

# BRITAIN'S CHILD POVERTY SHAME

## Make the super-rich pay Fight for socialist change

EMILY LYNDON  
CAMDEN AND HARRINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

**I**t will come as no surprise to most that, over the last six years, conditions for the poorest children in Britain have worsened, according to the government's own report. Families are worse off under Labour's continued austerity. The single biggest cause of child poverty being the two-child benefit cap, which Labour have so far refused to ditch.

The devastating impact of deprivation is apparent in schools throughout the UK, where in many cases support staff and teachers supply food and clothing to pupils who need it. We know this is not a sustainable solution, but it is impossible for children to access learning when their basic needs aren't met.

The cost of housing forces families to live in inadequate homes with insufficient space alongside damp and mould. Children in the sixth-richest country in the world experience health issues due to inadequate housing, many of whom live in small flats where upwards of three children share a bedroom.

At a school in south London, children from one family, who were frequently off sick due to mould in their home, which the council refused to resolve, were threatened by the authorities with fines and a referral to social services.

Inner London boroughs like Hackney and Tower Hamlets rank



highly in measures of child deprivation. Children sleep in cramped, mouldy bedrooms in the shadows of the City of London and Canary Wharf, through which billions are traded every hour and profits boom.

We live in a system in which a super-rich minority gets richer at our expense, and where we are told we have to accept more cuts and austerity to 'balance the books'.

We need a party to fight for the working class, with policies to scrap the two-child benefit cap, to raise the minimum wage to at least £15 an hour with no exemptions, and to build council homes and cap rents. We need a party with councillors prepared to defy austerity, fully fund schools and other public services, and demand the money needed from the government.

We need to fight for socialist change to take the wealth and resources out of the hands of the capitalist bosses so things can be run by the working class in our interests, which can bring an end to child poverty for good.

# the Socialist

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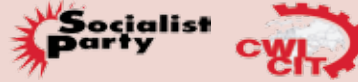
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."  
**Karl Marx**

# Labour housing debacles show the need for a real alternative

## Fight for council homes and rent control

**SAM SMITHSON**  
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Chancellor Rachel Reeves has become the latest Labour cabinet member to have their dodgy property dealings exposed. Reeves broke the law by failing to apply for a licence from Southwark Council to rent out her former family home. It comes just months after the resignations of ex-deputy prime minister Angela Rayner, who never paid stamp duty on the sale of her property, and former homelessness minister Rushanara Ali, who evicted the tenants of her £1 million east London town house in order to increase the rent. Reeves apologised for the 'inadvertent mistake', she made while renting out the £3,200 a month home, which was put on the rental market following her move to Number 11 Downing Street, a flat she lives in for free.

The back pockets of landlords such as Reeves continue to be well lined by renters. A recent study showed the cost of private rent now swallows 44% of the average wage packet. This figure has grown over the last five years while bills continue to soar and wages stagnate. Rents both in and out of London are at record highs, with the average rent in London now costing an eye watering £2,736 a month.

Any hope that Reeves will be held responsible for breaking the law is unlikely. Southwark Council released a statement saying they would not issue an enforcement fine unless

the landlord had previously received a warning that they had not acted upon. Despite the Labour-run council's stated desire to protect renters by licensing landlords, their actions have done little to alleviate the burden on the many facing exorbitant private rents or stuck on lengthy council housing waiting lists.

### Councils can take action

Local councils have the power to address the housing crisis, including by implementing proper licensing and registration for landlords. This would enable them to enforce rent controls on existing properties, making housing more affordable for local residents, with levels democratically determined by the local community. Licences should be withheld from landlords who set unaffordable rents or maintain substandard or unsafe properties. Councils currently have the authority to requisition vacant properties. Owners who intentionally leave properties empty should have them requisitioned and converted into council housing, or become licensed landlords with rents capped at affordable rates. This should be implemented alongside mass council house building programmes, freeing families on waiting lists from temporary accommodation and providing decent housing for all.

The upcoming May council elections offer an opportunity for potential Your Party candidates to propose



NUMBER 10/OGLAND PAUL MATTSOON

these as real solutions to the housing crisis. This would be a clear alternative to the current ineffectual local governance of the Labour, Conservative, and Reform parties. Councillors that fight for the people they represent, and demand the funding from Starmer's government, would make a real difference. These are the sort of councillors that we need, ones who will fight rogue landlords, bring down rents and stand up for the working class.

### Come and discuss

What could a socialist solution to Britain's housing crisis look like?

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# Despite fee rises universities still at risk of collapse

## Fight for funding not fees

**ADAM GILLMAN**  
SOCIALIST STUDENTS ORGANISER

Starmer's Labour will make already over £9,000 a year tuition fees automatically increase with inflation every year. Tuition fees rose for English students for the first time in over a decade last year. And despite these rises, as well as cuts already made at the expense of the quality of our education, the chair of the Office for Students said that there is still a possibility of high-profile universities collapsing! As if students don't already have enough to worry about: we face a lifetime of debt, an astronomical cost of living, and are forced to pay high rents for terrible accommodation.

The funding model of our education system is broken and it is students and university workers who are forced to pay the price.

Over 10,000 jobs have already been lost across the sector. Universities have made cuts to courses and university staff and lecturers redundant. We are paying more for less. We need to fight back to save these jobs and fight the cuts at our campuses.

This is why Socialist Students initiated the Funding Not Fees campaign to fight for:

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

The money in society is there, but it's hoarded by the super-rich bosses instead of used to fund things we

actually need – like a decent free education. Supermarket giant Tesco made £1 billion in profits last year, just one example of the wealth that the bosses of the big banks and corporations control. We need to take the wealth of the super-rich to fully fund free education for all.

For students that want to fight for the education system we deserve, it's vital that we build links with campus trade union branches fighting back against job losses and cuts to

courses to build a united student-staff fightback.

If you want to join in the fight for free education, for maintenance grants not loans and for a socialist society free from war, poverty and exploitation then Join Socialist Students today!

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Socialist Students campaigning in Leeds

# Prince Andrew's downfall reveals cracks in the British establishment

**NICK HART**  
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

That'll be plain old Andrew then! With allegations mounting against the now Andrew Mountbatten Windsor, few will be sorry to see the former prince stripped of his titles and evicted from his mansion.

This includes true blue royalists. Royal biographer Andrew Lownie stated in a recent Daily Mail podcast: "Andrew is clearly bringing disrepute upon the whole institution... let him if necessary, go to prison... I speak as a monarchist who wants the monarchy to survive."

The reason the King made his younger brother an ex-royal wasn't because he suddenly had to rid himself of one bad apple. But because the attention created by Andrew's reputed conduct further undermined the institution of the monarchy, which sits at the heart of rotten British capitalism.

The King has reportedly agreed to give Mountbatten Windsor a six-figure sum to help with moving costs. Will this encourage him not to go running to the tabloids with other stories that might cause embarrassment to the royal firm and their associates?

### Representing British capitalism

It's no coincidence that Mountbatten Windsor's relationship with the paedophile banker Jeffrey Epstein first came under scrutiny in 2011. The banking crisis and revelations about how powerful abusers such as Jimmy Saville were protected by the institutions they fronted angered many at what it revealed about the nature of the establishment. No wonder the once second in line to the throne reportedly felt entitled to ask police officers to 'dig up dirt' on Virginia Giuffrè.

The two of them became fast friends not due to an 'error of judgement' on the part of Mountbatten Windsor, as he has said in his strenuous denials of sexual assaulting Giuffrè, but through



The monarch is not some neutral and dispassionate figure sitting above society

his job as UK trade ambassador. His role was to suck up to all manner of wealthy individuals on behalf of the UK government and businesses, including the war criminal son of Colonel Gaddafi and Kazakhstani despot Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Even with Andrew stood down as a working royal, less than two months ago the King was happy to host another Epstein associate and alleged sex offender, Donald Trump. The hobnobbing banquet at Windsor Castle also featured executives from leading US tech firms, given a direct chance to lobby the president of the world's largest economy and his poodle Keir Starmer.

Why, in spite of all this, do large sections of the establishment want to see the monarchy survive?

There is the role it plays in providing a (sometimes) more dignified front for Great Britain plc than unpopular politicians such as Starmer, wheeled out at times of national celebration and tragedy alike.

But the monarch is not some neutral and dispassionate figure sitting above society. Before any new laws are presented to parliament for debate, which could impact on the royal family as landowners or employers, the sitting monarch has the chance to review the legislation and lobby for changes. Though the specifics of this process of 'king's consent' is kept secret from the public, you can bet that Charles and Liz never asked for laws to give a better deal to workers and tenants on their estates! The monarchy is an extra tool in the box to defend the interests of the capitalists.

In times of extreme crisis for the ruling elite, the monarch can dismiss

a democratically elected government in the UK and other countries where they are head of state. Just as they did when Queen Elizabeth's Governor General dissolved the radical Labour government of Gough Whitlam in Australia in 1975.

Or if the capitalist class feels really under threat, why resort to constitutional niceties when they can simply prepare to do away with democracy altogether? Rumours continue to circulate about the role of the King's great uncle Lord Mountbatten in plotting a military coup in the 1970s during a rising tide of worker militancy and the rank and file of the Labour Party moving sharply to the left. Imagine the role the Queen could have usefully played for the ruling class if a Corbyn-led Labour government had challenged their wealth.

