later any such hope has fizzled out. Starmer is the most unpopular prime minister since polling began, and Rachel Reeves is the most unpopular chancellor - that's some record!

The Budget on 26 November will undoubtedly serve the interests of capitalism at the expense of working people.

With both the Tories and Labour languishing in the polls, for the bosses getting parties that can reliably represent their interests elected is looking shaky. They've got away with it so far because the working class doesn't have its own party. This has led to a layer of workers looking towards Reform, who pretend to be anti-establishment, but have nothing to offer

except divisive racist scapegoating and more austerity.

Amidst all this, Jeremy Corbyn and Zahrah Sultana's Your Party has the potential to become a party that can really represent the interests of working-class people. If this potential is realised it could light up the sky - giving real hope to millions.

The Socialist Party will be in the thick of the coming struggle, putting forward the necessity of Your Party adopting socialist policies to fight austerity, build council homes and bring back services. And ensuring that trade unions, local community groups fighting cuts and socialists are at the heart of this battle.

There are a tiny minority at the top of society that hoard unimagined wealth and use it solely to increase their plunder. There are more than enough resources to provide us all with a decent standard of living; instead of letting them stay in the clutches of the mega-rich bosses, the working class should be in control. A democratic socialist world is possible, let's fight for it.

**ELAINE BRUNSKILL**  
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

## Gaza ceasefire

# Struggle for the complete end of the war and occupation - and for socialist change

**YOUR PARTY**

**TUists 4 a New Party >>> p3 The 'Block Vote' >>> p8-9  
No cuts stance? Corbyn, Sultana and Polanski >>> p11**

**Page 2**

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

GAZA CEASEFIRE

Struggle for the complete end of the war and occupation - and for socialist change



A shortened version of an article by Shahar Ben-Horin, Socialist Struggle Movement, Israel-Palestine. For the full version see socialistworld.net.

More than half a year since Netanyahu's ultra-right government collapsed the previous ceasefire, a new ceasefire came into effect on Friday 10 October. It sparked a wave of relief and cautious hope that the two-year-long war of extermination may be nearing its end, accompanied by an agreement for the release of hostages and prisoners. Tens of thousands of surviving residents in Gaza began marching northwards from the makeshift displacement camps in the south, with cries of joy.

The previous ceasefire collapsed within two months, when the occupation government refused to proceed to 'Phase B'. The Trump administration now offers 'guarantees' that this ceasefire will lead to an end to the war, which Trump typically hails as progress toward 'regional peace'. Simultaneously, the same administration threatens to back a renewed Israeli offensive in Gaza should Hamas allegedly violate the framework's terms.

In line with the framework, Israeli occupation forces have withdrawn to the 'Yellow Line' - the deployment line as of 14 August, the date of the

assault on Gaza City. Occupation forces continue to directly control over 50% of the Strip and will maintain the siege policy.

Although the ceasefire is expected to increase the entry of 'aid' in the form of essential goods and basic equipment, including materials needed for infrastructure rebuilding, the Israeli military can easily obstruct the transfer of supplies, especially in the vast areas under its direct control.

At an undefined date, the Israeli army is supposed to withdraw to the 'Red Line'. This is conditional on replacing the Hamas administration with a 'technocratic' government under Trump's direct control - a 'temporary' colonial administration backed by an 'International Stabilisation Force', a policing and occupation force directed by US imperialism and regional regimes. Further withdrawal is supposedly contingent on 'demilitarisation of the Strip', with full withdrawal expected after an undefined number of years. The Hamas leadership has already clarified that its movement will not disarm.

Instability

This ceasefire is built on very unstable ground, creating high uncertainty about the coming months. There is concrete potential for collapse scenarios, as well as, as occurred with the previous ceasefire, military escalation in other arenas - including an attack on Iran that could ignite another war cycle.

Netanyahu's government has been forced to cooperate with 'Phase A' of the framework due to mounting pressure from Washington, which in turn reflected increased pressure from Arab and Muslim regimes in the

region, and from governments within the Western imperialist bloc. Israel's arrogant bombing of Qatar's capital on 9 September, a US ally, prompted an unprecedented US declaration of commitment to defend Qatar and likely triggered the new attempt at a stabilising exit strategy from the Gaza crisis.

Mass protest strikes in Italy against the genocidal war marked a new level of international working-class intervention and highlighted the radicalisation potential of the prolonged historical crisis, which has shaken mass consciousness worldwide. The mass movements, although not sufficiently developed to directly compel the halting of the war machine, are undoubtedly a significant background factor in the dynamic. This includes the highly contradictory protest movement within Israeli society, where dominant forces have been establishment-aligned and only belatedly adopted a clear demand to end the war, yet objectively exerted pressure that somewhat constrained Netanyahu's government - albeit to a much too limited degree.

The concentrated aspirations of Netanyahu's government to erase the existence of the Palestinian people - currently pursued primarily through efforts to continue displacement from the territories of historic Palestine - are not going away. In particular, the West Bank remains in the crosshairs of Netanyahu's government, which seeks to deepen the colonial settlement enterprise and advance annexation measures.

Palestinian state

Netanyahu has not even paid lip service to hypothetical recognition of a Palestinian state, and Trump's framework will not reach the implementation of 'Point 19', which suggests that at some unknown future time, conditions might ripen for realising the Palestinian people's national aspiration for statehood. Trump's framework is not intended to pave the way for a solution based on freedom and equality for the Palestinian people and all peoples of the region, but rather to re-advance the normalisation of the occupation in the service of US, Arab, and Israeli capital. Such a plan will inevitably lead to further bloodshed and even more extreme deterioration.

Further demonstrations and strikes are needed, both locally and internationally - as well as intensified organised actions among Israelis to refuse to participate in military aggression. But there is also a need for a struggle for an alternative.

Without a fundamental, socialist solution that includes ending the occupation and achieving freedom, equality, personal security, and social justice for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis and all peoples of the region, the path is paved for even more catastrophic bloodshed.

Yes to ending the war of extermination. No to the plans of Trump and Netanyahu. Overthrow the death government. There is no solution without a struggle to end the occupation and for social justice.

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'Trade unionists for a new party' reconvene: What are the next steps in the unions to fight for a party based on the working class?

IAIN DALTON  
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Keir Starmer's Labour government is preparing yet more austerity in the Autumn Budget while Reform rises in the polls. But with the recent clashes at the summit of 'Your Party' and the published timetable for the launch of the new party having slipped somewhat, the reconvened 'Trade Unionists for a New Party' meeting on Monday 13 October was aptly timed to discuss the role of the organised working class in these developments.

With over 570 registrants and over 300 screens taking part, including a number of watch parties, hundreds of trade unionists tuned in to discuss the way forward.

Strikes in Italy have inspired many workers in Britain. To start the meeting, Hugo Pierre, former Unison National Executive Council (NEC) member, reported from the demonstrations and massive strikes of Italian workers. This struggle has shaken the right-populist Meloni government, and shown how workers can bring society to a halt. Hugo argued that the movement has the "potential power to organise politically, to win a general election and force the Meloni government out of power". Like in the UK, "there's a vacuum that needs to be filled by the working class."

On 21 July, over 1,000 trade unionists had attended the launch of the Trade Unionists for a new party campaign, hosted by former Labour MP and chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) Dave Nellist and addressed by Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sultana, just days before they launched 'Your Party'. In introducing the 13 October recall meeting, Dave outlined how since then ten follow-up meetings of trade unionists in specific unions have taken place so far.

The most recent of these was of members of the RMT transport union, hosted by the London Underground (LU) engineering branch, secretary Sam Ashley explained. Dave reminded us that this was the late RMT general secretary Bob Crow's old branch who, in the mid-2000s, convened two conferences of trade unionists on the crisis of political representation and played a leading role in founding TUSC.

Sam reported on the motion

carried overwhelmingly by the RMT London Transport region, calling for the National Executive Committee (NEC) to engage with Corbyn and Sultana about the role the union could play in the founding of a new party, including to be involved in the drafting of policy, and encouraged branches to pass such a motion "to start the conversation in trade union branches".

Why the working class?

University and College Union (UCU) NEC member Richard Wild questioned whether it was right to centre a new party on the working class and the trade unions. UCU congress in May had overwhelmingly agreed that UCU should engage in the debate about a new party, encourage members to stand as candidates, and invite Jeremy Corbyn and the Independents to meet with the NEC.

But Richard argued to "do politics differently" rather than being based on trade unions, pointing to former Momentum leader James Schneider's championing of 'organic mobilisation' in Latin America as another model. He worried that a focus on the working class would exclude groups such as disabled people, homeless or migrant workers.

This point was taken up by a number of other speakers. RMT member Simon argued the importance of aiming to represent the working-class people who feel betrayed, while also putting forward a programme that champions the interests of all oppressed people. Throughout the meeting, trade unionists argued for policies against austerity and council cuts, on housing, benefits, tuition fees, for nationalisation, the right to protest and more.

Unite Executive Council member Suzanne Muna explained that 'working class' means all those people Richard was referring to, "but the organised and collective working class has the power to make change".

Unite is a Labour-affiliated union. Suz reported on the decision of Unite's policy conference to debate the union's relationship with Labour, particularly due to the role of Angela Rayner and the Labour councillors in the Birmingham bin strike. She reported that around 20 Unite branches had passed their model motion so far to campaign for a special conference.

Trade unions have a role

Deji Olayinka, chair of a Communication Workers Union (CWU) branch, argued for trade unionists, socialist parties, working-class and community groups to be able to join and affiliate to Your Party. He explained that trade unions playing a collective role in the new party does not mean a return to unaccountable leaders "over riding the votes of thousands of members", but "a federal system where democratic interventions can take place at all levels", including at branch and regional level, that would



Unite bin workers in Birmingham are fighting tooth and nail against a brutal Labour council. The attempts to fire and rehire workers with some taking an £8,000 a year pay cut led to Unite the Union conference voting to examine the union's affiliation to the Labour Party

"prevent leaders blocking policies in interests of the working class". He explained that members across CWU, a Labour-affiliated union, want disaffiliation. If union branches were able to affiliate to YP it would help a bottom-up wave within the union to fight for disaffiliation.

