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the Socialist

Issue 1349

18 December 2025 - 7 January 2026

formerly **Militant**

FUND OUR

NHS

- Kick out profiteers
- Support resident doctor strikes

SALLY GRIFFITHS
NHS UNISON REP (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

To NHS staff, 'winter pressures' used to mean the planned-for period of the year during which every level of care, from GPs to hospital trusts, expected an increase in demand.

Now it's a message to the public that they can expect horrendous waits for treatment and cancellations. And it's being used by the Labour government to attack resident doctors to try to get them to call off their strike.

NHS bosses have no qualms in continuing their organisational change, which includes frontline redundancies. Perhaps those should be paused whilst winter pressures are dealt with?

It's also being suggested that somehow these pressures are the public's fault for not being vaccinated, or not being vaccinated quickly enough. If true, why not give all workers paid time off to go and get their flu jab, and make it free?

The reality is that the resident doctors and all NHS staff are working under severe pressure all year due to NHS funding cuts. Hospital occupancy rates are at 95% year round. There is no buffer for spikes in demand. It's reported that

the 'optimum' occupancy level is 85%. 'Optimum' for who? 85% is the level at which the risk to patient safety increases. Running bed occupancy at 80% would reduce corridor care, and hopefully unblock A&E. Nursing in the community and primary care have been cut, slowing down discharge.

The crime in these events is that the government and NHS bosses are overseeing the collapse of our health service, and blaming the staff or patients for it! Labour health secretary Wes Streeting has said that the resident doctors' strike "could be the jenga piece" that "forces" the NHS to collapse. Labour and Conservative governments have been knocking holes in the NHS for decades!

Rather than Streeting's plans for more privatisation, we need to bring all health services, the big pharmaceuticals and medical manufacturers into democratic public ownership.

NHS workers, from all levels, together with patient groups should be deciding the level of care required and the funding needed to deliver it.

Support resident doctors standing up to Starmer and Streeting. Fight for the funding our health service needs. Make the super-rich pay!

● Read more on resident doctors strike on page 3, Notts nurses fight fire and rehire on page 7



PHOTOS: PHIL WATSON

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

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

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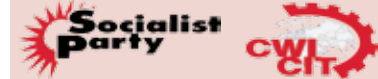
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Women and hard work at Christmas

HEATHER RAWLING
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Are you looking forward to the festive season? Getting excited even? Maybe you are counting the days to having time off to spend with family and friends, sharing festive food and drink. Or perhaps the season of good cheer brings mixed feelings? Do you worry about falling further in debt in order to give the kids a good Christmas?

But never mind, if you are rich you can get a turkey dinner at the Ritz for £650 a head, or buy a £700 pack of crackers!

Or do you dream about escaping all the frenzied activity in the run-up to Christmas? Billionaires are off in their private jets and superyachts. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos's yacht, Koru, is currently floating in the Caribbean Sea.

But for the 99% of us, it usually falls on women's shoulders to organise and strive for the elusive perfect celebrations. We do extra cleaning of the home before the decorations go up, shopping, cooking, wrapping presents, getting all the laundry washed, dried and ironed before hosting family and friends. We often combine all this with jobs outside the home, with very little time off because women mostly work in the public sector, retail and hospitality. And whilst more men help in the home these days, capitalist culture places the responsibility on

women. It is rarely a joint enterprise. According to a recent World Inequality report, women earn only 32% of what men earn per working hour if unpaid domestic labour is taken into account. And still only 61% when only counting paid labour. Really, not a lot has changed for women since Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin wrote over 100 years ago about "millions and millions of women ... striving with a desperate daily effort to feed and clothe their families on a few coppers, economising in everything except their own labour."

But in some households, women also fear violence from their partners in the season of 'goodwill'. Rising numbers of women are experiencing domestic abuse at Christmas, with calls to helplines still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

But it doesn't have to be like this. We don't want equality with working-class men, their lot is not to be envied either. We want to free women and men from the weight of domesticity. A massive increase in spending on public services that could ease the burden of domestic chores and free, good-quality and democratically run community restaurants would give us a genuine choice of whether to cook for the family or to dine out with other families. And we call for free, high-quality childcare, not just for women to do paid work, but also to participate in a variety of activities of our own choosing.



HUNTERSMTW/CC

Homelessness services in crisis

- Build council homes
- Control rents
- Unfreeze housing benefits

BEN GOLDSTONE
CROYDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Labour's newly announced homelessness strategy, while containing some measures that are welcome, is overall inadequate and nowhere near radical enough to actually eradicate homelessness.

300,000 individuals and families in England alone are now experiencing the worst forms of homelessness, research from charity Crisis has shown. A record number of households are in temporary accommodation, including 170,000 children, the government's own data reveals.

The government has been forced to act because of the severity of the current situation. It has made three key pledges: to halve the number of long-term rough sleepers, end the use of bed and breakfasts for housing families, and prevent more households from experiencing homelessness. To achieve these quite modest goals would require an end to the austerity measures aimed at placating the markets.

Homelessness is at crisis levels and local authorities' frontline services are at capacity, and facing rising demand. Research by St Martin's in the Field (a homelessness charity) has shown that 85% of frontline staff have seen an increase in demands for their service in the past twelve months, and a majority feel they are at risk of burnout.

After years of austerity, homelessness services need to be fully funded. Local councils should stop all cuts, use reserves to fund vital services, and demand that national government plug the gap.