The impact of decades of capitalism in crisis and the attacks that have rained down on the working class has damaged the standing of all aspects of capitalist rule. Workers have seen politicians embroiled in scandal, police forces institutionally biased and unfair courts enforcing laws for the bosses. The crisis in the monarchy is part of this process, as weak and rotten British capitalism attempts to maintain the profits of a few and deflect the mass anger of the working class and young people at their system. All the more reason for us to get organised and fight to get rid of the capitalist system and its outgrowths, and replace it with a democratic socialist society without obscene privileges – whether from wealth or right of birth.

### Come and discuss

Why can't Starmer save the sinking ship of British capitalism?

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PAUL MATTSOON

# Stop energy rip off – nationalise!

**SCOTT JONES**  
NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

A new report by Unite the Union investigates why the UK has the highest energy prices in Europe and points out that the average household pays £500 a year of its bills directly to energy company profits. This at a time when bills have gone up 42% since 2021 leading to a total of £30 billion in pre-tax profits for energy companies in 2024.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham says: "What the Unite energy costs report clearly shows, is that households are being fleeced pure and simple. The chaos of the current system has resulted in the highest energy bills in Europe."

The report correctly concludes that you can't control what you don't own, calling for public ownership of energy. Taking it out of the hands of some of the world's wealthiest people and companies mentioned in the report like US Investors Blackrock and Vanguard, which both have major stakes in UK energy companies. Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky owns gas generator EP, Hong Kong's richest man Li Ka Shing is the largest shareholder in UK Power Networks, while Warren Buffet is the largest shareholder in Northern Powergrid. Unite reiterates its policy of

renationalising our energy system, estimating the overall costs of renationalisation, including if the taxpayer were to buy back the system assets at their 'book value', at £90 billion.

But these companies have been ripping us off for years and compensation should only be paid on the basis of proven need and not giving more money to the super-rich to give us back what is ours.

And workers and our trade unions which have a policy of public ownership need a party that fights for renationalisation. Your Party is an opportunity for this, and trade unions need to be involved fighting for a programme and structure that gives voice to trade union members and policies, and the working class as a whole.

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# Israeli state terror continues amid fragile Gaza ceasefire

Israeli airstrikes killed 104 Palestinians on 28 October, nearly three weeks after the ceasefire began in Gaza. The Israeli government now says it has resumed the ceasefire. The reason it gave for the strikes was retaliation for an attack on Israeli forces in IDF-held Rafah, which killed one reservist.

The ceasefire is still in its 'phase one', during which captives are being exchanged and the IDF maintains control of over half of the Strip, behind the 'yellow line'. The blockade on aid into Gaza has been lifted but remains severely restricted.

Every part of the 'Gaza peace plan' remains a potential source of volatile disagreements. Israeli forces have violated it scores of times. Palestinian fighters in the IDF-controlled zone attempt to return from positions beyond the 'yellow line'; there are repeated tragic disputes over the identities of the remains of deceased hostages recovered from being buried under rubble; accusations of incursions.

Meanwhile, Israeli state-sanctioned violence against Palestinians in the West Bank continues. Israeli forces continue to strike targets in southern Lebanon and threaten to resume strikes on Houthis in Yemen.

Government representatives from seven Arab and Islamic majority nations, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Pakistan, met in

Turkey on 3 November to discuss establishing a future international 'stabilisation' force to be stationed in Gaza.

What faith could ordinary Palestinians possibly have in forces deployed by the ruling elites of those nations, many themselves resorting to violent repression at home, and all representatives of exploitative capitalism?

It is the struggles of the working class and masses - of Palestinians, and others across the Middle East and internationally - that can offer a route towards peace, based on socialist change to meet the needs of all.

The horrors of the capitalist system, displayed brutally by events in Gaza and capitalist politicians' hypocritical responses, are having international consequences. It has been the trigger for a general strike in Italy, provoked repeated mass protests across the world, played a role in the likely election of a self-proclaimed socialist mayor of New York City, and precipitated potential developments towards a new mass workers' party in Britain.

The primary task for socialists in Britain is to strengthen and build the organisations of the working class, to win them to the fight for socialist change, in solidarity with the working class and oppressed internationally.



## The world impact of two years of war on Gaza – and what lies ahead?

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## SOCIALISM TODAY

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

### Your Party and the left

Hannah Sell explains how a misunderstanding of Marxism is shaping the mistaken approaches of most parties on the left towards the basis on which the newly formed Your Party should be organised.

November issue also includes...

- How powerful is Putin?
- Jean-Luc Mélenchon
- COP30 impasse
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## Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

A major factor in Britain's economic woes is "a cross-party agreement to finance the expansion of the welfare state by taxing 'the rich', while reducing the contribution from 'ordinary working people.'" That is the claim being made by the chief economist of Gavikal, a Hong Kong-based wealth management company, writing in the Financial Times on 1 November.

In fact, it is the determination of the establishment parties to defend the interests of the capitalist rich that has made them unable to maintain a stable base of support. On the highest turnout ever in the Welsh Senedd constituency, the Caerphilly by-election delivered 11% and 2% of the votes for Labour and the Tories. They are respectively the most successful party in Caerphilly's history and the most successful capitalist party in the world. Far from making the rich pay for the expansion of welfare, they have overseen an unrelenting cost-of-living crisis for us while billionaire profits pile up.

Last month, The Economist ran a feature entitled 'Don't tax wealth'. Its reasons to not tax the super-rich include "the risks of letting the wealth tax cat out of the bag". The article says: "Many wealth tax advocates almost certainly see a levy of 2% as just the start". The article points to France where 86% of the population backs a tax on wealth of more than 100 million euros, and the capitalist parties struggle to pass austerity budgets amid mass protests and strikes.

The defenders of the capitalist class fear that the appetite of the working class for measures that represent our interests will grow with the eating, for measures that come up against their ownership of industry. This poses a threat to their system.

### Autumn Budget

In the run-up to the Budget on 26 November, all the talk is about Labour Chancellor Rachel Reeves's 'black hole', which requires her to 'find' £20-40 billion. Despite the talk of change, just like under the hated Tories the working class remains in the Starmer government's crosshairs and must organise to fight the austerity axe falling on us again.

Our opponents are relentless in defending their right to pile up profits unobstructed. They have representatives in the billionaire-owned press and four parties: Labour, Tories, Lib Dems and Reform UK. But the enthusiasm expressed when Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party initiative launched indicates a growing understanding that we need our own voice.

To be able to express our interests, the new party being built must be a mass workers' party. That is why Socialist Party activists are fighting in their trade unions for them to take steps towards developing their own political voice. It is why we are fighting for trade union bodies to have a collective democratic voice in the Your Party structures.

To be able to discuss and debate

# Your Party: Labour's budget shows need for workers' political voice



NEU members on strike during the strike wave in 2023 PAUL MATTSSON

the crucial questions of programme requires a democratic and inclusive approach, with no exclusions or prescriptions of socialist parties.

### Socialist programme

Without doubt, there will be attempts by representatives of big business to seek to influence any political force, including a new workers' party, in the direction of moderation and ultimately capitulation to the capitalist status quo. In the course of struggle, to be able to deliver for the working class, a new party will need to adopt a fighting, socialist programme to take wealth and power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

The Socialist Party campaigns for the nationalisation of the top 125 corporations and banks that dominate the economy, under the democratic control and management of the working class, with compensation only where there is proven need. That would be a means not only of getting hold of some of the existing wealth but of the working class taking the levers of the economy into its own hands. That would allow the enormous resources, but also the technology and technique, to be organised in a democratic plan to meet the needs of all.

The working class has the potential to fight for this - and win. Under capitalism, workers are ultimately material for exploitation, our living standards being hammered down unless we fight back. But it is the collective strength of the organised working class that makes us such a potentially powerful threat to the defenders of the status quo.

The general strike that shook France in 1968, during which ten million workers brought the country to a halt and forced President Charles de Gaulle to flee, looms in the memory of the French capitalist establishment facing strikes today, and in the minds of the Economist editors.

In 1968, mistakes of the workers' leaders allowed capitalism to be stabilised. Had it succeeded, the strike would have spread like wildfire across Europe and worldwide. It would have posed the question of working-class political organisation to replace capitalist governments removed by the movement. Today that need is even greater.

The next steps needed in Britain to build such a movement include trade union branches pushing for their leaders to fight for the TUC (Trades Union Congress) to realise its democratically agreed motion to organise

a mass demo against Starmer's austerity. That would help build the confidence of our class in its mass collective strength.

### Workers' voice

But also needed are steps to building the workers' political alternative. Last week's Socialist reported that Glasgow Unison, with socialists in its leadership, had immediately written to the councillors who had defected from the Greens to Your Party in Glasgow. The councillors were called to urgently meet with the city council trade unions to discuss how they can work together to advance a genuine anti-austerity and pro-public service policy.

This is a step towards the collective voice of the working class being represented in the council. Without it, the interests of all of us exploited and oppressed in the bosses' profit-first system will continue to be trampled in the stampede to profit.

Every trade unionist should think about how their branch can put demands on local councillors to represent their opposition to cuts. If no councillors are found willing, it will be necessary for trade unions to stand their own candidates as part of a no-cuts stand - ideally under a national Your Party challenge.