Also speaking from an affiliated union, Unison NEC member April Ashley explained the petition and model motion campaigning to re-view the union's political fund, to enable money only to be used to back candidates that support the union's policies. Only 16% of Unison members pay to affiliate to Labour.

Chris Bowkett, a branch chair in the retail union Usdaw, another Labour-affiliated union, explained how several model rule change motions had been drawn up to be put forward for next year's Annual Delegate Meeting, including a rule change to remove the limitation on branches only being able to make political donations to the Labour Party.

Adam Harmsworth, vice president of the probation and family courts union Napo, reported that a motion was being put to the upcoming Napo AGM along similar lines to that in UCU.

Should unions be independent?

Sean McCauley, former National Education Union (NEU) NEC member, took up an argument being made in some of the non-affiliated unions. He explained that while NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede has spoken on some platforms of 'Your Party' meetings, he advocates that the NEU should be independent of any party. Sean argued for trade unions to be involved in forming a party, "to influence the direction that the new party

takes". 'Independence' means relying on 'friends' of the union, rather than a trade union being able to collectively decide its policy and hold political representatives to account. That includes in councils - especially when Your Party councillors could be elected and even win control of councils next year.

What about the Greens?

This point was also taken up in relation to the idea of alliances with the Green Party, by president of Waltham Forest Trades Council Nancy Taaffe. She welcomed the more radical positions adopted by the Greens, but argued that that needs backing up where they hold power. She pointed out that when questioned at the World Transformed conference about the role of the Green Party's 800 councillors in resisting austerity, Zack Polanski defended Green-led councils' implementation of huge cuts. In the Green Party there is no way for "the will of trade unionists" to be reflected, "to hold those with elected positions to account".

In response to a question about whether there are meetings of trade unionists in local areas, debates hosted by trades councils were encouraged. Dave Warren from Swansea TUC reported that five Welsh trades union councils, the bakers union BFAWU, the civil service union PCS Wales Executive, and numerous local trade union branches are backing a conference on 18 October to discuss political representation for trade unionists ahead of the Welsh Assembly elections.

Dave Nellist rounded off the meeting reminding attendees of the Wales and Scotland parliamentary

Reports  
from meetings of trade unionists about the specific campaigns in their own unions



elections and council elections in May. Reform are set to make gains, but they can be countered. In the general election in 2015, Farage, then heading Ukip, got 4 million votes; in the 2017 election, with Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader and a radical manifesto, they were down to 600,000. The Reform "bubble could be burst - but it will be burst quicker if the organised trade union movement is at the heart of the development of Your Party."

All trade union speakers were in a personal capacity

Come and discuss  
Forum: How can the new party be built as a voice for the working class  
SOCIALISM 2025  
15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

# Artists not algorithms: How 'Tilly Norwood' AI threatens actors

TONY BLYTH  
SOCIALIST PARTY AND EQUITY UNION MEMBER

In the latest assault on the livelihoods of working performers, some in the film industry are celebrating the launch of 'Tilly Norwood', an artificial intelligence capable of producing 'convincing' on-screen performances. While the technology is being sold as revolutionary, its impact would be deeply destructive for less well-known actors who already face precarious work and low pay.

The BBC has reported on studios' growing interest in securing rights to actors' digital doubles, sometimes indefinitely, for reuse across projects. With the arrival of tools like Tilly Norwood, bosses can sidestep negotiations entirely. Why pay an actor day-rates, pension contributions, or royalties when a machine can generate dialogue, expressions, and movement on command?

This is not progress for the many, it is profit for the few. Established stars, with agents and legal teams, may be able to protect their image. But for supporting actors, extras, and the thousands of working performers who bring authenticity to screen and stage, AI threatens to wipe out vital opportunities. They may be replaced by synthetic 'talent' without compensation.

### Stop-ification

Worse still, the craft itself is undermined. Human performance is rooted in lived experience, vulnerability, and creativity. An algorithm like Tilly Norwood may mimic gestures, but it cannot feel. To replace actors with code is to strip art of its humanity, further

reducing real stories into another commodity churned out by capital.

There have been successful push-backs by US actors' union SAG-AFTRA and the Writers' Guild of America. Their strike action in 2023 won protections for both writers and actors against being replaced by AI. This shows the immense power of collective action and what is needed to protect the livelihood of creatives.

Here, the performers' union Equity should take inspiration and fight to make sure AI is not used as another weapon in the bosses' arsenal against workers. Stronger union protections, legal limits on AI use, and collective resistance are needed to safeguard both livelihoods and the soul of acting. The struggle is not against technology itself, but against its use to exploit, devalue, and erase workers in the name of profit. And while big bosses dominate the creative industries, as they do across the economy, workers don't have a real say in how new technologies are implemented. Taking them out of the bosses' hands and putting them under the democratic control of workers and wider society would stop this race to the bottom.

The future of storytelling must remain in human hands. Otherwise, we risk a future where stories are told by algorithms - and lived by none of us.

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Writers and actors on strike in America in 2023  
EDEN, JANNIE AND JIM/CC



# Mothers lose out on tens of thousands of pounds after having a child Fight for high-quality, free childcare

CORINTHIA WARD  
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Another year and another report highlighting the ongoing gender pay gap. The Office for National Statistics has released new findings regarding the "substantial and long-lasting reduction" in earnings facing mothers after having children.

Five years after the birth of their first child, the mother's earnings drop by an average of £1,051 per month compared to their salary prior to having a child. Over five years this is a total of £65,618 in lost earnings! Not to mention losses to their pensions, NI and any other payments, such as student loan repayments.

Unsurprisingly, this report will not come as any shock to mothers and carers who are facing this reality. Financial pressures are one of the main reasons why people are either delaying having children or not having them altogether. In a report by UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies in October last year, two fifths of 32-year-olds want a child (or more children), but only one in four of them are actively trying to conceive. The financial aspect is one of the main reasons behind this and it is not hard to see why when parents, and women in particular, face such a drop in earnings, especially during a continued cost-of-living crisis.

### Gender pay gap

A significant element to the gender pay gap is linked to the 'motherhood penalty' - with a number of factors including unaffordable childcare, uneven parental leave (fathers only receive two weeks statutory paternity pay), inflexible employers and workplace discrimination.

Capitalist society benefits from

and reinforces unbalanced gender norms, with mothers seen as the primary caregiver so subsequently the one expected to reduce working hours for caring responsibilities. In a 2021 study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, women were more than likely to reduce their working hours after having a child than men, even if they were originally earning more.

As an attempt to encourage more people to have children and women back into the workplace, both the Tories and Labour have rolled out, or promised, reforms offering free childcare, new nurseries or wrap-around care.

To date, these measures have not solved the rocketing price of private nurseries, and in turn haven't addressed women's loss of earnings. Even with 15 funded hours, a full-time nursery place for a child under two in England costs on average £12,425 a year. Over 80% of UK nurseries are independent or privately owned resulting in many areas experiencing nursery 'deserts' if there is not enough profit in that area for one to operate. And childcare can be a lucrative business - one global nursery company, Busy Bees, was valued at over £3 billion!

Until childcare, and the raising of children, is seen as a societal responsibility rather than just a parental one, the consequence of 'the motherhood penalty' will not be resolved. As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child!

**£1,051**  
drop in a mother's earnings  
five years after her first child

### The Socialist Party demands:

- Free flexible high-quality childcare for all
- Councils to invest in building new, quality nurseries to meet need. Nationalise big private nurseries under workers' democratic control. Open the books - for compensation paid on the basis of proven need
- A living wage for nursery staff and fully funded training
- Scrap the two-child benefit cap. End low pay and a benefit system that we can live on
- End uneven parental leave. For a year's full pay maternity and paternity pay so all carers can bond with their child
- For a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay to create a better work-life balance for all, including working parents

Come and discuss  
The fight to end misogyny and violence against women - and the struggle for socialism  
**SOCIALISM 2025**  
15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

# NSSN lobby of TUC General Council Name the date for a national demo against Labour austerity

PAULA MITCHELL  
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In September, the TUC (Trades Union Congress) voted to call a national weekend demonstration against Labour austerity. Now we must fight to make that a reality.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has called a lobby of the TUC General Council to demand it names the date - ideally Saturday 22 November, just before the Autumn Budget.

Since its inception, initiated by

Bob Crow and the transport union RMT in 2006, the NSSN has not only supported workers in struggle, but has also brought reps and activists across different unions and sectors together to discuss the way forward. At its conferences and rallies, it brings together leaders and members in a dialogue, enabling members to put demands on their leaders; and arms trade unionists with the next steps to take back and discuss in their workplaces and union branches. It acts to mobilise the collective pressure of the members

on the leadership of the trade union movement.

### Strike waves

The NSSN has played a significant role many times - including during the 2022-23 strike wave, campaigning for the coordination that was needed, and against draconian Tory anti-union legislation.

Perhaps most significantly for today, the NSSN, campaigning alongside activists in unions such as the PCS civil service union, played a big role in mobilising and giving confidence to thousands of trade unionists to fight Tory austerity when it was introduced by the 'ConDem' (Tory-LibDem) coalition that took power in 2010.

The NSSN lobbied the TUC for a national demonstration against austerity, spearheading regional demos in the autumn of 2010. That national demonstration took place in March 2011 - 750,000 strong. On that demo, the NSSN, with its leaflets, placards and stage, called for the next step: a 24-hour public sector general strike.

The NSSN collaborated with fighters in the membership and leadership of public sector unions. A strike of four unions took place in June. 700 trade unionists marched with the NSSN to demand the TUC name the date for joint industrial action. On 30 November 2011 that took place - two million workers took part in effectively a public sector general strike.