Charities have warned that the current plans do not include an

expansion of the Housing First scheme, which provides those who are homeless and have complex needs with housing and support. This needs to be coupled with a mass building programme of affordable and high-quality council homes.

Two important measures that could also be taken, which the government hasn't announced, are controlling rents and unfreezing housing benefits. In the UK, up until October 2025, average UK monthly private rents increased by 5% in the last year. All the while, people are finding it increasingly difficult to afford their rent - recent figures show that, on average, tenants pay 36.3% of their wages on rent.

The Local Housing Allowance element of benefits is meant to cover the cheapest third of properties in an area; however, the freeze has meant that it has not kept up with rising rents, leaving people struggling. Unfreezing housing benefits and giving workers and communities control over private rents would mean that those on the lowest wages are not pushed into arrears, evictions, and ultimately homelessness.

Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

The Socialist Party has regular meetings in towns and cities across the country.

If you would like to participate:
● socialistparty.org.uk/events
● Or text 07958 032071 with your name and postcode.

Socialist Students Conference 2026

Organising the student fightback for socialist change!



Saturday 14 February 2026
University Place @ University of Manchester
176 Oxford Rd, Manchester M13 9PL

From war to climate change, cuts to the cost of living, our future is on fire. Young people are under attack! The government has made it clear it's on the side of the super-rich, raising our fees and destroying our services. Young people have been fighting back against cuts on campus, and have been marching against the genocidal onslaught on Gaza. Let's build the fightback! Students and young people across the country are gathering on Saturday 14 February in Manchester for the Socialist Students conference, to discuss and debate how we can build the fightback against capitalist catastrophe! If you're interested in coming along, then register online, leave your details so we can put you in touch with your local organiser to help arrange travel plans. And ask your classmates if they can come along too!

Socialist Students Conference 2026

Resident doctors tell Labour government: No! We are fighting to save the NHS

In the face of the relentless pressure from the Labour government, NHS bosses and the capitalist press, a whopping 83.2% of doctors voted against the latest government offer, on a huge 65.34% turnout. As we go to press, the planned strikes starting on 17 December are going ahead.

Disgracefully, Labour health secretary Wes Streeting accused the British Medical Association leadership of "wilful casualness". They "have chosen to inflict this pain on patients, other staff and the NHS itself. It is one of the most shameful episodes in the long history of the BMA."

NHS bosses called the action "cruel and calculated". Yet these attempts to morally blackmail members of the BMA, accusing them of potentially "collapsing the NHS", have failed.

What is shameful, cruel and calculated is the degradation of NHS services almost to the point of collapse due to underfunding, understaffing, and the drain of billions of pounds of public money being leached into the back pockets of profiteering private companies through privatisation.

The government's proposal to the doctors' pay review body is a real-terms pay cut, on top of resident doctors' pay already being 21% down on 2008. There is also a huge crisis in specialist training places.

Resident doctors - alongside nurses, porters, domestics and all health service workers - are the ones who are actually struggling every day to keep the NHS going. Socialist Party members will be standing with them on the picket line.

"It's so disheartening watching the service we give to patients progressively deteriorate. Staff are progressively disempowered, so it is increasingly hard to make improvements or resist further worsening of care."

"The only solutions to increasing demand and long waits seem to be to pressure staff to work harder and put in more additional hours. There's much talk about action on staff well-being, but in practice the emotional blackmail to work harder and longer continues apace. Burnout is a real risk. If there is any innovation going on to increase efficiency instead, it's invisible."

"The long-standing aspiration to excellence is being replaced by a drive to make care as shoddy and as cursory as possible. Watching this and knowing that as you get older you are more likely to have to use these low-quality, downgraded services is really worrying."

RESIDENT DOCTOR IN MANCHESTER



PAUL MATTESSON

Plymouth fight to save food service from Labour cuts

ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

In the same week that the Labour government announced that it has a "moral imperative" to reduce child poverty levels in this country, Plymouth City Council, led by Labour Party NEC member Tudor Evans, also announced the end of CaterEd, the award-winning cooperative between the council and 58 schools across the city.

CaterEd has provided healthy, hot meals to schools and vulnerable adults in Plymouth for over a decade, including throughout the Covid lockdowns. Due to the increasing costs of food and energy over the last two years, it has struggled to continue on the meagre £2.61 per child funding from central government. The result of this is that 'meals on wheels' will end in February, adding further pressure to the overstretched adult social care services in the city. The school meals will end in July, forcing schools to either sign contracts with private companies or bring catering in-house, which will squeeze already pressured school budgets further.

Plymouth Socialist Party members launched a Save Our School meals petition on 13 December as a result of this announcement and spoke to many people within the city who are angry with Sir Keir Starmer's government, which always seems to have enough money

for arms contracts, but not enough for vital services. Others pointed out the mess Plymouth council have made of the regeneration of the city centre, including the scandal of cutting down the Armada Way trees. They asked why they can waste money on things that residents don't want but they won't ensure that the poorest children in our city get at least one hot meal a day.

The loss of CaterEd would be a blow for Plymouth and it raises huge questions for staff, whose futures are now uncertain, as well as the many food producers that partnered with

them. The only winners are private catering companies who will make profits while cutting staff and the quality of food provided.