As the Scotland report notes: "As the first Your Party councillors in Scotland, the three could set an example of what a fighting socialist policy on cuts looks like. With a council budget due to be drawn up in the early months of 2026, there is an immediate opportunity to create a new tradition in Glasgow by proposing a no-cuts budget."

### People's budgets

Your Party supporters could draw together local community campaigners, trade union branches, student groups, etc, to initiate discussion on a People's Budget in every area (see pages 8-9).

This is a vital plank of the fight against Reform UK. Farage's equivalents in France, Marine Le Pen's National Rally, also claim to speak for left-behind working-class people. But in the French Parliament, they used their seats to help the capitalist parties defeat the vote on the wealth tax on Friday 31 October.

Here, Reform councils are raising council tax. We need councils that use their powers and resources to defend working-class people - but also to unite us in a movement to fight for the money we need. Reform's division undermines our ability to fight.

Regrettably, the current emphasis from the Your Party leadership is not on ensuring the centrality of the fighting capacity of the organised working class. Trade union members have a role to play by putting forward for discussion, in their branch or relevant body, steps that can be taken by their union towards independent working-class political representation (with model motions for a number of unions, either affiliated to Labour or not, available [tinyurl.com/shbfusyw](https://tinyurl.com/shbfusyw)).

There are over six million members in the trade unions. The mighty potential of the organised working class to transform society is shown when that collective voice is exerted through strike action - but it needs a socialist political voice to replace capitalist rule.

### Come and discuss

**Why is the working class still the agent of socialist change?**

**Will Farage be the next Prime Minister? and how to stop Reform UK**

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# NEU exec: We must get ready to fight Starmer on pay, funding and workload

DAN WARRINGTON  
NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Keir Starmer's Labour government has instructed the School Teachers Review Body on pay (STRB) for the next three years instead of one year, as is usual. When the National Education Union (NEU) executive met in October, the government had released its evidence to the STRB, and the proposal is insultingly bad.

The government has proposed that teacher pay should 'increase' by just 6.5% spread over the next three years. At current inflation rates, that amounts to a real-terms pay cut of around 2% per year. Even if inflation were to reduce to the government's target of 2% (which does not seem probable any time soon), 6.5% over three years will do nothing to alleviate the 23% erosion of real-terms pay since 2010.

Labour must know that this proposal is an insult to the teaching profession. Further decline in real-terms pay will worsen the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, driving up workload even further for everyone, and worsening the learning conditions of students.

The government will claim lack of affordability, but the reality is that the current expenditure on education in the UK is only 4.1% of GDP – well below that of our European neighbours or even the USA. Instead, Labour is choosing to prioritise preserving the wealth of the super-rich over proper funding of education.

Rather than wait for the STRB process to slowly unfold, education unions must begin to organise a dispute for fully funded teacher pay rises that move towards a restoration of lost pay. This begins with a rejection of the STRB and a call for direct negotiations over pay and conditions between the unions and the Education Secretary.

But the fight on funding must not be limited to the pay award. Workload is the issue members are most acutely suffering from and requires funding overall to be addressed. We must bring workload, funding and pay all together – and link that to demanding a route for academies to return to local authority control to end the drain on school finances by multi-academy trusts (MATs).

## Sixth forms fragmentation only benefits bosses

Following a protracted battle with the Sixth Form College Association, NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede reported that sixth-form members would be consulted on accepting a 4% pay award, while continuing to pursue changes to conditions that would bring sixth-form college lecturers in line with schoolteachers.

That teachers and lecturers in sixth form colleges have had to fight to receive the same pay uplift as schoolteachers illustrates the need for direct bargaining with the government rather than through the fragmented system of different college CEOs. Any national pay campaign



NEU members had to fight the Tories – and now must prepare to fight Starmer's Labour GLENN KELLY

over the coming year must include sixth-form colleges and demand better for the whole education system.

## Supply agency rip-off

One area where the privatisation of state education is keenly shown is that of supply teacher agencies. Underfunding of schools leads to overstretched staffing and a need for supply teachers to cover the gaps. Supply agencies charge schools extortionate fees, only a fraction of which are received by the supply teacher. The result is funds that schools should be spending on educating students are lining the pockets of supply agency bosses.

Kebede announced the launch of a Stop the Agency Rip-off campaign, to expose the extraordinary profits made by the supply agencies and lobby politicians to support the set-up of a publicly held national supply register. Socialist Party members have long demanded that supply is brought back in-house.

Lobbying of MPs would be stronger if the NEU was able to back parliamentary candidates whose policies align with NEU campaign aims. We want to see the back of privatisation in education – whether it is supply agencies, academies or exam boards – which would be much stronger if our rules allowed the union to endorse socialist candidates standing on anti-privatisation anti-austerity platforms. Socialist Party members are campaigning for Jeremy Corbyn

and Zarah Sultana and other pro-worker MPs to be invited to the NEU exec to discuss how this and all our other demands can be fought for politically.

## Support staff

The most debate in this month's executive meeting was around the arrangements for the Special Conference regarding support staff recruitment and organising planned for February 2026 – a point of continued tension between the NEU and other education unions following a second censure of the NEU for attempting to gain bargaining rights for support staff.

The Support Staff National Council (SSNC) within the NEU had put forward recommendations for how to ensure that support staff voices were heard at this special conference, most notably a requirement that 20% of district delegates to the conference be support staff members. These recommendations were opposed and overridden by the NEU Left faction, which holds a majority on the Executive Committee.

Annual conference has three years in a row passed motions calling on the union to begin actively recruiting support staff. Socialist Party members fight for all the education unions to become strong, democratic and combative unions, for them all to have negotiation rights, and to campaign for maximum collaboration in action.

## TUC demo against austerity

As agreed at the previous executive meeting, the NEU delegates to the General Council of the TUC (Trades Union Congress) reported that they called for the TUC to name a date for a trade union-led demonstration against Labour austerity.

Daniel Kebede acknowledged the impact of the lobby outside the TUC, called by the National Shop Stewards Network and supported by Socialist Party members, and encouraged NEU members to continue to lobby for the TUC to fulfil policy passed at the Congress in September.

However, no date has been set for a demo yet. The NEU and the trades unions have to keep fighting for it. As the Budget looms, it is essential that the trade union movement steps up and opposes the imposition of yet more austerity on the public sector.

## Join the fightback

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## Come and discuss

The struggle to build fighting trade unions under Labour

### SOCIALISM 2025

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# Unison general secretary election: A chance to turn around the union to take on the government

## Vote Andrea Egan

APRIL ASHLEY  
UNISON NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The public sector union Unison is in the midst of electing a new general secretary to head the union for the next five years.

The two contenders are the current general secretary, Keir Starmer supporter Christina McAnea, and left challenger Andrea Egan, part of the Time For Real Change (TFRC) group in Unison.

The election comes as Starmer's government is continuing Tory austerity in the public sector. So far that has left members suffering a 25% real-terms pay cut, thousands of job losses, the decimation of local council services, and continuing privatisation and crisis in the NHS. Rachel Reeves's 26 November Budget promising yet more austerity comes the day after the general secretary election closes.

Members are angry that the cost-of-living crisis continues to ravage living standards without a serious national fightback by Unison, which claims to be the biggest union in the UK with 1.3 million members.

This election gives the opportunity to challenge the right-wing union leadership, which still supports the hated Labour Party that attacked



STEVE SCORE

## University ballots – Vote yes! Strike together to defend pay, jobs and working conditions

BEA GARDNER  
UCU MEMBER

Higher education workers cannot continue to pay the price for the failed marketised education system.

Four education unions – University and College Union (UCU), Unison, Unite and Scottish education union EIS – are coordinating a ballot for industrial action. The ballot closes the week of the Autumn Budget. We now have the chance to send a clear, defiant message to our employers and the government by delivering a strong 'yes' vote for industrial action.

In the past 15 years we have already faced huge attacks on working conditions and the value of our pay, all to maximise the 'surplus' held by universities. Now, with the majority of universities forecasting deficits, we are paying an even higher price.

1.4% is the imposed pay offer this year, at a time when our cost of living is far higher. One in two universities is cutting jobs and courses, with thousands more jobs at risk.

The much-anticipated 'Post-16 Education and Skills' white paper

does nothing to resolve the crisis. In fact, it is a green light for universities to continue to cut courses and jobs in the name of 'specialisation'. It doubles down on the fee-based funding model.

We now have a chance to coordinate our fightback and to say we will not be made to pay the price any longer. Combined, the unions have over 120,000 members; we are the ones who really make the universities function. Without us, buildings and labs wouldn't open, teaching and research would halt, and no students would be enrolled.

As the sixth largest economy in the world, with an ever-increasing number of billionaires, the money is there for full funding for post-16 education: for full pay restoration, investment in courses and facilities, the scrapping of tuition fees and the introduction of living grants for students.

UCU is running a ballot in Further Education too. We must join together as education unions, along with student organisations, and fight for full democratic worker and student control of our sectors, so they are run in our interests and not the interests of privateers, profiteers and warmongers.

UCU and Unison on strike together in 2022 PAUL MATTSSON



pensioners' winter fuel allowance and disability benefits. Outrage forced a retreat, but the government is still maintaining the two-child benefit cap, forcing more working families, including Unison members, into poverty.