There, the NSSN argued for the next step: a 24-hour general strike bringing public and private sectors together. When the right-wing leaders of unions such as Unison pulled the plug on further action, the NSSN campaigned with the left in the PCS and others for a 'coalition of the willing' to fight on. Over a thousand trade unionists lobbied the TUC for a 24-hour general strike in September 2012 and the TUC voted to 'consider' it.

There is the potential for such a fight to develop again. The workers who took part in the strike wave celebrated the end of the Tory government and many may have had some

hopes in Starmer's government. But no wonder Starmer's Labour is plummeting in the polls, when the government is continuing and intensifying Tory austerity. A bold lead from the top of the trade union movement could transform things. Although the trade union leaders have so far attempted to hold back struggle and cover for Starmer, that can change under the pressure of their members.

### Starmer in power

After the election of Starmer in 2024, the NSSN warned that increased austerity was coming and that the workers' movement would need to get ready to fight. The motions that went to TUC for a national demo against Labour austerity, from the TUC Disabled Workers and Trades Council conferences, originated from activists including Socialist Party members and NSSN supporters.

The NSSN lobbied the TUC on 7 September in support of that call. Socialist Party members and NSSN supporters have been moving 'name the date' resolutions and raising the issue where possible at union national executive meetings.

Lobbying the General Council to put that decision into practice is another important step in mobilising the pressure of 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**  
**# NAME THE DATE** for a TUC national demo against Starmer's austerity 2.0  
9am Wednesday 22nd October  
at TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS  
nationalshopstewardsnetwork  
shopstewards.net



# Uni bosses back arms companies, blocking protests

HANNAH PONTING  
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

In recent years there has been a huge explosion of youth protests not just in the UK, but across the globe. With encampments, walkouts, and student resistance movements, university campuses have become key sites of protest. This activism has been particularly notable in relation to the horrific events taking place in Gaza, with students making it clear that companies supplying arms to the Israeli state have no place on campuses.

Recent reports in the Guardian have shown the lengths universities have gone to stop protests, particularly those demanding divestment from Israel, and against arms companies facilitating weapons used in the Gaza slaughter. In some cases, universities have taken legal action against those involved in encampments.

In February 2024, Cardiff University shifted its careers event from in-person to online in agreement with BAE systems, a major British arms company, after social media posts indicated a protest was being planned in opposition. Similarly, email correspondence between Heriot-Watt

University in Edinburgh and Rolls Royce revealed that the company had asked the university to "monitor university chat groups" on its behalf before a careers fair.

These are not isolated incidents. In fact, almost a quarter of universities have launched disciplinary action against pro-Gaza student and staff activists between October 2023 and March 2025.

Even more concerning is the coordinated effort by the Association of University Chief Security Officers to deter protest activity, framing it as "affecting our students' career advancement." Such rhetoric not only undermines the right to protest but is also an attempt to intimidate anyone that wants to show their opposition to the actions of their university or government.

Jo Grady, University and College Union (UCU) general secretary, correctly spoke out in opposition to this, stating that student protesters should be supported by universities, and the fact that universities have sunk important resources into surveilling students, seemingly on the say-so of these defence companies, is "utterly shameful." At the same time, across the country university staff have

been made redundant and courses have been closed due to a 'lack of funding'.

In this time of crackdowns on university protests, it is vital that staff and students stand alongside each other in solidarity, and continue to demand transparency, divestment from arms companies, and the right to protest about these matters. University bosses try to keep arms companies and others onside because they rely on investment from big businesses to make ends meet. We need a fully free education system, by taking the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich, and to kick private profit out of our education system.

Join the student fightback: join...  
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Visit [socialiststudents.org.uk/join](https://socialiststudents.org.uk/join)  
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Liverpool Socialist Students at a Gaza encampment

# Brum bins: Labour council in fear of scabbing strategy unravelling

CLIVE WALDER  
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

**B**irmingham City Council's shambolic and brutal handling of the bin workers' dispute is beginning to re-bound on it. In a dramatic change of events, it is reported that 15 agency staff are refusing to cross picket lines.

While the Labour council is trying to fool the public into believing that the agency workforce is keeping on top of refuse collection, the workers themselves are complaining about a toxic workplace culture. They complain that managers are bullying them, and threatening disciplinary action or dismissal if they fail to complete unsustainable workloads or take on extra work. The council has suspended recycling and garden waste collections, so residents are



PHOTO: DAVID ELLIS

putting everything in one bin, making them heavy and overflowing, which slows down the pace of work.

Despite the council throwing everything at breaking the resolve of Unite members, at a cost currently of £14 million, the strike has remained solid.

The lead government commissioner visited one of the depots on 8 October and the agency called all workers to a meeting the following day. These are clear signs that the council is getting worried.

Over the weekend, four Labour councillors left the party after being blocked from standing for reelection in Birmingham next year, as part of a continued purge of anyone who might be critical of the local or national leadership and, in the case of one, linked to an HMO housing scandal.

There is a rumour that they could become the first Your Party councillors in the city. If any councillors make the break from forcing horrendous cuts on the bin workers, and on

jobs and services across the council, that would be welcomed. Making good on their claim to want to champion "social justice" and "fairness" would start with fighting to stop the cuts and building support for the striking bin workers.

Unite the Union also called a protest outside the offices of the main employment agency supplying scab labour. In a sign of desperation, a manager from the agency was filmed threatening the remaining agency workers that they would be black-listed by the council from getting a permanent position if they joined the strike too. Unite's belief that the council is terrified at the prospect of their scabbing strategy unravelling has added to the iron determination of the bin workers to see the battle through to the end.

Unite's efforts to recruit agency workers to join the strike should continue, with striking workers in the lead. If more refuse to cross the picket line, it would put even more pressure on the council.

# PCS DWP pay ballot shows workers are ready to fight – Now launch the national campaign!

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN DWP

**T**he PCS union consultative ballot result in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is a clear warning shot to Keir Starmer's government, indicating that workers are ready to fight on pay. Over 80.5% of PCS members who voted said they are prepared to take industrial action, on a 52.3% turnout – a strong mandate showing the members' willingness to fight.

The union's National Executive Committee (NEC) must now move swiftly to launch the national campaign.

The misnamed 'Left Unity' leadership in the DWP group have indicated they will now demand that the DWP reopens pay talks, and submit a serious case for increased pay to use the unused £6.6 million in the bonus pot. But this will not address the rising cost of living or the decades of pay erosion – it equates to £73 per member.

Nor is pay the only issue facing members. The Labour government is making hundreds of job cuts and threatening thousands more. The motion on the national campaign (motion A383) passed at the PCS Annual Delegate Conference in May laid out a clear list of demands for a campaign: pay restoration, pensions justice, and job security. We should now ballot the whole PCS membership on those demands.

The Socialist Party calls for a serious, fighting strategy. That means developing a timeline for a ballot in consultation with reps, and giving them the tools they need to breach the Tory anti-trade union 50% turnout threshold – scandalously still in place 15 months into a Labour government.



PCS on strike in 2023  
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Civil service-wide national action can force the employer - the Labour government - to retreat on its attacks on staff, to increase the pitiful 3.25% pay remit, reduce the

working week and return pension overpayments.

The DWP result shows the mood is there. Now let's organise to turn it into victory.

Join the fightback

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

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

# Low-paid health workers in Swansea feel betrayed

MARK EVANS  
PRESIDENT OF SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL, AND  
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY

About 40 enthusiastic and determined members of Unison attended a 6.30am protest outside Morriston Hospital in Swansea, on a dark and damp 8 October. Socialist Party and Swansea Trades Council members attended, offering solidarity and support, and were welcomed.

The protest was organised by Swansea Bay Healthcare Unison in response to the decision of the employer, Swansea Bay University Health Board, to pull the plug on a local agreement to upgrade Health Care Support Workers from band two to band three pay.

For about five years these women workers have been exploited, carrying out the duties of a band three but not paid for this work.

The excuse given for not implementing the agreement and paying back-pay is that the Welsh government is in talks with the trade unions nationally, and the employers say they are waiting for the conclusions of these all-Wales discussions. Some of us are sceptical and think

that the health board made the original agreement to avoid strike action in the run-up to Christmas last year. Unison members feel betrayed, and say that no explanation was provided when the plug was pulled.

There is no justification for reneging on the agreement. If the Welsh government comes to a national agreement with Unison and the other unions on these issues, and in the unlikely scenario that any national agreement is greater than the local one, then that can be paid on top.

Health Care Support Workers are scandalously among the lowest paid in the NHS. They were relying on this money, and had no doubt planned how to spend what they had earned and deserved.

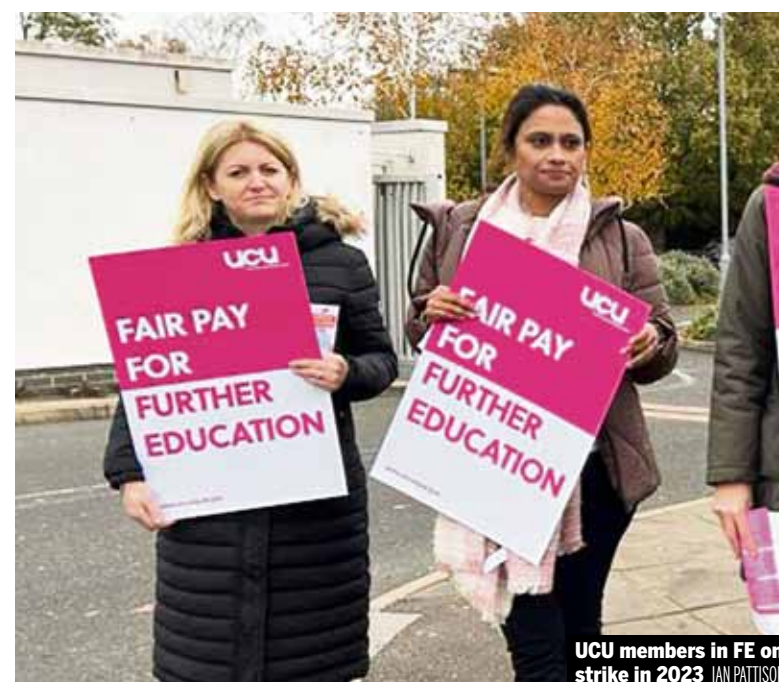
Low-paid workers cannot wait, and the Health Board should immediately implement the local agreement. The Labour Welsh government should order them to do so.