The Socialist Party campaigns for Plymouth council to resist making further austerity cuts to our already decimated services, and set a needs-based budget for the city, including free school meals for all primary age children, as they have in Wales and Scotland. Furthermore, they should demand funding from the Labour government to ensure public services meet the needs of all our residents. In the sixth-richest nation

in the world, millions of children are living in poverty. Thousands of those children are in Plymouth, and CaterEd has been a lifeline for them and their families. If Labour genuinely think that they have a moral obligation to cut child poverty, then they must put their money where their mouth is. Saving CaterEd would be a good start.

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ANDY FOGG/CC

Bondi Beach attack

Unite against terror, war and racism

SOCIALISM TODAY (CWI AUSTRALIA) STATEMENT

Socialism Today (CWI Australia) condemns the horrific anti-Semitic Bondi Beach terror attack. We stand in solidarity with the victims of the attack, their families, the Jewish community, and the Bondi community. Victims of the murderous act include a child just ten years old, and a survivor of the holocaust.

There can be no justification for these deadly, indiscriminate attacks. Terrorist acts like this only help fuel division in society and can temporarily put back the common interests of the working class, from whatever background.

Solidarity

Socialists and workers' organisations should stand in solidarity with Jewish workers at this difficult time.

While the details of the attack and its consequences are yet to be fully understood, at this stage it appears two gunmen, a father and son, opened fire on a Hanukkah event near Bondi Beach, killing 15, with many more in hospital. Currently it does not appear that the pair are linked to any terrorist organisation. There is some speculation that they were inspired by Islamic State - an ultra-reactionary organisation that is anti-working class and a virulent enemy of women's rights and minorities.

Predictably, right-wing actors, such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have sought to weaponise Sunday's event against legitimate pro-Palestinian protests. Attempts to paint all criticism of the Israeli state as anti-Semitic should be opposed by the workers' movement. The attempts to use the

horror of Bondi beach to white-wash the Israeli government's post-7 October offensive in Gaza and the West Bank must be resisted. It cannot be forgotten that since Israel attacked and re-occupied the Gaza strip, at least 70,000 Palestinians have been murdered, of which almost 20,000 were children. The Palestinian solidarity movement, which has consistently opposed anti-Semitism, must not take a backward step.



Terrorist acts like this only help fuel division in society and can temporarily put back the common interests of the working class

Socialists and the workers' movement must also oppose any attempt by the government to exploit the Bondi killings to introduce repressive legislation.

Many right-wing commentators falsely and cynically make the link between the weekly Palestinian solidarity protests and anti-Semitism motivating the Bondi attack. Meanwhile, far-right groups, including those openly advocating fascism, are allowed to march in Australian cities.

Recent anti-immigrant protests organised by Nazi sympathisers have been facilitated by police. The fact that these highly provocative demonstrations take place also reflects the relative decline of the organised workers' movement over recent decades. Similar protests a decade ago were shut down by the left. It is urgent that the workers' and socialist



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

movement rebuild to counter the rise of the far right.

Calls are also being made to implement the recommendations of anti-Semitism envoy, Jillian Segal. Her report contained a number of contentious measures. Segal sought to falsely conflate criticism of Israeli government policies with anti-Semitism. If implemented, measures proposed by Segal would have a chilling effect on the media and in academia. Those now calling for the report's implementation must be opposed.

Worker's heroism

Sunday's events also revealed the heroism of working people. Ahmed al Ahmed, a local tobacconist and Syrian migrant, tackled one of the gunmen to the ground, disarming him. Ahmed is now in hospital with five bullet wounds in his arm and back. Ahmed's brave actions serve as a reminder that racism and anti-migrant hate have no place and should be opposed.

Socialism Today calls for the unity of the working class from all backgrounds against reactionary terror of all stripes, and for a common struggle to oppose cynical right-wing politicians. More than ever, the working class from all ethnic groups need their own party that will campaign for an end to racism and anti-Semitism, oppression, discrimination, imperialist wars, austerity and poverty. We must continue to stand in solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians. For a better life for all, on the basis of pro-working class, socialist policies.

Committee for a Workers' International
FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD
socialistworld.net

Prepare for the May elections with a bold anti-austerity stand

If 2025 has been a tricky year for Keir Starmer's Labour government, 2026 will be even more so! Not least because it will be forced to face just how unpopular it is in May's elections - in thousands of local authority seats in England, and in the Welsh and Scottish Parliaments.

A working-class political alternative to the austerity establishment parties is essential. Without it, right-populist Reform will continue to capitalise by posing as being anti-establishment and for 'ordinary working people'.

May 2026 is a huge opportunity for Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's newly formed Your Party to 'turn to the working class', as Socialist Party campaigners were calling for at its founding conference. The Socialist Party has, along with others, including for a period the RMT transport union, been pioneering the fight for a new mass party of the working class, including by standing in elections as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

We publish a report from the latest TUSC steering committee: 'Your Party, TUSC, and the 2026 local elections preparations'.

- Read more tusc.org.uk

The latest meeting of the TUSC all-Britain steering committee, held on 10 December, welcomed the successful launch of Your Party at its Liverpool conference at the end of November.

There were different views expressed, inevitably, between the different components of the TUSC coalition on various aspects of the conference, and the foundation process of Your Party more generally.

But, once again, the steering committee was united in pledging to help in any way it can to take forward the fight for a new, mass party of the working class - and, in particular, to discuss with the Your Party interim leadership agreed at the conference how best to maximise the opportunities provided by the elections in May 2026 to build a working class, socialist anti-austerity alternative to the establishment parties.