And apart from a few mealy mouthed comments, Christina McAnea is firmly wedded to partnership working with Starmer's Labour and promoting the Employment Rights Bill as the best thing since sliced bread. However, the promised repeal of the 2016 Trade Union Act with the undemocratic 50% ballot threshold for strike action has yet to be delivered. This has held back national strike action in local government and health pay campaigns.

Socialist Party members in Unison are supporting Andrea Egan, who says that if elected she will take the wage of a social worker and refuse the "eye-watering £181,000 salary package the current general secretary takes home."

If Andrea wins, it will be a sign to Keir Starmer that the union is going to change; that members want it to stand up to the government and employers.

She says she is angry that "Unison keeps funding and propping up the very same politicians who make our lives worse." Therefore, she says, she will launch a comprehensive review of the union's relationship with the Labour Party.

The Socialist Party is campaigning for a review of Unison's political funds. A meeting in August of Unison members for a new party launched a petition to campaign amongst members on this issue.

## Only 16% of Unison members pay into the Labour Link fund

We note that the 2025 Unison annual report stated that only 16% of members paid into the Labour Link fund. This clearly shows that affiliation to Labour is no longer a 'fundamental aim and objective' for Unison members.

800,000 people registered an interest in the announcement of a new party by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana. 'Your Party' is now organising regional assemblies and a founding conference later this month. It is more important than ever for Unison members to campaign for our union to engage in this process at all levels, to fight for a new working class-based party; to break with pro-austerity Labour and back only those political candidates and parties who clearly support Unison policies.

Workers are furious about the cost-of-living crisis and Labour's betrayal of working people. The racist Reform party has taken control of ten councils. There is a £4 billion gap in local council funding, with 30 councils requiring 'exceptional support' to avoid going effectively bankrupt. Local councils, whether Labour or Tory-controlled, continue to implement austerity cuts. The Socialist Party calls for councils to implement no-cuts budgets to protect jobs and services, and has called on Andrea Egan to make this a key part of her general secretary campaign.

- Sign the petition 'Labour's not our party! Let Unison members decide our political choices' at [change.org](http://change.org)

- The ballots close on 28 November
- See here for what we say about the strategy: 'University workers across four unions to ballot for industrial action' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)

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Why can't Starmer save the sinking ship of British capitalism?

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# YOUR PARTY COUNCILLORS CAN DEFY AUSTERITY

## How can councils resist cuts?

Nobody can seriously question that local councils could be an important alternative power to central government. Around a fifth of public spending is done by local authorities, providing 800 or so different services. Many are statutory functions that they have to fulfil, others are discretionary. There are 1.295 million workers employed in total by local government in England and Wales, and 240,000 in Scotland. Who controls your local council then is not a matter of indifference.

But equally, nobody could dispute that councils and the local services they provide have been at the front-line of the austerity offensive. The core spending power of local authorities, for example, is down by around 18% per person compared to 2010, the Institute of Fiscal Studies calculates. The GMB union estimates that councils across England and Wales – Tory and Labour alike – have cut nearly 600,000 jobs since 2012.

And the situation will not improve under the current spending plans of Starmer and the chancellor Rachel Reeves. Some additional grant funding was announced for local government in the June 2025 Spending Review but completely insufficient to meet its needs. Dr Jonathan Carr-West, the chief executive of the Local Government Information Unit, a membership organisation of over 200 different authorities, argued that “we have made some progress” because, whereas in 2024 half of councils were “telling us that if nothing changes in terms of how they’re funded they are going to go bust within five years”, now it was one third! (BBC News, 26 August)

### ‘Funding formula’ changes and re-organisation

In fact, the future position of local government is even worse than the already desperate headline figures suggest. Also announced in June was a new system for allocating central government funding between local authorities, to be in place for the 2026-27 council budgets after ‘consultation’. Redistributing around £2.1 billion in annual funding, including the income councils can keep from growing business rates revenue, the estimate is that 186 councils will lose out.

Some councils, obviously, will gain some additional funding; but one in four will see a real-terms fall in overall funding over the next three years with 30 facing cuts of 11-12%. And although the exact details of how the new funding formulas would apply are still unclear, the biggest losses are set to be inflicted on inner London boroughs and slow population growth areas, such as South Tyneside



One-in-four councils will see a real-terms fall in overall funding over the next three years with 30 facing cuts of 11-12%. PHOTO: BSNHULL/CC

and Sunderland in the North East.

Ominously the changes to the funding arrangements are also being accompanied by a ‘review’ of what statutory duties councils should have, and whether and how much fees can be charged for certain local services.

One set of rights certainly in the government’s target line are those of school pupils and their families requiring special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services. Up to now, councils have been able to incur deficits to meet their SEND spending needs – deficits which currently total over £5 billion combined – through a government ‘statutory override’ of the requirement for councils to produce a ‘balanced budget’ each year. This has recently been extended until 4 April 2028 but on the implicit basis that SEND services rights will be reviewed and cuts in provision made. What other statutory functions will be cut, or charges imposed for?

And all this is taking place against the backdrop of the biggest reorganisation of local government in England since the 1970s, as Labour aims to merge many district councils into

larger, less accountable, single bodies – known as unitary authorities – and increase the number of directly elected mayors.

Larger, more remote, councils are favoured by the Starmer government because it fits with their aim to weaken local democratic accountability. Whereas people living in towns and cities like, for example, Exeter, Basingstoke, Worcester, Crawley or Norwich, can currently vote every year for who runs their local public services – in district council elections, for one-third of the seats each time, and a county election in the fourth year – under the new plans they will only have a vote once every four years, and then only for distant mega-councils with populations of half a million or more.

With this erosion of local democracy, topped off by US-style directly elected mayors, it will be easier to take unpopular decisions to cut or privatise services – or to favour special business interests – than to win support for pro-business austerity policies amongst a wider group of regularly elected councillors, who

The 800,000 who signed up to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana’s initial Your Party announcement this summer showed the huge appetite for an alternative to the austerity establishment parties. The May 2026 local elections present a huge opportunity for Your Party councillors to be elected, or even to lead councils. How could those elected positions be used to help mobilise a movement to defy Starmer’s austerity?

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is the electoral coalition which the Socialist Party has been a part of since 2010. TUSC has given its full backing to moves towards a new party. The following has been taken from the TUSC discussion document ‘Ideas about the next local elections - Opportunities and challenges for a new working-class party in May 2026’, tusc.org.uk

place to push through their austerity agenda?

### So is resistance futile?

No, it’s not! Since its inception, TUSC has pioneered an anti-cuts strategy of councils using their prudential borrowing powers and reserves to set needs-based budgets as part of building a mass campaign for proper government funding for local services, explaining exactly how that was possible. Not by ignoring the legal requirement for a council to set a balanced budget each year before it is able to spend money or issue council tax bills, but by formally ‘balancing’ it by the use of borrowing powers and reserves.

What powers councils have and how they could be used to this end has been detailed in previous TUSC documents, including the 55-page briefing Preparing a No Cuts People’s Budget, available from the TUSC website at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/450.pdf>. There really has been no excuse for local austerity policies. But, until now, there has not been the prospect of electing councillors on a sufficiently large scale who are prepared to fight them.

The latest version of the TUSC briefing was published in 2021 and obviously things have moved on since then. One of the last pieces of legislation passed by the Tories to get royal assent, for example, was the so-called Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act which gave greater intervention powers to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government over council borrowing. The implications were analysed by TUSC, the conclusion drawn that, while the battleground was being reset, councils still retained the capacity to resist austerity diktats. And recent developments have only confirmed the broad point of the flexibility that still exists in council budget-setting and funding decisions.

### Not just in the council chamber

The alternative budget amendments moved by TUSC-supporting councillors and explored in the TUSC

material were not recommended by council finance officers when they were presented, although they were not ruled as ‘illegal’ either.

In particular there was debate over whether a council budget could include borrowing which could arguably be used for ‘current’ spending, to pay for day-to-day services, rather than ‘capital’ spending, and whether the possibility of increased government support could be built into budget projections. In one case a QC’s opinion was sought by the Labour-led council, which was inconclusive. Yet, confirming our arguments, this year, for example, 30 councils have been given ‘capitalisation directions’ by the government explicitly enabling them to take out loans to pay for current spending. The ‘statutory override’ on SEND deficits is another example of this elasticity in the system, on a massive scale.

Meanwhile, in August, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government agreed to provide funding towards repaying the £2 billion debts that had been incurred by Woking Borough Council in Surrey.

A ministry official was quoted as saying “it is not typical for a council’s debt to be addressed or written off centrally. However, the government accepts that there are exceptional circumstances in Woking”. (BBC News, 6 August) In this case, it was because the borough council’s debts were potentially derailing the government’s reorganisation plans – none of the other ten councils in Surrey, the county or the districts, wanted to be burdened with Woking’s debts when they were merged.

But couldn’t a councils’ revolt against austerity, spearheaded by new party-led councils and councillor groups, create ‘exceptional circumstances’ too? ‘Circumstances’ that could also force the government to ‘accept’ it has to pay up?

The ‘technical’ means to fight back can always be found, if the will is there.

Local austerity, it must be said again, will not be defeated by action in the council chambers alone but by combining such defiance with building a mass movement.

But that is the potential which is opening up in the new political situation in Britain and which must be seized.