This is another example of 'social partnership' being a sham. The employers and the government talk of partnership with the unions while continuing to treat low-paid employees with disdain.



Protesting in the dark  
SOCIALIST PARTY WALES

# Vote yes in the UCU FE ballot: For a nationally coordinated fightback



UCU members in FE on strike in 2023  
IAN PATTERSON

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN FURTHER EDUCATION

**F**urther Education (FE) colleges are facing unsustainable levels of underfunding. Workers have been made to pay the price through below-inflation pay rises, job cuts and course closures. Heavy workloads are made even worse by Labour's drastic cuts to the Adult Skills Fund. These major attacks also affect students' education.

86% backed strike action in a University and College Union (UCU) consultative ballot in the summer. Now over 100 UCU FE branches are being balloted to take strike action, and every branch that hits the 50% turnout threshold can take part.

Our ballot results will come out the week before the Autumn Budget – we can say it loud and clear that FE workers will not accept another cuts budget! We demand full funding for FE.

With university workers also balloting for industrial action, Starmer faces the prospect of a post-16 education strike before the year is out (see 'University workers across four unions to ballot for industrial action' at [socialistparty.org.uk](https://socialistparty.org.uk))

## Demand full funding

UCU should demand Starmer's government fully funds post-16 education, with an end to marketisation, full pay restoration, and the scrapping of tuition fees and reintroduction of real liveable grants for students.

Coordinating our disputes is the most effective way to put maximum pressure on our employers and the Starmer government. We now have a chance to send a clear message to

the leadership of our union that UCU members in FE want a nationally coordinated fightback.

Socialist Party members are campaigning for maximum branch participation. UCU regions should organise rallies and mass pickets to build links between members and branches. Where necessary, branches should establish joint hardship funds so we can sustain our strike action.

Our dispute is not only about pay for this year, but also about the future. Binding national pay agreements are the best way of guarding against the 'race to the bottom' pay offers that have become the norm. Currently, we have to fight locally just to be awarded the non-binding 'recommendation' made by the colleges association.

Therefore, while individual branches have the right to decide when to settle their disputes, Socialist Party members will be advocating to stay in the dispute until the employers' association concedes to this vital demand.

We cannot afford any further set-backs like we saw in 2024. We must demand that our elected leaders back our action and implement members' decisions.

## NEC elections

In the upcoming NEC elections, we have an opportunity to elect candidates who are serious about building a democratic, fighting union and remove those who have repeatedly undermined or stepped down our campaigns. Socialist Party member and sitting NEC member Duncan Moore will be standing for re-election.

Other left candidates will stand too. We stand the best chance if we can come together to agree on a shared slate. This could lay the groundwork for a new, democratic left within UCU.

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steward network  
NSSN bulletin: [shopstewards.net](https://shopstewards.net)

# Napo AGM: Preparing for industrial and political battles ahead

ADAM HARMSWORTH  
NATIONAL VICE-CHAIR, PERSONAL CAPACITY

**N**apo AGM on 16-18 October comes shortly after a hard-fought ballot on probation pay and funding.

90% voted to strike and 97% for action short of strike. Probation workers have been left struggling and even impoverished by years of below-inflation pay rises. In return, they face unmanageable caseloads, with leaked figures showing sentence management alone has less than half the staff needed. Work-related stress is rising across the probation workforce.

The Rademaker Report released in May has proven what Napo reps have been saying for years: that bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation are rampant throughout HM Prison and Probation Service.

Across probation and Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service), years of government cuts have left services struggling to meet basic needs. This is set to only continue under Keir Starmer's Labour.

## Turnout thresholds

The ballot delivered a decisive result for strike action, but was defeated by the 50% turnout threshold required by the Tories' 2016 anti-union law. The Labour government still has not repealed this, despite its promise to do so. It will be important at this AGM and beyond to debate how we can smash that threshold, and that we continue to demand its immediate repeal.

In Cafcass, Napo reps are hearing more and more concerns about soaring workloads and overworking. This, alongside uncompetitive pay, is leading more social work practitioners to leave the service.

Nothing will improve without a serious industrial and political fightback.

With all the main parties now singing from the same hymn sheet, it is up to the trade unions to fight back. Napo must continue to fight to restore decent funding and pay to probation and Cafcass, and put pressure on the TUC to implement the agreement from its congress this year, to call a national trade union-led demo against Labour austerity.

## New workers' party

The Socialist Party believes the trade unions must play a leading role in building a new political voice for the working class. Napo AGM provides an opportunity to debate that. Motion 21 from the Family Court Section, titled 'Enough is Enough – We Need New Political Representation', includes important steps for Napo to invite Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana to discuss with the NEC, and to link together with trade unions who want to see a new vehicle of the working class built. We urge all Napo members to go to AGM in person or online and vote for this important motion (see Napo members fighting in their union for a new party at [socialistparty.org.uk](https://socialistparty.org.uk)).

• During AGM, there will be a 'Napo For A New Party' meeting: Thursday 16 October 6:30pm at The Devonshire Club, Hartington Place, Eastbourne, BN21 3BN

After the TUC Congress - the struggle to build fighting trade unions under Labour

SOCIALISM 2025  
15 and 16 November  
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In the NEC elections, we can vote for candidates who are serious about building a democratic, fighting union



Napo members in an earlier fight against privatisation  
PAUL MATTESON

JOSH ASKER

SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**“T**hey own you, lock, stock and block vote”, Tory prime minister David Cameron once taunted then Labour leader Ed Miliband, referring to the trade unions. To the capitalist class, the idea of the trade unions - mass organisations of the working class - having a collective voice in a political party is an anathema.

In fact, by the time Cameron made that accusation in the 2010s Labour had long been transformed into an out-and-out capitalist party, with the ability of the working class to exert pressure on the leadership through the trade unions long gone. He, the Tory party and the capitalist class, knew it. One senior Tory said of Margaret Thatcher: “Her real triumph was to have transformed not just one party, but two”.

During his time as leader, Ed Miliband was pushing through another counter-reform to even further drive union influence in the party into the dirt. The 2014 Collins Review introduced a new category of individual trade union ‘affiliated supporters’, removing a trade union’s collective voice. It also abolished the electoral college for leader and deputy leader elections, in which a third of the votes was allocated to the unions.

The earlier removal of local trade union representation in the selection process of parliamentary candidates in favour of a one-member-one-vote system, in 1993, was later described by Tony Blair’s deputy leader John Prescott as being more important in changing Labour into a ‘pro-market’ party even than the abolition of the socialist Clause Four in 1995.

Since, Keir Starmer’s Labour Party has further centralised democracy under the control of the Parliamentary Labour Party. And faced with enormous working-class anger, it now faces the prospect of a new mass workers’ party developing. The enthusiasm for such an alternative is shown by the 800,000 signing up to support Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana’s Your Party.

Now, it is in discussions around



**At the 1982 Labour Party conference the leader of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), Sidney Weighell, broke with the democratic mandate from his members...**



**... Weeks later, this entrenched right-winger in the trade union movement was forced from his post**

Your Party, its democracy and trade union involvement, that those arguing against trade unions being able to affiliate and have a collective democratic voice that some are joining Cameron in criticising the trade union ‘block vote’ that used to exist in the Labour Party.

Organisations affiliated to the Labour Party had their representation through its democratic structures aggregated, with votes weighted according to their size. Before 1992, for example, the share of votes at Labour conference allocated to affiliated organisations (the trade unions, the Co-operative Party and socialist societies), was 90%.

Some of those opposed to the trade union collective voice being expressed in future ‘Your Party’ democratic structures raise the threat of right-wing trade union leaders wielding votes against the wishes or interests of their members.

Of course this is a possibility. But where is their confidence in the willingness and ability of trade unionists to hold their leaders democratically to account? Even in the right wing-led unions, this happened in the old Labour Party structures.

At the 1982 Labour Party conference, for example, the leader of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), Sidney Weighell, broke with the democratic mandate from his members and conference delegates to put the NUR’s votes behind a right-wing candidate on the party’s National Executive Committee (NEC) - the party’s leadership body.

Weeks later, this entrenched right-winger in the trade union movement was forced from his post by members’ anger.

Before the party’s transformation into its current form, Labour Party conference was an event in stark contrast to the charade of ‘democracy’ that it is today. It was then a reflection of the contradictory character of a party with a mass working-class membership but with a pro-capitalist leadership. Labour Party conference was an arena in which those class forces contended.

At the 1982 Labour Party conference, reported on by Lynn Walsh in *Militant*, “The tremendous

conflicting class pressures which will be brought to bear on the next Labour government were evident... Enthusiastic support for radical policies from the floor of conference foreshadowed the enormous pressure which will come from the working class for Labour to carry out bold anti-capitalist measures. The ifs, buts, and maybes, on the other hand, are a warning of the role which will be played by the Healeys, Hattersleys and others [on the right] who, backed by the capitalist media, will attempt to sabotage the implementation of radical policies.”

Labour Party politics in that period were feverish. The 1974-79 Labour government had been elected on the back of a victorious miners’ strike. But with British capitalism in crisis, and the party leadership in the hands of the right unwilling to implement a socialist programme, Labour implemented the ‘Social Contract’ to restrain workers’ wages. Huge workers’ discontent built up, leading to the industrial struggles against a Labour government in the 1978-79 winter of discontent, and ultimately to Thatcher’s Tory victory in the 1979 general election.