People's Budgets as a basis for election campaigns

One highlight of the conference, the steering committee agreed, was the overwhelming support given (a 90% yes) to an amendment sponsored by TUSC supporters under the heading, 'Prepare for the May elections with a bold anti-austerity stand'.

Recognising that "the 2026 local elections are a huge opportunity to stand Your Party candidates that can expose and cut across all the pro-austerity parties, not least Reform UK" the amendment went on to urge branches and Your Party proto-branch supporters groups to "organise open public conferences, including representatives of trade unions, community organisations, socialist parties and others, to discuss their local community's needs and draw up a no-cuts 'Peoples

Budget' based on those needs, not Starmer's continued austerity".

By Your Party candidates pledging "to take these issues and more into the council chambers", the amendment concluded - fighting "for a no-cuts budget that meets the needs of our communities and demanding the money to pay for it from central government" in summary - the best possible election campaign could be prepared in those council areas going to the polls in May.

But that positive plan for Your Party and TUSC supporters to act on still leaves questions about how best to maximise the impact of a 2026 election challenge given the practicalities of establishing Your Party's structures after the Liverpool conference - and some of the other decisions that were agreed upon there.

Practical questions for next May

The TUSC steering committee had discussed some of these issues at its previous meeting, assessing how the Your Party founding documents, specifically the constitution and the first year organisational strategy paper, related to the 2026 elections. And the conference has brought, if not a definitive picture, at least some more clarity.

It was agreed, for example, that, because of the unlikelihood of official Your Party structures being in place in time, "for the unique case of the 2026 Local Government elections in England, Your Party will seek to support all independent socialist candidates of good standing where there is evidence of candidates being engaged in progressive community campaigning and having the support of their local communities or trade union branches".

This, TUSC believes, should be



Top: Birmingham bin strikers marching against Labour MARK BEST Below: TUSC campaign in Doncaster in May 2025 ALISTAIR TICE



World Cup 2026: FIFA rotten to the core

JOHN REID
GUILDFORD AND SURREY SOCIALIST PARTY

The draw for the 2026 World Cup saw FIFA President Gianni Infantino grovelling to US President Donald Trump, awarding him a peace prize (irony is dead).

There is also talk of a long Super Bowl-style break at half-time in the World Cup final, which will be a bonanza for corporate advertisers. Also, planned drinks breaks in matches for players will allow for advertising.

FIFA, the football world governing body, is set to make over \$10 billion from the tournament.

Exclusive deals with McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Bank of America and others will boost these corporation's profits and also the coffers of FIFA.

Fans of Scotland and England will

be hit with massively inflated ticket prices. Many of these fans travel the world to follow their national teams. Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are among the teams in the play-offs in March and could face even higher costs with less time to buy.

Rip off

Some standard group stage tickets will be priced at \$700 and the cheapest ticket to the World Cup final will be priced at \$8,680, up nearly \$2,000 on prices quoted in October.

Category 1 tickets for games such as England vs Croatia or Scotland vs Brazil have risen to \$445 before the World Cup draw to \$700. Category 1 prices have risen for 80 of the 104 matches, in some cases by 71%.

Corporations will, or already have, bought up hundreds of thousands

of tickets. World Cup tickets, travel and hotel packages for fans will be at extortionate prices taxing the loyal working-class fans, who see football as a joyful escape from the drudgery of everyday life (in 1966 I watched England vs Argentina for less than the equivalent of \$1).

For other countries like Haiti, the average month's wage in the Caribbean nation is around \$147 but the cheapest tickets for Haiti's first game at the World Cup in 52 years, against Scotland, cost \$180.

Previous issues of my book Reclaim the Game outline the corruption of football governing bodies. Like any other multibillion dollar corporations they are rotten to the core and the real fans are priced out.

- 'Reclaim the Game' by John Reid, £5 from leftbooks.co.uk



PHOTO: WHITE HOUSE, PUBLIC DOMAIN



A green light for every community organiser, social movement activist, trade unionist, and socialist campaigner to be prepared to stand next May

a green light for every community organiser, social movement activist, trade unionist, and socialist campaigner to be prepared to stand next May. Apart from anything else, if one-sixth of the council seats up for election are contested the broadcasting authorities will be obliged to give 'fair media coverage' to a socialist, anti-austerity challenge, headed by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana.

On the other hand, the ballot conducted during the Liverpool conference also agreed an amendment - by 5,787 online votes to 4,373 - that "the Party's strategic priority in the English local elections will be to target support for endorsed candidates" to those "in a position to meaningfully contest for their seat". Actually, that doesn't preclude a wide spread of candidates standing to ensure that the pro-austerity establishment parties don't have a free run; while national party support - financial resources, media focus, co-ordinated telephone canvassing, MPs visits etc - is concentrated on 'target candidates'. But it is not clear - and time is pressing.

Co-ordinating efforts

At this point in the year, at its December meeting, the TUSC steering committee would usually be setting out a timetable for candidate selection for next year's elections,

agreeing the questions to be asked in the candidate application form and so on. The last time this particular four-yearly cycle of elections took place for example, in 2022 under Boris Johnson's Tory government, TUSC organised 227 candidates to stand - which, if repeated, would be a significant contribution to the 'fair media coverage' one-sixth of seats target. But a co-ordination of efforts is urgently needed.

So the steering committee agreed to defer making any plans until our January meeting - in order to seek more clarity from the Your Party interim leadership on what their intentions are for the local elections and how we can achieve the maximum possible impact next May.