## Preparing for the May elections: local People’s Budgets

Discussing policy amongst supporters of Jeremy and Zarah’s new party call is vital preparation for the May elections, certainly to ensure that those who put themselves forward as candidates are committed to an absolute, no-cuts, anti-austerity stand.

But building a movement that could back councillors taking such a stand beyond those who have already declared their support for a new party is equally important, if not more so. And that must start now, well before the election period begins next spring.

One way of doing this in each council district would be to use the budget-making timetable that local authorities will begin in the autumn, before they set their 2026-2027 spending plans in January-February. Councils will publish initial spending plans – and any new cuts – including ‘consultations’ with the council trade unions, local groups whose services might be affected, and sometimes public meetings, before they reach their final budget proposals to be voted on in the new year. This can provide a framework to produce an alternative ‘People’s Budget’ for the area, involving the widest possible input from the local community.

Almost certainly, by doing this – inviting local community organisations, trade union branches, campaign groups, student groups and others to contribute their ideas on what services the council should provide – more policy proposals would emerge, even beyond those raised in the previous section. And that really would establish the foundations to pull together the broadest possible anti-austerity electoral challenge in May.

### How to start?

Drawing up a local People’s Budget can sound daunting – but it doesn’t have to be. Getting across the idea that council budgets should start from what local communities need – not what central government austerity policies demand – can begin with just one local campaign. In fact, all the alternative budget proposals presented by TUSC-supporting councillors in previous campaigns, explained in more detail in the TUSC ‘Preparing a No Cuts People’s Budget’ briefing document, started in this way. A local People’s Budget can be as broad or as specific as local campaigners make it.

But an open meeting to make sure it genuinely reflects the local community’s needs will be vital – ideally a specific ‘People’s Budget conference’ to draw together the local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2026-27 budget-setting meeting.

To prepare for that, Your Party supporters could draw up a list of trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, residents associations, students unions, student societies and so on, to take part. Ask them about co-hosting the event. But certainly invite them to contribute with their ideas and proposals for what the local community needs. Local authority websites, by the way, should have information on all the organisations that receive council funding or grants. Track this down and go through to see what relevant organisations may be good to contact to see if they want to be involved.

A draft ‘suggested People’s Budget of demands’ for the local council

area could be discussed at an initial meeting of Your Party supporters. This could act as a starting point that could then be debated, added to and amended from the local, broader, conference.

If it does achieve wider input from the local community, a resulting ‘People’s Budget’ could, in itself, be the local manifesto for Your Party candidates in May’s elections; underpinned, of course, as it needs to be, by a clear no-cuts commitment. And really, what better way could there be to create unity across working-class communities against the divide-and-rule propaganda of the establishment politicians, including Reform?

### Think local, aim big

Other campaign opportunities could also come from the process of bringing together a People’s Budget ahead of the council’s official budget-setting meeting. All councils, for example, accept petitions from residents, although they have different rules about what happens then. Some petitions on a defined issue (opposing a specific council proposal) may require the council to respond in a report following consultation. Petitions reaching a certain threshold may mean the council has to debate the issue at a full, public, council meeting, often with the lead petitioner having speaking rights.

Check the petition rules for individual local authorities to see what is possible but the main point is to use every avenue to build momentum for a real anti-austerity alternative before the May elections. To build the base in the community for the constant campaigning that will be needed after May if a new party councillor is elected – or, thinking big, if the new party wins a majority in the council!

And who is to say that is not possible in at least some of the councils that are being contested in this particular four-yearly cycle of elections next May? If, that is, there is a properly organised national stand.

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The Liverpool council struggle - what did a political voice for workers in struggle look like?  
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# YOUR PARTY REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

## South Yorkshire - critical 'dot-ocracy'

ALISTAIR TICE  
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Around 200 members attended, including from East Midlands where no regional assembly is planned. Whilst most were from an older layer of activists and ex-Labour Party members, there were some people attending their first Your Party meeting since signing up to the website in the summer, including some younger people.

Unlike others so far, our assembly was run entirely by local activists because, for reasons not explained, no national facilitators attended. Whilst largely sticking to the Your Party HQ agenda of debating 11 sections of the four founding documents, it allowed more flexibility for breakout groups to decide what they wanted to discuss. It also meant consultative votes were taken during the closing plenary session, on the founding documents and on alternative proposals put forward by the recently elected

Sheffield proto-branch interim steering committee.

There was also an innovative use of 'dot-ocracy', whereby participants voted on the proposals and alternatives by sticking coloured dots on prepared voting charts, which were reported on in the final session.

In 8 out of 9 cases, the Sheffield alternatives to the founding documents were overwhelmingly supported. There was strong opposition to sortition and the lack of representative democracy. There was support for a "party of the whole left" and against bans and proscriptions. There was a strong demand for official branches to be set up immediately, for standing widely in the May council elections to counter Labour and Reform, and with local branches selecting their own candidates.

Unfortunately there was no discussion about no-cuts council budgets but a motion will be debated at the next Sheffield proto-branch meeting proposing that all Your Party

candidates should commit to such a policy before selection.

Unfortunately, a last minute amendment that "trade unions and other bodies should not have separate arrangements or special privileges" was carried in a rushed closing session with no time for real debate.

If Your Party is to have "the working-class at its heart" then the collective voice of 6.5 million trade unionists must be its concrete expression. The battles inside trade unions to disaffiliate from Labour and establish a new workers' party will also include the struggle for democratic control of union policies and leaderships.

Notwithstanding the limits of the regional assemblies, the Sheffield event ran smoothly, allowed members to strongly criticise the Your Party leadership proposals, and generated enthusiasm to get on with building Your Party in local areas. Most attendees left feeling more positive than when they had arrived.



PHOTO: ALISTAIR TICE

## Manchester – ideas exchanged but no decisions made

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES  
LANCASHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

As expected, the format of the meeting was for volunteer 'facilitators' to take 'breakout groups', of a dozen or so attendees each, through the detail of the four draft founding documents.

At the start, an attempt was made to propose that the assembly first began with a full group discussion. However, the facilitators countered that this would prevent everyone's voices being heard in the way that small group discussion would allow.

That seemed to get a certain echo, perhaps reflecting a desire to avoid discussion being curtailed and top table speakers dominating.

The rest of the day was, therefore, spent in groups. This approach does allow an easier exchange of ideas between individuals but, of course, limits that exchange only to the views within that particular group.

Structuring discussion around the constitutional documents meant there was limited opportunity to discuss concrete policies and campaigns, such as organising around no-cuts 'People's Budgets' in preparation for standing as widely as possible in the May elections. It also risked getting bogged down in detail, rather than having a wider discussion on the tactics needed to successfully "build a mass party with the working class at its heart", as set out in the draft 'political statement'.

Nevertheless, every group engaged in serious and constructive discussion with a range of amendments and suggestions being put forward. There appeared to be general agreement across most groups over, for example, allowing



PHOTOS: JESSICA TAYLOR/UK PARLIAMENT/CC

members of other parties who support 'Your Party' to join it, for the Party's MPs to be on a 'workers' wage', for decision-making to take place through elected delegates rather

than through random selection by 'sortition', and for the launching of formal branches without further delay. There was concern that the current draft 'Organisational Strategy' suggests that such local structures would still not be in place by May 2026.

Trade unionists warned that the current proposal to postpone discussion on whether unions could affiliate for another twelve months only played into the hands of those who want to keep unions tied to Starmer's Labour. While it was a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, the Assembly also showed the weakness of the individualised 'horizontalist' decision-making seemingly favoured by those drafting these documents. Instead of the Assembly voting collectively on amendments, or electing delegates to attend conference to put forward its views, the only formal outcome was that the facilitators' notes would be passed on to Your Party.

**Come and discuss**  
**Forum: How can a new party be built as a voice for the working class?**  
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## South London – support for no-cuts stand

SOFIA PANDOLFI  
SOUTH WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Right from the start, there was a clear mood of both excitement at the creation and potential that this party could have in addressing the crisis in Britain today, as well as doubt in how the party was being organised.

The attendees were grouped in tables to discuss sections of documents and fill out answers to specific pre-proscribed questions. Each discussion was managed by facilitators, yet the lack of facilitators for the number of people meant some groups took it upon themselves to 'self-facilitate'.

Generally, there was scepticism on how these discussions would have any impact in influencing changes to the documents. This brought further questions on how members could have their voices heard in the upcoming founding conference of 13,500 members.

In addition, the undemocratic methods of sortition to select attendees for the conference and the voting system of 'one member one vote' were questioned by the majority. Instead, there was agreement that elected delegates, accountable to their communities and organisations, could more effectively represent members' views.

Socialist Party members argued for Your Party to adopt a federal structure, explaining the role of the trade unions in building a new workers' party. This received support, with agreement that this party needs to represent the working class and put forward socialist demands. Trade

unions, bringing together the largest number of organised workers in Britain, are crucial in achieving that.

The upcoming local elections in May 2026 were another significant point of discussion. Many felt that participating in elections was an immediate need for Your Party but were unsure of how the party would prepare itself for that in time. In the party's draft Organisational Strategy for its first year, it states that Your Party will "seek to support all Independent socialist candidates of good standing".