The effects of the Labour government’s betrayals and Thatcher’s implementation of her brutal programme to weaken the power of the organised working class, led to tumult in the Labour Party and a layer of activists looking to the left. An expression of this was Tony Benn’s left-wing campaign for election as deputy leader in 1981. His candidacy was possible as a consequence of the electoral college which was introduced in 1980, a democratic reform won by the left. Until then, the Labour leader and deputy leader were elected solely by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In this process, *Militant*, the Socialist Party’s predecessor, was gaining strength and influence. Weighell’s antics at the 1982 conference were part of a desperate attempt to ensure the right maintained control of the NEC. His sympathetic obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, a Tory newspaper, quotes him as saying, “I’m glad to have been a casualty if it means that the party executive does not fall into the hands of militants.”

He was part of a section of the trade union leaders who, with the Labour right, acted in service of the capitalist class. Likewise, the right wingers who left Labour in 1981 to found the Social Democratic Party, standing as part of the ‘Alliance’ with the Liberals

# THE ‘BLOCK VOTE’

## For a new mass workers’ party and fighting, democratic trade unions



PHOTO: MARY FINCH

in the 1983 general election, helping Thatcher to secure a second term.

The right was using all tools at its disposal to defeat the left and ultimately to make Labour a safe tool for the capitalist class, including trying to oust *Militant* and its influence. “The angry row at Blackpool, however, makes clear the hollowness of the right’s NEC majority”, we wrote. “The way the block vote has been used by some general secretaries does not reflect the wishes or the mood of their members. This was also true on the register, which is intended to open the door to expulsions of *Militant* supporters... Now the right has a majority on the NEC it will attempt to use it ruthlessly. But they will be attempting to launch a purge and reverse, or at least shelve, radical policy decisions on the basis of a rigged NEC”.

*Militant* warned: “Weighell will now face a storm of opposition within the NUR. There may be moves to censure or dismiss the general secretary by the National Executive”.

Less than a week later, “A hundred members of the National Union of Railwaymen lobbied the union’s Special General Meeting (SGM) on 13 October, travelling into Birmingham from as far afield as Glasgow.” In the interim period, Weighell had tended his resignation.

“Despite the press reports of a mass mood of support for Weighell, the placards outside showed the real feelings of many rank and file NUR members. ‘Roll out the Weighell - wheel in the new’ said one, with others naming the general secretary ‘Slippery Sid’.

“The SGM voted by 41 to 36 to accept Weighell’s resignation. The news was greeted with jubilation by the lobbyists with shouts of ‘fantastic’, and ‘magic’. Delegates were applauded and hands shaken all round as the news came out.”

It is no accident that the SGM that voted to accept his resignation was convened to reconsider a pay deal that his leadership had called off strikes over. “His swansong was sung to the same old tune the union leadership have sung for years of the ‘joint approach’ between management and the unions” (*Militant*, 22 October 1982).

Weighell’s departure broke the grip of the right wing on the leadership of the NUR. He was succeeded by Jimmy Knapp, who was to his left. Knapp in turn was succeeded by left-winger Bob Crow, who played an important role as general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union, leading it to begin to forge its own political representation. Including, in collaboration with the Socialist Party, in the formation of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

The Socialist Party argues for the trade unions to lead in the process of the working class creating its own mass party. We argue for the unions, as existing mass organisations of the working class, to have a democratic voice inside Your Party.

Any political force and its elected representatives, let alone a new mass party, will come under contending class pressures. Your Party councillors will, for example, enter into meetings with council officers and commissioners telling them they have to obey the ‘rules’ - capitalist rules - and continue to cut services and raise taxes on workers.

Trade unions’ collective voice in the democratic structures of Your Party would give those councillors confidence that behind them in defying Starmer’s austerity is the strength of



**The fight for the working class to have its own mass political party goes hand in glove with the struggle for democratic trade unions, armed with a fighting programme**

the organised working class. That was the role, for example, of the Liverpool District Labour Party, made up of delegates representing thousands of organised workers, during the successful struggle, led by *Militant*, against Thatcher. (see ‘Liverpool’s *Militant* Labour council struggle - lessons for democracy’ at socialistparty.org.uk)

The fight for the working class to have its own mass political party goes hand in glove with the struggle for democratic trade unions, armed with a fighting programme.

The July Policy Conference of Unite the Union, currently the Labour Party’s largest affiliated union, voted to suspend then deputy leader of the Labour Party Angela Rayner from membership and to discuss the union’s relationship with Labour. Socialist Party members and supporters helped to give expression to the anger of delegates at the role of Birmingham Labour council trying to ‘fire and re-hire’ bin workers to impose an £8,000 a year pay cut, backed by Rayner and the Labour government.

Members of the misnamed United Left (UL) group in the leadership of the union had hoped to use the conference to try to overturn the union’s position that councils should set no-cuts, needs-based budgets, in favour of “working with Labour councillors in lobbying the government for more funds”. Faced with the overwhelming mood of delegates, UL stepped back from its attempts to act as a shield for Starmer’s government.

In Unite the Union, Socialist Party members will continue to fight to keep the union’s leadership out of the hands of those who want ‘partnership’ with Starmer’s government carrying out austerity, as well as fighting for the union to lead in developing a political voice of the working class. Including, as part of ‘Trade Unionists for a New Party’, winning support for the model motion calling for the “convening of special policy and rules conferences to draw political and organisational conclusions, potentially including the building of a new workers’ party, standing and supporting workers’ candidates, calling for a conference across unions to build a political alternative for workers on a pro-worker, socialist programme.”



PHOTO: DAVE SINCLAIR

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- The lessons of Corbynism for a new party - debate**
- The Liverpool struggle - what did a political voice for workers in struggle look like?**

# Socialists debate and prepare for 2026 Scottish Parliamentary elections

This is an extract of a report from **Socialist Party Scotland**. The full report, including of the discussion and debate around Scottish independence and how to organise democratically, can be read online at [socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

## Motion agreed:

The need for a working-class, socialist and trade union election challenge for Holyrood 2026 is undeniable. As the reaction to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's decision to create a "new kind of political party...rooted in trade unions, communities and social movements" – which has had tens of thousands of responses from Scotland – has shown there is a huge potential to build an alternative to the political establishment that can offer a united working-class platform to communities across Scotland.

A successful conference took place on 4 October in Glasgow on the theme of building a trade union, socialist and working-class election challenge for the Scottish parliamentary election next year. The conference had been prepared over the last five months by the Conference Organising Committee (COC), where decisions around speakers and the democratic organisation of the conference were reached by consensus.

The COC was made up of representatives from the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), Socialist Party Scotland, the Scottish Left Alternative (SLA), the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), Collective Scotland (set up by activists around Jeremy Corbyn) and, vitally, trade union leaders in a personal capacity from Dundee City Unison, Glasgow City Unison, and the Unite Housing Association branch as observers.

This conference of trade unionists, socialists, left activists and organisations agree to work together to achieve a united election challenge for Holyrood 2026. This could take the form of existing socialist organisations with a long history of standing in elections – for example Scottish TUSC, the SSP and others – meeting with other newly created groups, including the Scottish Left Alternative electoral coalition, who are considering standing, to negotiate and agree where to stand candidates.

It would also take account of further concrete developments around the Your Party initiative in the run-up to October 4 and also in the run-up to next May, as well as for the local council elections in 2027 and for by-elections as and when they arise.

Either way, this conference agrees to help prepare a united socialist, trade union and working-class



PHOTO: SCOTTISH TUSC

election challenge in as many parts of Scotland as possible for next May.

The gravity of the situation facing the working class means that we need to engage with as many workplace and community activists as possible, and to engage with Your Party as it develops in Scotland, to put forward the most credible and effective left challenge.

We agree to elect a coordinating committee with representatives from each organisation that supports this initiative, as well as leading trade unionists, to act as a forum to advance those discussions. We at all times seek to come to decisions based on consensus where at all possible.

Core policies that we agree on include: (Candidates and organisations standing in elections will of course add to these policies, and nor are they an exhaustive list of our views on all of the issues facing the working class in Scotland and internationally. We would also ask all candidates to stand on the pledge, if elected, of only taking the

average wage of a skilled worker as an MSP)

- End all cuts and austerity – elected politicians in councils, Holyrood and Westminster must refuse to make cuts and fight for fully funded public services
- No coalitions or electoral agreements with parties or independents who have a record of implementing cuts and who refuse to sign up to a no-cuts platform
- For a massive programme of council house building to tackle the housing crisis
- Scrap the council tax and for its replacement with a progressive tax on wealth that makes the rich pay
- Increase the minimum wage to an immediate £15 an hour with no age exemptions – wages must rise automatically with inflation
- Abolish all anti-trade union laws
- Stop benefit cuts – benefits must match the cost of living
- Take the wealth off the billionaires – Tax the rich and big

business – For public ownership and democratic control of the multinationals that dominate the economy

- End the genocide – End the occupation of Gaza – Build mass struggle for Palestinian rights and an independent Palestinian state
- Oppose all forms of racism – Fight for jobs, homes and public services for all – Defend the right to asylum and fight against the onslaught against refugees
- Defend and extend LGBTQ+ and women's rights
- For socialist change, public ownership and democratic planning to tackle the environmental crisis
- For the right of self-determination for Scotland, including the right of the Scottish parliament to organise a second independence referendum. Fight for an independent socialist Scotland (We understand that some candidates may choose to not campaign for an independent socialist Scotland)

# Enthusiasm at Birmingham Your Party meeting

BEN LEES  
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

The energy was high. People were passionate about the prospect of the new party.

The Socialist Party was there. We had a petition to calling on Your Party councillors standing in the May 2026 council elections to take a no-cuts budget policy. This is particularly relevant after four Birmingham Labour councillors announced their resignation from the party earlier that day, and attended the Your Party rally.

People were supportive of what we said. Many of them raised the schism among the Your Party MPs as a reason to hold the new party to higher standards going forward.