TUSC AGAINST CUTS Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition
tusc.org.uk

Striving for a single left slate in the UCU national elections

Re-elect Duncan Moore

BEA GARDNER

Post-16 education is in deep crisis - the result of underfunding and a failed market model, which workers are being made to pay the price for. Up to 15,000 job cuts in universities, a £12,000 pay gap between further education (FE) teaching staff and their secondary school counterparts, course closures, excessive workloads and more. The need for the union to mount a serious campaign of action in defence of its members has never been clearer.

Yet as it stands, the majority in the existing leadership on the University and College Union (UCU) National Executive Committee (NEC) and the two sector sub-committees for Higher Education (HEC) and Further Education (FEC) are opposed to such action.

The general secretary, Jo Grady, and her supporters have presided over delays and retreats across both sectors and have undermined

disputes. As a consequence, they have knocked the confidence of members.

The upcoming NEC elections are therefore pivotal. The left needs two more seats on the NEC. There is a real opportunity to tip the balance in favour of candidates who are serious about building a fighting, democratic union.

Socialist Party members have consistently argued that those who want UCU to be a fighting union stand the best chance of winning a majority if we can come together and agree on a shared slate between the 'UCU Left' group, which is dominated by the SWP (Socialist Workers Party), left independent candidates and Socialist Party members.

In the upcoming elections in January 2026, incumbent NEC and Socialist Party member Duncan Moore will be standing for re-election for one of the three UK-elected FE seats. Another Socialist Party member, Scott Hunter, also secured enough nominations to stand. Three UCU

Left candidates and a left-leaning independent candidate are also nominated.

Duncan drafted an open letter, shared with left activists across the union, to see if an agreement could be reached between the left candidates about a single left slate. He appealed at least for an agreement not to stand against incumbent left NEC members.

As we go to press, attempts at discussion have not succeeded, though the open letter has sparked informal discussion. Members of the SWP accused Socialist Party member Marco Tesi of having stood against a left incumbent in the 2025 election, when he won one of two UK-elected FE seats.

This is not the case. Marco attempted to discuss with the UCU Left. He then wrote to the four other left candidates with an appeal to avoid standing against each other, emphasising that he was not standing against Sean Vernell as a left incumbent.

No agreement was reached; nonetheless Marco endorsed Sean in his election address and leaflets, but that wasn't enough for him to win.

Despite having not reached agreement at this stage for the January 2026 election, in the interests of maximising the left vote, Scott Hunter has withdrawn from the election. There is still time for other left candidates to do the same, and we continue to appeal to the UCU Left not to run a candidate against sitting left NEC member Duncan Moore.

- See Duncan's open letter at socialistparty.org.uk

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



PHOTO: PAUL MATSSON

Notts nurses step up strike against fire and rehire

JON DALE

UNITE NOTTS HEALTH BRANCH SECRETARY

The Intensive Care nurses' strike at Bassetlaw Hospital is intensifying. Their employer, Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS Trust, threatened to terminate their contracts on 12 December if they would not agree to

new terms. These included working at Doncaster for eight-week blocks.

The nurses have clearly stated that the extra travelling is dangerous and sometimes impossible for them, working 13-hour shifts day and night. It's also dangerous for Bassetlaw patients - this could be a step towards losing their Intensive Care Unit (ICU) altogether. Without an ICU on site, many other hospital treatments would also be moved away.

Trust management attempting 'fire and rehire' is bad enough. But now the Trust is in effect threatening a lock-out. After two days of strikes, nurses worked to rule and refused to be moved off ICU to cover shortages, as they have done out of goodwill in the past.

'Volunteers'

Management have retaliated by threatening not to pay the nurses for working these shifts. They

said the nurses were working like "volunteers".

However, the Trust did not follow through with the 12 December deadline. A further week of strike action is now taking place, with the prospect of more strikes over Christmas.

There has been a lot of support from the local community, which the nurses plan to build on by leafleting shoppers in Workshop and Retford.

Pressures on all NHS staff are nearing bursting point. With resident doctors striking, and a Christmas strike announced at Cheswold Park secure mental hospital in Doncaster, health workers are making clear they will not continue to put up with ever-growing attacks on pay and working conditions, while unable to provide quality care after years of cuts.

Health trade unions should be organising national action to demand full funding for the NHS, with profit-seeking businesses kicked out.

London college strikers fighting to save FE



PHOTO: SARAH SACHS ELDRIDGE

SARAH SACHS-ELDRIDGE ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

"CCCG, shame on you! You need to listen to the UCU!"

That was the bold message from a fantastic lively picket line of University and College Union (UCU) members at Enfield College in north London on 10 December. Cars and trucks tooted their support. CCCG is Capital City College Group, an amalgam of Further Education (FE) colleges across London.

Anne, the UCU rep, explained the strike: "We're on strike for fair pay, a sustainable workload - and for the FE national binding agreement. We're also out in support of the National Education Union fighting in the sixth form colleges, which are slowly being eroded. They haven't got fair pay. I think eventually, if it carries on like this, it will lead to the destruction of the sixth form colleges."

"Further Education is so important. The staff work so hard. The teachers work so hard. They really care about the students. It's so important for the local communities. It's vital. You want teachers to be supported and valued and it all filters down to the students. The courses we offer are a vital aspect of the community."