Questions were raised on what is meant by 'good standing'. Socialist Party members argued for the need for no-cuts candidates who pledge to stand for anti-austerity demands. This could ensure candidates are not simply in 'good standing' but are accountable to protecting services and fighting for working-class communities. In these discussions, the demand for Your Party candidates to fight for no-cuts council budgets gained support.

At the end, a few facilitators were chosen to report back on the aspects of the document they had discussed. We also had the opportunity to show whether we were in support of the draft Political Statement by using different coloured stickers.

While these ineffective methods reflected the lack of democratic building within Your Party so far, the widespread support for our demands showed the importance of continuing to campaign for Your Party to be a socialist, anti-austerity alternative to the other mainstream parties today.

## Southampton shows we can win! No-cuts stand piles on pressure to save services

NADIA DITTA  
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

After a more-than-year-long campaign, the Venny play park in Bevois has been refurbished and re-opened by Southampton City Council. Families have been thanking us for campaigning to save the park and described the difference it makes to their children. Just round the corner, scaffolding has gone up around St Mary's Leisure Centre, which Socialist Party members were also involved in the fight to save, as part of the £1.5 million refurbishment programme.

We were told by our local Labour councillors that the council was lying. What this shows is the money is there, if you are prepared to fight for it.

We've now had over a year of a Labour government and things are worse than ever. Labour's cuts continue. Jobs and services face further cuts, council assets are being sold on the cheap, and council tax is set to rise by 25% in the next five years, alongside rents and parking charges. We've had enough. Our communities are fighting a war in our homes to find the money to pay the bills, the rent and buy food for our families.

At the same time, the profits of the utility companies and banks pile ever higher. The rich get richer. The economy is being run by the parties of the 1%, for the 1%. When is this going to end?

When we elect fighting anti-cuts councillors who will refuse to carry out cuts and fight for the restoration of government funding cut since 2010. Over £500 million has been



Campaigning to save the Venny PHOTOS: SOUTHAMPTON SP



St Mary's Leisure centre being refurbished...



...and the Venny playground refurbished and reopened!

stripped from the council budget. That's why there is a crisis. We demand that money back.

The launch of Your Party has come at an important time. Close to 100 attended the launch meeting in Southampton on 27 October. I spoke about the work we have done in Bevois and the support we got for our anti-cuts and anti-war campaign during the May 2023 council elections. We won 848 votes (32%) in Bevois ward and over 2,000 votes across Southampton. That support piled on the pressure for the council to find the money for the Venny and St Mary's Leisure Centre. At the meeting, we called for candidates to stand in May who will oppose the cuts and are building with Southampton Trades Council for a lobby of the council's next meeting.

There is a political vacuum that needs filling. Currently Reform and the far right are whipping up racism and scapegoating vulnerable asylum seekers for problems caused by 15 years of austerity. Hundreds marched and rallied through Bevois last weekend in a show of solidarity to oppose the far right. That needs to be built into a citywide mass campaign, led by council trade unions, that unites our communities for a People's Budget that meets the needs of all.

Southampton City Council has over £100 million in usable reserves, an increase since last year. This is our money. It should be used alongside council borrowing to deliver a budget that meets the needs of Southampton.

On Thursday 30 October we held a community workshop to discuss what we have achieved so far, what we need for our communities and how we can get it. The meeting was full of enthusiasm from the success we have had and fuelled by the ongoing problems we face. Our message is what we can win!

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socialistparty.org.uk/sub

## Stevenage trade unions protest against racist division

PRESS RELEASE

People who are concerned about the rise of hate, fear and division in our communities gathered outside the Ibis Hotel in Stevenage on Saturday 1 November for a peaceful rally. The event was organised by Stevenage Trades Union Council (TUC) in collaboration with the North Herts People's Assembly, political parties and anti-racist groups in the area. There were short speeches, poems and music with lyrics of unity.

All the groups involved came together to oppose the scapegoating of refugees and people seeking asylum. Many speakers highlighted how growing inequality and the decimation of public services have been caused by years of austerity, not by

refugees who are a tiny percentage of the UK's population.

As Mark Kerr of Stevenage TUC said in launching the event: "We believe all people have the right to live in peace. Under normal circumstances we would never demonstrate where vulnerable people are living. However, because of the shameful targeting of asylum accommodation by the far right, we are coming out together to show there is another side to Stevenage that is diverse, kind and welcoming. As trade unionists we say, 'It's not immigration that has wrecked the UK, it's 14 years of austerity, cuts, and privatisation' and that 'We need public investment, not tax cuts for the super-rich. That means rebuilding the NHS, funding housing, and reversing the cuts, not blaming refugees and migrants.'" Barbara, secretary of Stevenage Socialist Party, resident of Stevenage 37 years, and National Education Union

(NEU) delegate to Stevenage TUC, in her speech to the rally said: "We have seen how people come together in unity when tragedy strikes. [...] We live in a world full of war, poverty and inequality in which the working class and poor are made to suffer. There are no obstacles for a million-dollar migrant investor to enter the UK as a so-called 'high-value migrant'. Instead they point their fingers at the migrants who are most desperately in need of help and refuge."

Speakers also highlighted a report by Corporate Watch that illustrates how enormous profits are being made by sub-contracted companies off the backs of vulnerable people in the asylum system.

**Come and discuss**  
**After the 'Unite the Kingdom' protests - how can workers and youth fight back against racist division and capitalism?**  
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### Socialism is on the agenda – fund the struggle for a new society. Help us reach £30,000 at Socialism 2025

Every year, the Socialist Party organises the largest gathering of socialists, campaigners, and activists who are serious about fighting for socialism. Socialism 2025 is filled with discussions and debates about socialist ideas that can change the world.

A growing number of people are looking for alternatives, and socialism is an idea that is resonating with many. To help fund the fight for socialism, please donate to the Socialism 2025 appeal.

**SOCIALISM 2025**  
15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London  
socialistparty.org.uk/socialism-2025

| SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND |              |               |                           |                          |  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| AREA                          | £ RECEIVED   | £ TARGET      | Q4: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2025 | DEADLINE: 5 JANUARY 2026 |  |
| North West                    | 439          | 1,200         | 37%                       |                          |  |
| South West                    | 656          | 2,100         | 31%                       |                          |  |
| Southern & SE                 | 662          | 2,400         | 28%                       |                          |  |
| London                        | 1,356        | 5,000         | 27%                       |                          |  |
| Yorkshire                     | 578          | 2,650         | 22%                       |                          |  |
| Northern                      | 126          | 800           | 16%                       |                          |  |
| Eastern                       | 178          | 1,300         | 14%                       |                          |  |
| Wales                         | 315          | 2,400         | 13%                       |                          |  |
| West Midlands                 | 330          | 2,700         | 12%                       |                          |  |
| East Midlands                 | 129          | 2,050         | 6%                        |                          |  |
| Other                         | 222          | 2,400         | 9%                        |                          |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>4,989</b> | <b>25,000</b> | <b>20%</b>                |                          |  |



## 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](https://socialistparty.org.uk/join)

- or call 020 8988 8777

- or text your name and postcode to 07958 032 071

to find out more today!

Help fund the fightback!

**DONATE TODAY** [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](https://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)



# SOCIALISM 2025

A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSION OF SOCIALIST IDEAS  
15th and 16th November  
Institute of Education, Bedford Way  
London WC1 0AH

**Saturday rally 5:30pm:**

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

### WHERE AND WHEN?

Socialism 2025 takes place at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL, on the weekend of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November. The venue is a 5 minute walk from Russell Square tube station, and a 15 minute walk from Euston station.

### WHAT TIME DOES IT START?

The event will start at 11am on Saturday and finish at 4:15pm on Sunday. Registration will open at 9am on Saturday.

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST AND WHERE CAN I STAY?

Ticket prices start at £5 and are available at [socialism.org.uk](https://socialism.org.uk). A 'golden ticket' includes entry to the entire weekend and one night in a London hostel. The hostel is the Generator at Tavistock Square - less than a ten minute walk from the venue, Institute of Education. **There is also a free creche which runs throughout the event. To book your place, please email [theoshariff@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:theoshariff@socialistparty.org.uk).**

### SUNDAY CLOSING RALLY

**3:15PM-4:15PM**

## THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM WORLDWIDE

STUDENT DISCOUNT AVAILABLE SEE ONLINE!

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

10% discount on all ticket types!



## British Library two-week PCS strike: Highly qualified and low paid



CLARE DOYLE  
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

On the morning of Wednesday 29 September, the third day of a two-week strike at the British Library, Jeremy Corbyn addressed a very lively picket line at the revered establishment. The day before, John McDonnell MP had spoken there about a parliamentary motion being moved to support the 300 or so highly skilled workers involved.

A massive 98.23% vote for strike action is an indication of the anger that has accumulated amongst the workforce at this prestigious and historic institution. Nick Alen, PCS branch chair (and controller of the lively music system on the picket line!) explained the background and why there is such anger.

"A PCS library strike two years ago campaigned for a 5% rise. The government capitulated and there was a lump sum of £1,500 'thrown in'. But inflation ate into our rise. We had the added burden of a criminal attack on our computer system. Our personal data was stolen. We got the rap from the public as the services for them were disrupted and there was no management intervention on our behalf.

"Our members are highly qualified. Some have doctorates, masters

degrees, and membership of professional bodies to do their work - their salaries are around the £31,000 a year mark, with the lowest paid on even less on the London Living Wage".