Birmingham independent MP Ayoub Khan, as well as Jeremy Corbyn, were the featured speakers. They focused heavily on ex-Labour members who had become disillusioned under Keir Starmer's government. Corbyn was the star of the show by a



PHOTO: BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

wide margin, and a huge favourite of the crowd.

The local impact of successive Labour and Tory governments was a key talking point. The years-long bankruptcy of Birmingham Labour council is one of the more overt examples of austerity's utter failure.

It is the result of years of underinvestment and pandering to shareholders that has left life expectancy lower than national average, ordinary workers more hopeless than ever, and a despair that leads many people to think that Reform is the only viable option left.

The Birmingham bin strike, now entering its tenth month, was called out in particular as an example of why we need a new party on the side of workers. Neither the local or national Labour governments have provided workers with an acceptable deal. The local council has still found millions of pounds to pay private organisations to collect 'excess' rubbish.

The UK's continued military support of the Israeli government's genocide of the Palestinian people was huge for the crowd, especially in light of the recent attack on the Manchester synagogue that has been disgustingly weaponised by Starmer and his ministers to further repress pro-Palestine protests. Corbyn invited everyone to join the anti-war march

on 11 October in central London (see page 12).

A living wage for workers, and public ownership of public transport, energy, and water were other positive commitments made. A question posed on how to prevent further privatisation of the NHS was met with an emphasis on the importance of local communities campaigning, and holding MPs who would profit off of private medical care to account.

May's local elections, including in Birmingham, will be a great opportunity for Your Party council candidates to stand and win. They could do this by pledging to vote against all cuts, campaigning to restore services, jobs, and pay stolen by Labour and Tory austerity.

Come and discuss  
After Polanski's leadership win - are the Greens a viable socialist alternative?

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# Greens' Polanski refuses Manchester student demand to support no-cuts stand

ARCHIE BETTS  
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Zack Polanski addressed a meeting at the student fringe of the World Transformed event at Manchester Students Union on 11 October.

Socialist Students and Socialist Party member Robbie Davidson was able to ask a question in the discussion:

"Hi, I'm Robbie from Socialist Students. We welcome many of the things you've said Zack. But the Green Party has over 800 councillors across the country. Unfortunately, where the Greens have control of the councils, like in Bristol, they've carried out £50 million worth of cuts whilst simultaneously adding £60 million to the council reserves.

"The Green Party has the opportunity to implement a no-cuts budget in Bristol, by using those reserves, alongside the council's borrowing powers, to fight austerity, not in words, but in action. Building council houses, funding local services, then fighting central government to restore the money. This approach of setting legally balanced no-cuts budgets is in line with the official policies of the local authority trade unions: GMB, Unite and Unison.

"Zack, will you instruct your over 800 councillors across the country, to fight for these no-cuts budgets?"

Polanski's response:  
"If councils do no-cuts budgets, lets talk about Bristol in particular, what happens is, they effectively

down tools, and then the government comes in and then do all the cuts anyway.

"And the councillors actually have nothing to do about it, and it can be even worse than actually making the cuts in the first place."

Ultimately, Polanski's response of hiding behind the threat of government commissioners, is an excuse not to fight back. Why should democratically elected councillors follow orders from unelected commissioners anyway?

Councils defying government austerity, funding services and building council homes, would be hugely popular. That would make it very difficult for the government to get away with taking over the council and 'doing the cuts anyway'.

Bristol's Green leader of the council told the BBC last year that "the reality is we have to work within the constraints that are placed upon us." Why accept the 'constraints' of a capitalist system that forces the working class to pay? The Greens' inability or refusal to fight for an alternative to capitalism will lead to them holding back working-class struggle.

Socialist Students members prepared for the meeting by drawing up a model question that we shared among those of us in attendance to increase the chances of it being asked. This ended up being the correct tactic as, of the six questions asked, only three were taken from the floor. The other three were prepared questions from the chair of the meeting.



New Green Party leader Zack Polanski PHOTO: ROB BROWNE/CC



PHOTO: LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

# Liverpool: Corbyn and Sultana back demands for no cuts

JOE WOOLFALL  
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members in Liverpool attended the 'Your Party Rally for Real Change' at St Georges Hall on 9 October, with hundreds in attendance.

Around 30 Socialist Party members met outside beforehand to speak to the attendees, handing out our Socialist Party petition calling for:

- No cuts to public services
- Councils to set needs-based budgets and refuse to pass on Starmer and Reeves's austerity
- For Your Party to be built as a mass workers' party based on trade union organisations, with socialist organisations – like the Socialist Party – allowed to affiliate

There were multiple speakers, on the platform were Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana as well as Liverpool Community Independent (LCI) councillors, including Alan Gibbons.

Jeremy Corbyn's speech was received well by the crowd, and in her speech, Zarah Sultana referred to Liverpool as "the city that took on Thatcher" – a reference to the city council's historic battle against the Thatcher government in the 1980s, led by Militant, the forerunner to the Socialist Party.

In her speech, Sultana defined socialism as "the working class owning the means of production" and said that 'Your Party' shouldn't limit itself to reforms within the capitalist system.

After the meeting, approached by young Socialist Party activists, Corbyn and Sultana put their names to our petition, as did LCI councillor Sam Gorst.

The petition called for "Your Party to be built as a mass workers' party based on trade union organisations". Socialist Party members will be arguing that the next step to translate

the fighting language into action is for Liverpool Trades Union Council (LTUC) to call a meeting inviting Jeremy Corbyn, Zarah Sultana, Sam Gorst and the other independent councillors around Merseyside. The meeting should be centred around how a trade union campaign can be built in the region in support of the petition's call for "councils to set needs-based budgets and refuse to pass on Starmer and Reeves's austerity".

In the recent period, LCI councillors have refused to vote for the Labour council's austerity budgets. In Liverpool City Council's struggle against the Thatcher government in the 1980s, when councillors took an anti-austerity stand, behind them – pushing them every step of the way – was the organised working class in the city. It was this force that ultimately pushed the Thatcher government into largely ceding to the council's demands in 1984.

## Workers' counter-pressure

This is why it is so important that we now mobilise the trade union movement in the city and elsewhere behind our petition's call for an anti-austerity stand. Elected representatives who take the Liverpool road will inevitably come under enormous pressure from capitalism. A campaign in support – led by working-class organisations – is essential to apply counter-pressure to back them up.

The Green Party was also discussed by both Sultana and Corbyn. At a meeting in Manchester two days later Zack Polanski – the new leader of the Green Party – said he thought councillors had to make cuts to avoid the government taking over (see left). The Liverpool struggle showed the government won't easily be able to impose its cuts on a city where the organised working class is mobilised behind councillors taking an

anti-austerity stand. Not without a fight.

Corbyn and Sultana also outlined some differences they have with the Green Party. For example, Sultana raised the idea that the UK should immediately withdraw from NATO (the western capitalist military alliance set up during the Cold War) multiple times. A clear difference compared to the Green Party's more pro-NATO position. Corbyn was less explicit, but he did say that his disagreements with the Green Party were partially related to foreign policy, socialism, and social justice.

Both Corbyn and Sultana restated their commitment to supporting the use of a one-member-one-vote (OMOV) system at the 'Your Party' founding conference, slated to take place in late November in Liverpool, with 'sortition' – a lottery system – due to be used to select conference contributors. This type of horizontalist structure is far removed from the system of representative workers' democracy that the Liverpool struggle was based on, where local working-class organisations met and elected accountable fighting delegates through OMOV in local meetings.

These delegates would then go on to mass delegate meetings of the Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP). The DLP then set the fighting programme and provided the necessary support for the councillors who were mandated to implement it. This is why Socialist Party members are arguing for Your Party's founding conference to be based on a similar system of representative workers' democracy, with the trade unions at its heart, and with accountable delegates elected democratically by the working class – not chosen out of a hat. Such a system is needed if we are to win trade unions over to Your Party, and make it a genuine mass workers' party.

## Hundreds of thousands defend right to protest on Gaza



ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

**MORGAN TRITTON**  
HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of central London on 11 October, in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The voices of the Palestinian people, and their right to self-determination, are being silenced during the so-called peace talks that aim to enable warmongers, Donald Trump and Tony Blair, to profit from the devastating destruction of this genocide.

Keir Starmer and his Labour government are intensifying its discouragement of people protesting and organising. Labour's attempts to brand anti-war protests as "un-British" are transparent.

People at the march recognised that the right to protest has never been handed down by the capitalist class or their big business politicians. Workers and students themselves have always fought for this right.

### First time protesting

Many young people, attending a protest for the first time, joined our Socialist Students contingent after hearing our speeches at the protest. Many people voiced anger at the betrayal by the UK government, complicit in the ongoing genocide in Gaza, and condemned the growing attempts to criminalise the anti-war movement.

Restraints on political activity are a major concern on campuses today. Both Starmer and university vice

chancellors fear a united student movement, especially one that fights for socialist change alongside workers. In response, they have increased surveillance and restricted organising, aiming to weaken student politics, and intimidate young people into silence.

At the University of Hertfordshire, students are currently unable to hold campaign stalls or demonstrations on campus, due to university security. But these limitations have only fuelled Herts students' determination to protest, with several students attending the march on 11 October.

### They fear us

From the Youth Walkouts Against Trump, organised by Socialist Students in September, to the recent March for Palestine, student and worker action is shamefully labelled as 'poorly timed' by those in power, determined to divide us. Starmer and other politicians defending capitalist class interests fear mass mobilisation of us.

Starmer's two-year-long backing of the Israeli state's war on Gaza has, together with continued austerity, destroyed any remaining trust young people once had in Labour. Young people therefore need, and will fight for, a new mass workers' party that truly represents students and workers. We should be at the forefront, alongside trade unions, in shaping this new socialist alternative.

## Protest in Whitechapel on 25 October

# East London unions mobilise against far-right provocation



Socialist Party members at the Unison protest opposing the far right

**CHRIS NEWBY**  
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

In an extreme provocation, Nick Tenconi, leader of the now far-right UK Independence Party (Ukip), has called a protest in Whitechapel on Saturday 25 October.