Supporting the picket line, we distributed a bulletin of Socialist Party members in UCU for the strike. It makes the case for UCU joining with other education unions and student organisations to make that union voice heard and fight for democratic and student control of our sectors. They should be run in the interests of staff, students and local communities, not the financiers and profiteers.

This was an impressive group of women workers who have clearly gained confidence through their collective action. A hairdressing teacher spoke of turning a delivery lorry around on the last strike.

Workers, with decades of experience in FE, did not hold back on their opinions on cuts to support for students, imposition of admin tasks on teachers taking time from teaching, and the amount paid to the executive team.

The facts of the situation demand a union response. Salaries are worth 40% less in real terms than in 2010, and severe understaffing comes at a huge cost to staff. There was big enthusiasm for the next stage of the strike planned for 14-16 January, when there will be UCU strike action in FE colleges nationwide.

- Socialist Party members also visited CCCG picket lines in Finsbury Park, City and Islington, and more



PHOTO: JON DALE

East London bus strike: 'Defending the union so we can fight for what we need'

ELLEN KENYON PEERS AND SORANA SECU WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Spirits were high among striking bus workers on the picket at Lea Interchange on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 December. Drivers were pushed to strike action after a campaign of victimisation against union reps which for some had resulted in them receiving 'final warning' letters.

Waltham Forest Socialist Party members visited the big picket line from early in the morning each day.

The importance of having fighting, militant reps was in evidence on the picket, with many drivers reporting the toxic work environment and inexperienced management who are quick to penalise workers for any perceived transgression.

One driver spoke of how those on the 'old contracts' - with more favourable pay and benefits - had targets on their back. Another explained that their poor pay simply failed to offset the cost-of-living crisis.

Working on the buses is not an easy job. Several spoke sombrely of the drivers who had lost their lives during Covid and the others who had risked their own - they asked: "Is this how our sacrifice will be repaid?"

The employer, Stagecoach, has not yet agreed the pay rise the workers were meant to receive in April.

Socialist Party members from several different Unite branches, including housing workers and Waltham Forest council branch, attended over the two days of action, delivering messages of solidarity from both their union branches and Waltham Forest Trades Council. Len Hockey from Barts Health Unite branch visited and spoke, as well as Unite Executive Committee member and fellow bus driver Jane McGuire.

Strikers were enthusiastic about the suggestion from Linda Taaffe that the trades council produces a leaflet to help build support among passengers that could be delivered in the daytimes by a team of pensioners!

Workers' list of candidates

Nancy Taaffe raised the need for trade unionists to stand in the council elections next year, alongside socialists and other campaigners, against cuts, and to demand that the privatised bus companies be brought back into public ownership.

Many of the striking drivers signed up to support our campaign for a 'workers' list' in the elections. We hope that some of them will have the confidence to stand themselves, as members of the organised working class.

The bosses attempted to disrupt the strike by reporting 'improperly parked' vehicles, to which the council responded by sending a traffic



PHOTOS: WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY



Ellen speaking on the picket line

officer to attempt to penalise workers. This from the Labour-run council which has made substantial cuts to public services in recent years.

Despite the attacks against them, workers remained united, with many reiterating their faith in the reps and their willingness to continue strike action until their demands are met. They know the bus company bosses fear the possibility of strike action spreading. Support came from other bus garages, and pickets at Lea Interchange were FaceTiming with drivers at Westbourne Park in west London, also on strike!

Their banner, which reads 'United for jobs, pay and conditions; against cuts and for public ownership', perfectly encapsulates the

mood and the message. We will fight against cuts and for all public services to be democratically owned and run by the working class - and that will be our message at the next election.

- If talks don't resolve the dispute, the next strikes are 8 and 9 January
- Emergency hardship fund: Unity LE254 Lea Interchange branch Unity Trust bank 60-83-01 20060855 ref: [your name/organisation]
- Messages of support: Branch secretary shahid.fazil@unitetheunion.org Branch organiser muhsin.manir@unitetheunion.org

Usdaw members fight in Rochdale

IAIN DALTON

USDAW BROAD LEFT SECRETARY

Usdaw members began four half-days of strike action at the Tetrosyl car care products factory in Rochdale, on 15 December, against the slashing of their pay and conditions through 'fire and rehire.'

On the picket line, many workers spoke to us about the impact this would have, with some unable to pay mortgages, some having to return cars bought on hire purchase, and others worried about having to rely on food banks. Some had worked for the company for 20 years.



PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

The obvious comparison made on the picket line was with the Birmingham bin workers. Tetrosyl workers face losing £4-7,000 a year through the elimination of shift pay and paid breaks (with two paid breaks being replaced by one unpaid break!). In Birmingham, disgracefully, it is a Labour council implementing fire and rehire, which Labour had previously pledged to outlaw. Usdaw is affiliated to Labour and in the year of the general election gave over £2 million of members' money! Usdaw and other trade unions should demand that the Labour government outlaws these practices immediately.

Usdaw is not currently recognised by Tetrosyl in Rochdale, though it is recognised at another site. Reps told us that, with a surge of members joining as a result of this attack and the fighting response, a majority of permanent workers are now in the union, and the process for compulsory recognition has started.

We were told that the workplace was only functioning at 25% of its usual capacity, largely facilitated by agency workers - who faced demands to 'stand together' from strikers as they entered the factory.

Despite pouring rain, dozens of pickets maintained an unmissable presence outside the factory, backed up by other Usdaw members and officials, which included new Usdaw general secretary Joanne Thomas and members of the Usdaw Broad Left.