As a strike leaflet puts it, "In 2024, we were offered below-sector pay rises of 3%. Meanwhile, executives took home salaries ranging between £80,000 and £170,000, with some receiving £10-15,000 in bonuses". A restructure is going on with senior management getting "fancy new titles" and the workforce - "a below-inflation 2.4% pay rise".

No wonder the pickets show a lively determination to win this fight. They were getting noisy support from drivers on the busy road alongside St Pancras International station. As the pickets dispersed for the day, they told me proudly that the library's management was at the doors and so-called security was being done by agency staff.

Audrey, a health and safety rep in the library, told me, "Ten out of the eleven reading rooms are closed!" The fight goes on!

Get all the latest union news  
[nationalshopstewardsnetwork](https://nationalshopstewardsnetwork.org.uk)  
NSSN bulletin: [shopstewards.net](https://shopstewards.net)

## Victory for low-paid Swansea health workers

MARK EVANS  
PRESIDENT SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL AND  
RETIRED UNISON MEMBER

In an article in The Socialist on 15 October, I highlighted that Health Care Support Workers (HCSW) felt betrayed by the decision of Swansea Bay University Health Board to renege on a local agreement to upgrade these poorly paid employees from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

Following a protest outside Morriston Hospital, they held a lobby of the health board in Port Talbot, where a petition of 2,000 signatures was handed in by their Swansea Bay Healthcare Union branch.

The health board has now reversed their decision and will cough up the cash to fund the upgrade! Previously, they claimed the reason for ditching their agreement with Unison was that they did not have the funds.

The board members who received the petition were clearly rattled by the strength of feeling of the 30 or so workers, who indicated their determination and were prepared to take

industrial action to force the board to honour their agreement.

Swansea and District Trades Council and Socialist Party members

supported both protests and Unison's campaign. It was clearly the threat of industrial action that forced the health board to back down.



## Unite bus workers strike against First Cymru

ALEC THRAVES  
SWANSEA TRADES COUNCIL AND SOCIALIST PARTY

Unite bus workers have begun a series of planned strikes after overwhelmingly rejecting the company's measly pay offer, its refusal to honour back pay, and to improve poor working conditions.

First Cymru is part of the highly profitable First Group transport network which made over £200 million profit last year.

First Cymru is notorious for paying some of the lowest wages in the transport industry. It has also enforced a two-tier wages system, where new recruits are paid an even lower rate for their first twelve months of employment.

A wage of just £13.45 an hour, just above the national minimum wage, is a disgrace for skilled workers who have to navigate outdated vehicles and protect the safety of thousands of passengers.

One of the young strikers remarked that he regularly transported jam-packed, double-decker buses of students from their Swansea halls to campus, but gets paid less than his shopworker partner.

Across South West Wales, from

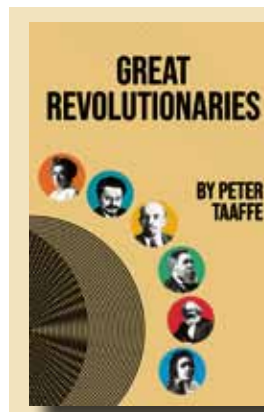


Bridgend to Haverfordwest, Unite members have responded magnificently to the call for action. The strike was solid with big picket lines at the Swansea depot, where just six buses out of the normal 67 a day left the depot and scabbed.

And little wonder, when they look across the Bristol Channel and see First Bus workers in Bristol earning

up to £3 an hour more, and driving a modern, up-to-date fleet of vehicles!

After these four days of strike action another four days were planned from 5 November and, unless First Cymru concede to Unite's demands, the industrial action fireworks could continue till over Christmas!



## NEW PUBLICATION: GREAT REVOLUTIONARIES

Mentmore Press

Great Revolutionaries is an introduction to the thoughts of six great revolutionaries, and explains how they sought to apply their ideas in action:

Marx & Engels, the founders of 'scientific socialism'; Lenin & Trotsky, the leaders of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and Babeuf & Luxemburg, both killed for their socialist ideals.

Their history is told through a compilation of twelve articles written by Peter Taaffe, who devoted his life to helping build struggle, in Britain and globally, first as editor of the Militant newspaper, then as general secretary of the Socialist Party.

Special offer at the Socialism 2025 weekend for just £8! RRP £9.99

# Hurricane Melissa

## Another climate catastrophe foreshadows COP30 talking shop

SCOTT HUNTER

Scenes of death and destruction in the Caribbean have filled our screens as Hurricane Melissa has rampaged through the region.

A category five hurricane - the most dangerous with sustained winds of 185 mph - has claimed at least 61 lives across the Caribbean, a toll which is sure to rise. According to the Red Cross, in Jamaica 72% of the population still do not have access to electricity and around 6,000 are still in emergency shelters.

Melissa is another episode in the escalating climate crisis. Climate change is not the sole cause of hurricanes but, as ocean temperatures rise, the increased sea surface temperatures warm the air above and make more energy available to drive tropical storms. Therefore, these storms are likely to be more intense and more destructive.

And it's only getting warmer. The UN warned in September that world governments have failed to limit global heating to 1.5°C: a key target of the Paris Agreement and necessary to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Although stark in his warning, UN Secretary General António Guterres could only point towards the upcoming COP30 as an opportunity to change course.

COP30 - opening 10 November - will be the 30th annual UN climate meeting. In 30 years, this talking shop of capitalist governments has failed to meet even their own climate

targets, so what hope do we have that this time will be different? Previous COPs have been deadlocked by questions of which nations should shoulder the burden of the green transition, and aid for developing economies.

The fact is that capitalist governments will never be able to work together to effectively combat climate change, no matter how many treaties they sign. Capitalism is a system based on exploitation, competition, and is rooted in nation states. Different countries have their own capitalist interests. In a system where nations are competing to make sure their own capitalism comes out on top, no country would voluntarily weaken itself by abandoning fossil fuel production or polluting industries - not when those industries produce profit and valuable material that can be used to give their capitalist class an edge.

The cause of climate devastation is the same as why disaster defences and relief are so often lacking: a capitalist system driven by profit and not by need. What we see as tragedy, others see as an opportunity. Donald Trump has already rushed to offer aid to Jamaica - but who could believe that this offer will come without strings? Fighting for a system that values human life and safety over profit means fighting for socialism. A system where the economy is collectively owned and democratically planned by the working class, all over the world.

# Argentina: Right-wing Milei wins midterm elections

## Build workers' struggle against reaction



Javier Milei, Argentina's right-wing 'libertarian' president, won the country's 2025 midterm elections, significantly strengthening his political position and ability to push forward with his reactionary economic policies.

**Hugo Rodríguez and Pedro Albornoz (CWI Chile)** look at the election results, the record of Milei's anti-working-class government and the failure of the Peronist opposition to offer an alternative to working-class voters.

Javier Milei has achieved a resounding victory in the Argentinian midterm elections. This scenario was not predicted by any poll, much less by the Peronist opposition.

Milei's Libertad Avanza party won the election to elect half the Chamber of Deputies with 40.59% of the votes, going from 37 to 93 deputies. And in the election for a third of the Senate it rose from 6 to 19 senators, a chamber in which it obtained just over 42% of the votes. But the big surprise was how it overcame the gap in the province of Buenos Aires, the country's main electoral district where, on 7 September, it had lost by almost 14 points to Peronism. In this election it was just one point. However in the separate electoral district of Buenos Aires city, Milei's party won just 25%.

Nationally, Fuerza Patria, the Peronist alliance, came in second, with just 33.64%. The third force, with 6.94% of the vote, was the Provincias Unidas Alliance, a force of six governors that was trying to occupy the political centre.

It should be noted that approximately 67.37% of the electoral roll voted in these elections. This was the

lowest turnout in recent years; two years ago, when the president was elected, it was 77.01% and, before that, 70.83% in the 2021 midterm elections. Fourth place went to the Frente de Izquierda (FIT-U), a coalition of the 'Trotskyist' left, with 3.9%, down from the 5.53% in the previous midterm elections in 2021.

It is essential to analyse why the government won despite attacks on large sectors of the population and the ongoing deep economic crisis.

There are undoubtedly several factors that contribute to explaining what happened. On the one hand, there is acute social fragmentation and polarisation. The consolidation of the anti-Peronist vote is clear in recent Argentine history. This vote has been consistent and has always hovered around 40%. This vote is made up of the traditional right-wing conservative vote but also includes support from popular sectors that have suffered greatly from Peronism, especially during the last government of Alberto Fernández. This includes important sectors of the

younger population who reject traditional parties and have seen in Milei a hope for change.

Furthermore, the Argentine population has faced a polarised and extortionate electoral situation, where they have been forced to vote for the lesser evil. Between Peronism, which has not led struggles, which does not present a clear alternative programme, and which only proposes managing capitalism in permanent crisis. And a government that, during the economic crisis, has intelligently argued that the opposition's victory would mean the country's collapse.

Finally, the government's last-minute bailout by Donald Trump and the US Treasury has temporarily sustained the economy and the exchange rate, thereby somehow controlling inflation. This issue has been fundamental for broad sectors of the population. Trump's support and his threat to abandon Argentina if the opposition won have had a significant impact on the election results.