This intrusion on the east London borough of Tower Hamlets, part of Ukip's "mass deportations tour", is a blatant attempt to whip up racism and division in an area with a big Muslim population. It's vital this is met by the biggest possible counterprotest.

It comes after months of anti-migrant protests outside a local hotel housing asylum seekers in the Isle of Dogs - also met by counterprotests, including local trade unionists.

Most recently, the 'Pink Ladies' - one of the right-wing groups apparently behind the Isle of Dogs protests - protested outside Tower Hamlets Town Hall on 8 October. The council was hearing a motion condemning anti-migrant protests.

Again, this was met by a counterprotest, outnumbering the Pink Ladies - and this time led by council workers defending their workplace, through the local branch of their union, Unison. Socialist Party and Socialist Students members took part.

There's a lot of anger in the area at Ukip's plan, and will likely be a big turnout to oppose it by the local community. The Socialist Party is playing



**There is a proud tradition in Tower Hamlets of mass struggles involving socialists and trade unionists, to oppose fascists and the far right**

our part to make the counterprotest as big as possible.

To build the most effective campaign against racism, it's vital that trade unions take the lead. 6.5 million workers are organised in the unions, of all different backgrounds, and with the power to bring society to a halt.

That power is crucial to effective campaigning against racism - and the conditions it breeds in. It needs to challenge austerity with clear demands that can unite the working-class community - such as jobs, homes and services for all, not racism.

That makes the recent initiative by activists in Tower Hamlets Unison especially important. They have set up a campaign group based among members of multiple unions to fight racism and the far right - on the day itself, and through community campaigning afterwards.

Tower Hamlets Socialist Party welcomes this and is participating fully. We suggested - and the trade union group agreed - demands to challenge austerity alongside racism, and for the unions to assert control over stewarding the counterprotest.

There is a proud tradition in Tower Hamlets of mass struggles led by socialists and trade unionists defeating fascists and the far right. The Battle of Cable Street in 1936 beat back the British Union of Fascists. The British National Party's street presence and first elected councillor were ousted in the 1990s. The English Defence League was stopped from marching in the 2010s.

The Socialist Party will continue building that tradition alongside other trade unionists and workers. And, as part of the struggle against racism today, a big, working-class, anti-austerity challenge is vital in next May's council elections.

## 'Students want new party to fight far right'



**Leeds - Notre Dame College**

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

Your Party, initiated by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, has been an interesting topic of conversation. Students at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College were engaging with ideas surrounding the new party, and how they could help join in and fight against the far right.

We sold the Socialist newspaper, and badges too, and gave out a generous amount of leaflets. People were enthusiastic about joining Socialist Students, and we hope to see more people at our meetings.

**ANISIA BOLDOGAN**  
LEEDS SOCIALIST STUDENTS

**Come and discuss**

**The case for a national trade union stewarding organisation against the far right**

**SOCIALISM 2025**

15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

WILLIAM HONDERMARCK  
SOCIALIST PARTY BLACK AND ASIAN GROUP

Insufficient wages, prices rising. Long hours. Increasing council taxes. An increase in uni fees. Perpetually priced out of secure living conditions due to spiralling housing costs, gentrification and a depletion of our council housing stock. Only some from the long list of issues faced by the working class in Britain. And for Black workers we add racism on top.

It should be a fundamental right to have secure access to decent housing, education and food, particularly when residing within the world's sixth biggest economy, producing a GDP of £2.9 trillion. But no, these are treated as mere commodities to be exploited by the capitalist class for their further enrichment and increased profits.

The capitalists have assaulted us with over a decade of austerity, which Starmer's Labour government is continuing. Meanwhile, it is increasing military spending by £8.2 billion over the last two years.

Measures like cutting pensioners' winter fuel payments and disability benefits have generated fury which capitalist politicians then cynically try to direct towards all vulnerable groups but the actual culprits - the capitalist rich elite who drain the wealth and resources out of our economy.

The wealthiest 350 people in the UK own just under £800 billion, enough to reverse every single austerity measure.

Perpetually maintained in a poverty rate that is more than double our white British counterparts, Black workers are the only major ethnic group still being paid less on average than white workers. We are also 3.7 times more likely to be 'stopped and searched' by police and more likely to be incarcerated. You can add to that the rekindled fear of being a victim of racist attacks from far-right mobs who seek to blame immigration for all the problems of the capitalist system.

Black workers are exploited as part of the broader working class, but that is compounded by historically rooted racial oppression - oppression rooted in Britain's colonial past and still used as a tool today. The five largest ethnic minority populations in Britain (Indian, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Black African and Black Caribbean, mainly Nigerian and Jamaican respectively), all being major former colonies of the British Empire.

Racism was used as a tool to try to justify forced mass extraction of resources from these nations, mass impoverishment and exploitation of their peoples, and the destruction of social infrastructure and political systems. These crimes were essential for the construction of the British Empire and ultimately British capitalism and the industrial revolution. The racism and conditions Black workers face in Britain today have been baked into the capitalist system. That is the root of our degraded living conditions today and in the past. While capitalism and its rich ruling class stands, so will our exploitative treatment.

Today it is the same class, including many of the same big business owners, such as those of Lloyds and Barclays who profited from colonialism, which maintains its domineering status in our economy. Its sole

# Build Your Party as a voice for Black workers, fighting for socialist change



PHOTOS: PAUL MATTSSON/CC

priority is generating profit and the self-preservation of their systemic oppression over the working class.

A successful struggle against that system requires Black workers coming together in a common struggle with other sections of the working class. Working-class solidarity and internationalism is vital to prevent the capitalists' attempts to divide and rule and to fight for liberation from the financial strangulation they impose on the masses worldwide for their own enrichment.

The development of a new mass party of the working class would increase the confidence of all workers to fight back, and would be a huge step forward for the fight against racism.

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party announcement is an important step in the process of such a party being created. Its 800,000 sign ups within its opening days shows the huge enthusiasm for working-class political representation.

There are nearly a million 'Black and minority ethnic' (BME) workers organised in the trade unions in Britain. The Socialist Party argues for the trade unions to be central to Your Party and for them to have a collective democratic voice within it. Democratic organisations with roots in Black working-class communities should have democratic representation within a new working class-led



**A successful struggle against that system requires Black workers coming together in a common struggle with other sections of the working class. Working-class solidarity and internationalism is vital to prevent the capitalists' attempts to divide and rule**

party too.

These organisations could play an important role in developing policy and programme to meet the needs of Black workers. It could include demands for policies such as free education, an increase in the quantity and quality of social housing, addressing the present disparities Black communities face in access to university education and adequate housing conditions relative to other groups.

A mass democratic workers' party needs to be structured to allow its membership to hold its leaders to account, to be able to determine policy, direct its elected representatives and

replace them if desired. We must demand that our representatives are paid no more than a workers' wage and are subject to recall.

The working class should have a democratic say over all aspects of our lives, of how industries are run and how resources it produces are used and distributed, abolishing the private decision-making that takes place currently by politicians alienated from our class. A new party needs to have a socialist programme based on nationalising big business and the banks under democratic workers' control and management.

We are constantly fed the false idea that the problems facing Black communities can be addressed by 'Black faces in high places'. But what is Kemi Badenoch doing for Black workers as the first Black leader of a British establishment party? Or that somehow Black-owned businesses can compete in a system driven by exploitation without themselves taking part in any exploitation.

These ideas are used as tools by the ruling class to try to stabilise their power by assimilating members of marginalised groups into positions of superficial power and authority. It is to try to pacify our justified anger towards the exploitative capitalist system, the conditions it places us under, and obscure the need for rebellion.

It is capitalism, based on private ownership of the world's vast wealth and resources, with its principles of ceaseless competition and ultimate target of profit accumulation, that creates a relentless search for the cheapest and most exploitable labour globally. Historically this materialised into slavery, colonialism, sweatshops rampant across the global south, and the desperate living conditions many currently face.

Combating our oppressor can only be executed through a fierce opposition to all they and their system represent. We need a united mass working-class party and for it to struggle for socialism.

**The Socialist Party's Black Workers Charter, a programme for fighting racism, produced by the Black and Asian group of the Socialist Party**





## WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

### WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

### ENVIRONMENT

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

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

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

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### DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

- Send your news, views and criticism, in not more than 150 words, to [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)
- We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. For legal reasons, we need your full name, address and phone number – but confidentiality will be respected if requested

## THE SOCIALIST INBOX

### ● A Tory in Handsworth

Complaining about the lack of integration and not seeing enough white faces whilst visiting Handsworth in Birmingham shouldn't even be on the list of issues for Tory shadow justice secretary Robert Jenrick.

What is the point of making statements like these? Working-class people in Handsworth face hardship daily from the lack of local and central government support and investment.

The only thing Jenrick can mention is race and lack of integration? Sounds like dog whistling.

Why not focus on the cost of housing? Rents, council tax and energy bills are ever increasing while our pay stays the same. Divide and conquer seems to be the Tory strategy; nothing else to offer apart from the same old song that has been played out with no results. All to compete with Reform UK's similar bigotry.

If Jenrick's concern is integration, why not suggest further investments in social spaces like community centres or youth clubs? That would be something refreshing to hear and welcomed by many. But focusing on working-class issues is beyond him; making sound clips for the internet is easier.

What does he mean by integration? Does he need people eating fish and chips in front of him, or maybe some full English breakfasts would prove to him that people have integrated? It's no wonder he made these unnecessary comments to get some attention, we all know Tory MPs are completely out of touch with working-class lives.

REFAT  
BIRMINGHAM

### ● Britain's Trump circus

I wish to echo Dave Murray's article on Trump's state visit (see 'Trump gets a soiree while Starmer sweats' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)), which showed what a state the British establishment and Trump are in. Dave concluded: "The visit [was] managed so as to minimise public scrutiny and above all protest. Respect and solidarity is due to all who protested Trump's second visit to the UK as an honoured guest."