- Further strike days are planned for 17, 19 and 22 December

British Library workers still fighting



PHOTO: ISAI MARJERLA

CLARE DOYLE

Friday 12 December saw another week of strike action at the world famous British Library come to a noisy conclusion. More than 300 members

of the Public and Civil Service Union (PCS) have been on strike again, after being offered just 3.8% which, as branch chair Nick Alen said, "does not even keep up with the rise in the Retail Price Index."

"Last time we took strike action", he reminds us, "one of the top managers - newly appointed Rebecca Lawrence - left the post before the strike was over! We also know that Jeremy Silver, on the board since 2019, gets no less than a six-figure salary."

Pickets at the staff entrance made plenty of noise, with their vuvuzelas and their music system blaring out. Drivers of buses, lorries, cars and taxis were constantly hooting as they drove past. The pickets responded with cheers and waves and extra loud blasts on their vuvuzelas.

"We do like to make a lot of noise out here!" Nick smiles. "At work, of course, it's a different matter. Management are trying to do our jobs and they have agency staff on the doors, but we understand all the reading rooms are inoperative."

One picket was carrying a cardboard poster with a hand-drawn cartoon of Bob Cratchet and Ebenezer Scrooge, with the message: 'Consider not giving presents this holiday season - BL health and well-being advice!'

"It's all a bit of a pantomime!" Nick exclaimed. "We will see after this whether management will get round the table with us. But unless they agree on at least our main demands we could well be out here again in the New Year."

In this era of rampant inequality, increasing wars and climate catastrophe, many around the world are desperately searching for an alternative to the rotten capitalist system. Inevitably, some are looking towards China. We publish an edited transcript of **Oscar Parry's** introduction to the discussion on China at Socialism 2025. Oscar is a member of the Socialist 2025 organising team

The Chinese regime is full of contradictions. It's the second largest economy in the world after decades of massive growth. It's got huge investments in renewable energy and infrastructure. And it can seem like China's economy is working better than the rest of the capitalist world in crisis.

But its economic growth figures have been achieved on the back of the Chinese working class, hundreds of millions toiling in brutal conditions, working 996 shifts - 9am to 9pm, six days a week, for poverty pay. And the regime is increasingly authoritarian, cracking down on any dissent.

To understand the character of China today, we have to go back to the origins of the Chinese state. Unlike the Soviet Union, which in 1917 was established by a revolution led by the working class successfully overthrowing capitalism and establishing a democratic workers' state, which was then isolated and degenerated, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led state was deformed from its very inception. A variant of Stalinism under Mao Zedong was its starting point.

From the very beginning, while defending a planned economy, the state machine was not subject to democratic checks by the working class. Far from being a party of internationalism and world socialism, the CCP now and in the past relies on Chinese nationalism to rally support.

So, if the CCP was undemocratic from its very inception, how has it survived this long?

The authority of the CCP originally stemmed from the 1949 revolution in China. Before that, 10% of the population owned 70% of arable land, and the vast majority of the Chinese population was trapped in brutal poverty. Based on the poor peasantry, the 1949 revolution overthrew landlordism and capitalism, leading to important gains for the working class and poor peasantry.

Revolutionary gains gone

Today, however, many of the initial gains have been completely destroyed. And while elements of it still formally exist, security of employment is gone, and state education and health care are not available to the 300 million migrant workers who have left their homes in the countryside to go to the cities looking for work.

Without going over the history of the Chinese economy since 1949, I will say that although China under Mao based itself on a bureaucratic caricature of a planned economy, there were considerable differences between the planned economy in Stalinist Russia and in China.

For example, the prices of only about 1,200 commodities were set centrally in China. Under the Russian plan from 1966, they tried to set 25 million prices centrally. In China,

much of the plan was always under the control of the provincial bureaucracies which had considerable economic freedom.

As far back as the 1970s, the Chinese bureaucratic state began to take some steps towards introducing market relations. These were taken empirically to try and overcome the economic crisis that had developed in China and Russia under the bureaucracies' mismanagement of the planned economies.

In the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism in the Soviet Union in 1991 and in Eastern Europe, capitalism appeared to reign triumphant globally. The powerful Chinese state machine went much further and introduced capitalist relations on an enormous scale. They were setting out to breed their own Chinese capitalist class.

Learning from the implosion that had taken place in Russia, they strove to keep it under state direction. Even today, the regime is not simply the repressive agent or servant of the newly formed, historically speaking, Chinese capitalist class. The Chinese state has a large degree of autonomy in fostering and steering the development of capitalism in the way that best preserves its own power.

There's no simple historical analogy which fully applies to China today. But Marx and Engels used to talk about the complex relationship between a state superstructure

and its economic foundations, and how under certain conditions a state power could balance between different social classes. They called this a Bonapartist state. And explained how it could, for a certain period, play a role in sponsoring the development of capitalist industry. This is what the Chinese state has done.

It has fostered the development of a capitalist class, and that's led to huge inequality. The privatisation of state-owned urban housing, valued at about £600 billion pounds in the early 2000s, was one of the biggest wealth transfers in history, and has entrenched rural to urban inequality.

450 billionaires

China is now home to 450 billionaires, second only to the US. But the state which has created this capitalist class, still rules in the name of socialism and Marxism. And the CCP justifies this by arguing that, given China's underdeveloped economy, the development of market relations is a necessary precondition for a higher level of socialism at some unspecified future point.