It should be noted that the geopolitical interests of the United States under the Trump administration and its trade war with China have been key reasons for supporting Milei's ultra-neoliberal government in the region.

### Why the defeat of Peronism?

As revolutionaries and fighters for a socialist society, it is necessary to dig

beneath the surface to find the reasons for this defeat of Peronism.

On the one hand, for the Argentine population and working class, the traditional parties have not offered any alternative to solve the problems they have endured for decades.

This election demonstrated that criticism of the government's fraudulent actions is not enough. There are important sectors who did not vote; more than 30% of the population abstained; because they don't believe in anyone, they don't believe in the institutions. Furthermore, with Milei's limited representation in parliament, some Peronist and Radical parliamentarians voted for some government laws.

The complete discrediting of the opposition and the lack of a party that genuinely represents the working class explain the advance of the populist and far right, not only in Argentina but worldwide.

What we will undoubtedly see in the future will be a government of crisis. Despite all the dollars the United States can send, they will not be able to resolve the serious structural problems of Argentine capitalism.

With this result, the attacks on workers' rights will continue. A labour reform is already being announced to introduce greater job insecurity, increase working hours, and make collective bargaining agreements more flexible, making them reversible. According to a government official, this is "a very necessary measure for job creation" and economic growth.

The union leadership, which has played a passive role in these two years, will be put to the test, once again.

Much anger is building, much rage, and some current analysts and commentators are speaking of the urgent need to make a change to channel this debacle within the institutional framework, before it is too late and a situation like the civil unrest that took place in 2001 occurs again. This situation could be catastrophic and turn into a bloodbath.

It must be remembered that the results are misleading. If we consider the high percentage of abstention, we find that the government obtained only about 25% support.

### A government of crisis

This will be a government of crisis, that will not change. On the contrary, with each measure against the rights of the working class, the crisis will worsen.

The political situation in Argentina shows the complete bankruptcy of Peronist reformism on the one hand, and of the trade union leadership on the other.

Milei's government has weathered major social conflicts with relative success, despite the colossal failure of his economic programme and actions linked to crime and fraud.

Shortly after Milei took office, he began a brutal attack on the living standards of the working class. His two main axes for governing are to overcome the fiscal deficit inherited from previous governments and lower inflation.

We must remember that the previous president, Alberto Fernández, took office with inflation running at 36% and left office with a rate above 210%.

### What is Peronism?

Peronism is a populist, nationalist political movement peculiar to Argentina. It draws inspiration from the presidencies of the late Juan Perón.

Perón was an army general who headed the labour ministry in the country's fascist-sympathising military dictatorship between 1943-46, where he embroiled the trade union tops into the state machine.

He was elected president in 1946, against the declared interests of US imperialism, and moulded his vision of a corporatist state with 'new deal' social reforms.

These included popular measures such as nationalisation of transport and public utilities, promoting trade unions, raising wages, and implementing progressive social programmes - set against a very favourable economic background.

This pro-worker and anti-imperialist stance bolstered his political reputation among sections of the working class.

Perón's radical reputation was further enhanced following his overthrow in 1955 by military chiefs, backed by the capitalist ruling class. In exile, he courted the revolutionary left, however, he also maintained links with far-right and fascist groups.

Perón went on to briefly become president again during a period of massive political instability in Argentina. During the struggle between the left and right wings of Peronism, he led a brutal clampdown on the urban guerrillaist Montoneros and the left wing.

Perón died in 1974 and was succeeded by his third wife Isabel Perón, whose presidency was overthrown in 1976 by a brutal US-backed military coup d'état.

Peronism, at its height, was a form of 'bourgeois bonapartism'; a regime where the machinery of the capitalist state temporarily elevates itself above the contending social classes in society, striking blows against one another, while ultimately representing the overall interests of capitalism. In recent decades, the Peronist opposition has moved significantly to the right.

To face these challenges, the promise was to make the elite pay the cost of the crisis. What was never specified was who the elite was.

Javier Milei and his government focused their direct action against the most vulnerable layers of the population; cutting public spending on pensions for retirees and medicines for cancer patients; completely paralysing public works programmes.

In his ultra-neoliberal discourse, he claimed that spending on social rights was theft, an attack on private property, and even went so far as to say that, if a town needed a bridge, it wasn't fair for the entire country to pay the cost of building it; that it should be the townspeople who pay as they would benefit from it.

In addition to brutally attacking the retired protesting for pensions improvements, the police shot a photographer and reporter in the head, who to this day remains hospitalised and in a serious condition after eight months of treatment.

There was also an episode of a massive scam. The government became embroiled after it backed the buying of a crypto currency (Libra). When it was promoted by Milei, the Libra rose by 1,200% in just a few minutes. It then collapsed, resulting in the loss of millions of dollars by 40,000 investors.

Regarding the economy, Milei's government has been determined to keep the price of the dollar anchored at the cost of intervening in the foreign exchange market, injecting billions of dollars to keep the peso overvalued. These dollars come from the savings of thousands of middle-class Argentines, loans from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and most recently from the US Federal Reserve Treasury.

All these measures have led to a rise in poverty rates. Thousands of families are unable to make ends meet. Consumption fell 6.3% in one year and in September it fell by 7.9%

compared to August. Thousands of small industries closed, laying off thousands of workers.

As well as the economic debacle, repression. Javier Milei endured humiliation at the hands of Donald Trump in his eagerness to receive an economic bailout. Milei has also promoted the plundering of Argentina's natural resources.

### Lack of a working-class organisation

The trade union movement has been conspicuous by its absence at most demonstrations against Milei's policies. And in Congress, a large portion of the Peronist parliamentarians have been miserably aligned with the government's policies.

All the above highlights the lack of a working-class party that can lead a fight against the brutal attacks on living standards.

The global capitalist system is in crisis, and all measures to find a solution are aimed at stripping away social rights achieved through decades of struggle.

If we are unable to build a revolutionary organisation aimed at changing the capitalist system, humanity will continue to be in danger, wars will continue, and deaths from hunger will continue.

Only a socialist society, which focuses on social wellbeing and not on individual accumulation, can solve the problems of education, health-care, lack of housing, jobs, and care for nature.

It is the system that is in permanent crisis, and many governments in the region face the same challenge. If there is no real alternative for the working class, Argentina will continue to go from crisis to crisis.

Only a revolutionary, class-based organisation can provide a solution to the current crisis, raising the banners of socialism and a true workers' democracy.

**Come and discuss**  
The fight against climate change: world capitalist disorder or socialist planning?

**SOCIALISM 2025**  
15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

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

[socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)

**Come and discuss**  
Trump 2 - is this a brand new era for world capitalism?

**SOCIALISM 2025**  
15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

£1 / £2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



# the Socialist

Issue 1343

6-12 November 2025

formerly **Militant**

**A**round the world, workers and young people are taking to the streets to fight back against governments which defend the crisis-ridden system of capitalism.

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's July call to establish a new party to 'take on the rich and powerful' got 800,000 sign-ups. This is an indication of the huge enthusiasm there is for a new party that can fight against Keir Starmer's war and austerity agenda.

Debates and discussions have begun about how such a party could be built and best succeed in taking on the interests of the rich and powerful, and fight for socialist change.

The recently released founding political statement of Your Party calls for "a mass party", "with the working class at its heart". Coming just two weeks before the Your Party founding conference in Liverpool, Socialism 2025 is going to be the event of the Autumn to discuss how that mission - of putting the working class at the heart of the new party, and arming it with a socialist programme to take on the capitalist system - can be achieved.

What is the role of the working class and trade union movement in preparing Your Party to take on the interests of the rich and powerful? How can it be built as a genuinely democratic voice for workers, students and young people? How can Your Party best prepare to launch an anti-austerity fightback at May's elections to push back Reform UK? And what role could Your Party play in the struggle for the socialist transformation of society?

All of this and more will be discussed and debated at Socialism 2025.

The centrepiece of Socialism 2025 will be the main rally on the Saturday evening, bringing together hundreds of trade unionists, students, community campaigners and socialists to hear about how 'Your Party' can be built as a party of working-class struggle and socialism.

Get your tickets at:

[www.socialism.org.uk](http://www.socialism.org.uk)

**SOCIALISM 2025**

15 and 16 November  
A weekend of socialist ideas in London

# SOCIALISM 2025

## Rallies announced

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

Saturday 15 November 5:30pm

#### Speakers:

**Hannah Sell** Socialist Party general secretary

**Zarah Sultana** Your Party and Independent Alliance MP

**Dave Nellist** socialist former Labour MP and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition national chair

**A leader of the Birmingham bin workers' strike**

**Ian Hodson** president of the BFAWU trade union

**Leila Messaoudi** France Insoumise councillor, Rouen

**April Ashley** National Black Members' Seat on executive of the UNISON trade union (personal capacity)

**Sofia Pandolfi** organiser of the Trump walkout student protests

PUBLIC DOMAIN, PAUL MATTESSON AND UK PARLIAMENT JESSICA TAYLOR/CC

### The struggle for socialism worldwide

Sunday 16 November, 3pm

#### Speakers:

**Tony Saunois** CWI (Committee for a Workers' International) secretary

**Chiara** young socialist activist in Die Linke, Germany

**Bob Labi** CWI International Secretariat

**Padraig Mulholland** deputy general secretary of NIPSA, the biggest trade union in Northern Ireland



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