I switched on the BBC news but despite all the genocide, slaughter, indiscriminate bombing and starvation around the world, I was treated to a circus. Unusually for clowns, they were treated to a slap-up dinner. Before that they had Trump 'inspect' the troops, all in fancy dress. One commentator said that, including an air force fly past, there were more troops involved on the day than deployed around the world.

All of this was taking place within the grounds of Windsor Castle, and the most glorious act was the golden coach. Donald pleaded for a ride so was driven from one side of Windsor Great Park to the other in it. Reminded me of a child in the fairground, pleading for a ride on the roundabout.

Of course, these charades of the rich and powerful are of more serious import but the fact that they couldn't parade Trump, not only through London, but even Windsor town shows the impact of the protests. The reports of the courageous student actions by Tom Gibson from Leeds summed it up: "The vast majority do not want our money spent on an expensive sycophantic ceremony, held by a government that refuses to spend money to help working people."

KEITH DICKINSON  
WEST LONDON



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY



# MOROCCO YOUTH REVOLT!

LEÏLA MESSAUDI  
GAUCHE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE (CWI FRANCE)

Morocco has witnessed a massive mobilisation of young people, who have taken to the streets en masse. A tragic event triggered this social anger: in Agadir, eight women died at the Hassan II hospital, the city's main health facility, in the space of ten days, following caesarean sections. This establishment is nicknamed "the hospital of death" and this tragedy is a symbol of the failures of the public health system.

## What is the situation in Morocco?

The country has experienced a period of strong economic growth in recent years and an increase in tourism and some industrial activities.

But the fact remains that the country is marked by significant poverty, with an unemployment rate of around 13.3% in 2025. And above all, this rate is very high among young people, reaching about 36.7% among 15 to 24-year-olds.

The movement is still growing. But since 30 September it has been subjected to violent repression, with the first clashes breaking out after four days of mobilisations. Three people died in the crackdown on the protests.

The demonstrators denounce massive corruption at the head of state, collusion with the rich elites, dramatic problems with education and health, as well as the massive lack of investment in public services.

It is precisely this generation, the 15 to 24-year-olds, that are the most numerous within the movement, called 'Gen Z 212' (after Morocco's telephone code), and among the arrests on 30 September.

## The super-rich and the King

For several years, Aziz Akhannouch has been at the head of state affairs. He is both the prime minister of King Mohammed VI and the richest man in Morocco. This man embodies Moroccan capitalism, strongly attached to political power and royal networks.

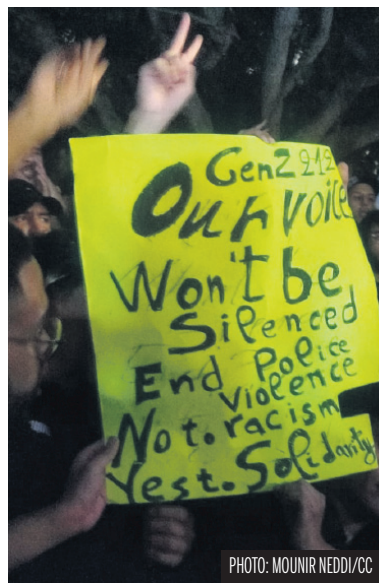
His Akwa Group is a major conglomerate, with a turnover of more than 2.7 billion euros per year. It is active in real estate, hydrocarbons, media and chemicals. In reality, what the demonstrators are denouncing is the gigantic collusion between political and economic power.

In recent years, he has placed his relatives in a position of power, which gives him a political and economic influence that is clearly contested by many young people, workers and the poor in Morocco. The population still has the appointment of two of his relatives to head the ministries of health and education in the back of its mind.

Akhannouch is the heir to a family group founded in the 1950s and linked to King Hassan II, father of Mohammed VI, who gave him increasing power. This group was linked to Elf Aquitaine, the French capitalist company. There was then an accumulation of wealth within this group and a diversification of activities that make Akhannouch the richest man in Morocco today.

In October 2021, Mohammed VI appointed Akhannouch as head of government, as his party, the RNI (centre-right), won a majority and they were able to come to power.

For more than four years, the conflict of interest has been obvious. He has accumulated a fortune estimated by Forbes at \$1.6 billion by 2025, in oil, gas, chemicals, as well as in subsidiaries such as Afriquia Gaz and Maghreb Oxygen, of which he is the majority shareholder.



At the head of power, a minority around Akhannouch is getting richer and richer through privatisations. During this time, the population has suffered a spike in prices, especially the price of meat, which has been very, very high. Inflation has been such that there was a controversy on the occasion of the end of Ramadan in 2025. Indeed, the state has asked for a halt to the ritual slaughter of Eid because it would have an impact on the price of meat, which is quite unprecedented.

## Regular revolts for 15 years

The GenZ 212 mobilisation has arisen. The young men and women who are demonstrating are demanding the right to education and to real public health. One of the slogans that permeates the mobilisation is: "We don't want the World Cup in 2030, we want real health, real education", which clearly reflects the aspirations of the population to live in dignified

conditions. Given the role of football as a popular outlet for a whole section of young people, this slogan is very significant. The revolt does not come out of nowhere.

Movements regularly arise in the kingdom. In 2011, a massive protest movement, the M20F, was launched, in the wake of the revolutions in the Maghreb and the Middle East known as the 'Arab Spring'. This forced Mohammed VI to announce democratic and social reform measures in the face of a particularly tense situation. The result: a little more parliamentary democracy in the country and a more liberal transformation of the economy, making Morocco the privileged partner of the US and other imperialist countries.

But beyond that, no significant improvement in living and working conditions has been observed. Wages have risen slightly, but inflation is such that these increases have been offset by the cost of living.

In 2016-17, there were mobilisations in certain regions, particularly in the Rif, a region that is particularly less developed than the rest of Morocco, because it has a strong Amazigh majority. Massive mobilisations took place there following the death of a young man during a police check. There were regional demands such as the recruitment of the inhabitants of the region into the local civil service services and the adoption of Amazigh as the language of local administration. At the same time, underdevelopment was not specific to this region and demonstrations also took place at the time in several urban centres.

In 2024, unemployment had reached a record high of 13.7% in the first quarter, and rising prices, especially for fuel, have caused significant social discontent. The "#Dégage\_Akhannouch" protest movement then developed, denouncing both the concentration of wealth and the mismanagement of social crises,



especially after the earthquake of 9 September 2023, which killed thousands of people. Entire areas have remained abandoned.

A new generation is on the streets. What is particularly significant is its determination, despite the repression. Interestingly, this mobilisation was organised via social networks, in particular Discord.

Today, the Akhannouch government is in the hot seat. On 10 October, Mohammed VI is due to speak at the opening of the parliamentary session. However, as in 2011, after the massive movement, the king should not be counted on to meet the demands of the young people and the majority of the inhabitants.

## Entire regime must go

Most of the demands of the young people in struggle are those that the whole country is facing. These demands could be taken up elsewhere and develop a powerful social movement capable of linking up with the rest of the population.

The majority of the population is suffering. Workers are increasingly numerous and exploited in Morocco in the automotive, aeronautics and energy industries. A large proportion of the peasants are very poor, excluded from the modernisation of the country and do not benefit from improvements in living conditions.

The events took place in more than ten cities and demonstrate that the potential is there. To wrest a real public health and education system, it is necessary to put an end to the repressive power of the Akhannouch government and Mohammed VI and the capitalists.

We must organise together and create committees of struggle, capable of organising a massive mobilisation, a massive strike movement of workers alongside the youth in revolt. These committees would be the basis for organising the struggle, deciding on its demands.

- Against the power of the capitalists and the rise in prices
- for the freezing and lowering of prices against privatisations
- for the nationalisation of the major sectors of the economy (energy, banks, etc)

It is up to the workers, together with the youth, to take control. Only the workers organising society themselves for the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population can truly improve the lives of the people of Morocco by overthrowing the power of the tiny minority of ultra-rich capitalists who rule today.

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# NO TO STARMER'S AUSTERITY



SOCIALIST PARTY

## TUC: Name the date

### For a trade union-led national demo against Labour's cuts

#### SOCIALIST PARTY YOUNG TRADE UNIONISTS

**T**he Treasury's announcement that there will be no 'bailouts' from its reserve fund is the clearest sign yet that Labour's 26 November Budget will mean more austerity.

Government departments have been told to 'make tough choices' and live within existing budgets - an instruction to cut jobs, pay, and services. This is what is in store for Labour's Budget.

Labour's 'fiscal discipline' means making working people pay again, while protecting the profits of the rich. We can't wait for the cuts to hit - we need to fight now!

At its 2025 Congress, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) voted unanimously to call a national weekend demonstration against austerity under Labour. That policy is already in place - now it must be implemented!

The TUC should immediately name the date.

The TUC General Council meets on Wednesday 22 October. The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) is calling on trade unionists, community campaigners and workers across the movement to join a lobby at 9am to demand the trade union leaders name the date. What better day than Saturday 22 November? The weekend before the Budget, sending the strongest possible message to Starmer's government that we will fight back against any attacks on our class.

Starmer's Labour continues to cosy up to big business whilst talking about hard choices for workers. They want more cuts, privatised services, pay cuts, and worse terms and conditions. The bosses are clearly fighting for their interests; we must fight for ours.

### Lobby the TUC General Council

**9am Wednesday 22 October at TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS**

### Trade union model motion

- This union NEC/branch/union branch committee/trades council welcomes the unanimous vote at this year's TUC Congress for the motions from the TUC Disabled Workers Conference and Trades Councils Conference
- We fully support the demand in the motions: "For the TUC to organise a weekend demonstration against Labour austerity as a launchpad for sustained trade union action in defence of workers and young people"

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

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

Get all the latest union news



NSSN bulletin: [shopstewards.net](http://shopstewards.net)