Contrary to the earlier expectations of capitalism in the West, China's president Xi Jinping has resisted subservient the Chinese economy to the control of the world capitalist economies dominated by US imperialism.

Instead, the Chinese regime has been empirically pushed towards

greater state intervention because of the multiple economic crises in capitalist economies. The role of the Chinese trillion dollar stimulus package in 2009 was very important in limiting the effect of the Great Recession in China.

That led the CCP leaders to further strengthen their confidence in a state-led economy. But this doesn't mean that private capital has ceased playing an important role. On the contrary, while there's a lot of state oversight and there have been some harsh crackdowns, particularly since 2020, private enterprises are increasingly the engines of China's growth. 92% of the firms are privately owned. The private sector accounts for about 85% of employment and manufacturing output, about two-thirds of GDP and fixed investment.

The CCP still maintains huge control of the private economy, firstly via state investment, and there are also CCP branches in most workplaces. The CCP exerts economic control by demanding voting rights to appoint directors, for example.

Nationalisation has also taken place in recent years. From 2018 to 2020, over 100 firms were nationalised, a total of about \$100 billion in assets.

It would be wrong to imagine that the Chinese capitalist class will indefinitely accept the constraints put on it by the state. And there are already tensions.

The CCP disciplinary agency, first mainly aimed at CCP members and government officials, is increasingly frequently used on business people. Some estimates find that more than a quarter of Chinese entrepreneurs have left the country, and about half of those remaining are thinking of doing so.

30 to 35% of all capitalists are CCP members, and many of the big capitalists, 'the princelings', are literally children of high-up CCP leaders. CCP propaganda has an effect, so too does education and upbringing. Ultimately, their own material class interests will be decisive in the outlook of the Chinese capitalists. When Stalinism in Russia collapsed, no amount of schooling in Stalinism prevented the oligarchs from stealing as much of the state's resources as they could.

The primary reason that the majority of the capitalist class accepts CCP constraints is because, up to now, the rapid growth of the Chinese economy has made it worth their while. And also, the most important factor is their fear of the working class entering the scene of history. Those factors are not going to contain tensions at the top indefinitely, although they may initially appear in a partially disguised way.

In future, tensions are not likely going to be expressed as just the CCP on one side and pro-Western capitalists on the other. Much more likely are

splits within the CCP which, in 2024, claimed it had 100 million members. Whatever the initial basis for conflict, class struggle is going to lie at the root of future crises.

The growth of the Chinese economy has allowed the Chinese state to manage these tensions, effectively balancing between them, striking blows in different directions in order to maintain its own power. And the regime is just as likely to squash discussion that is too far left, calling for a turn to the glory days of the planned economy under Mao, as it is likely to squash openly pro-Western capitalist discussion.

Such a crisis would begin at the top, but would certainly lead to mass revolt from below, although in its initial stages it may be confused. Whatever the character of the coming revolt in China, long-term stability is ruled out because of the developing economic crisis in the global economy.

China's growth

China's prolonged period of growth was unique in human history. From 1978 to 2019, GDP grew at about 9.5% annually, increasing 60-fold. This was only possible with a unique set of circumstances, including the unique role of the state.

In 1998, when the Asian financial crisis hit, the government launched a fiscal stimulus programme of infrastructure spending. It built a national

expressway, expanded ports up and down the country; investment in power plants exploded, China installed new power plants equivalent to Great Britain's total supply every year, for example.

For a whole period of time, China has played the role of an assembly plant for Western capitalism. It's facilitated the entry of a billion-plus very low-paid workers into the world capitalist economy; above all those were Chinese workers.

China has developed, locked together with the US market. It is now the world's manufacturing superpower with about 30% of total manufacturing output. Most of those products are bought by the US.

Initially, Chinese manufacturing was largely assembling Western products. Now it is determined to develop itself into an advanced manufacturing economy.

Alongside this, Xi's 2025 'Made in China' policy of state intervention is driving to develop ten strategic sectors in the economy, from next generation IT to agricultural machinery. China now leads the world in international patent applications, and it seems that the next five-year plan from 2025 to 2030 is going to seek to build on those foundations.

China still has problems in its economy, not least that its domestic market is very limited. Chinese capitalism is still reliant on being able to

sell its products internationally. It also still has a very limited capacity to produce some of the most advanced technology.

USA

For US imperialism, still the most powerful economy on the planet, even though it's in decline, it is imperative to block the rise of China, its nearest rival. That's why Trump introduced tariffs on China in his first term. And Biden kept those tariffs in place, giving massive subsidies to US manufacturing. Now we're seeing further tariffs being threatened under Trump 2.

Given the levels of integration that exist, the US and other western capitalist powers, aren't about to completely decouple from China. A very important factor is that more than 95% of rare earth materials or metals come from or are processed in China.

China is the world's biggest creditor. It has lent huge sums, mainly to neo-colonial countries, to fund Chinese-built infrastructure projects. China also holds around \$1.1 trillion of US government debt, about 4%. By selling this, it could plunge the US into crisis with severe consequences for the world economy, including China.

Nonetheless, the direction of travel in this increasingly multipolar world is for exacerbated tensions between

the major powers. Above all, tensions between the US and China. The result isn't going to be a short-term victory for either side. There's going to be a period of intensifying instability and conflict as the world's greatest powers fight for dominance, but neither one is capable of decisively claiming it.

In this situation, there's no prospect of China acting like it did in the Great Recession, when it acted as a motor for the world economy, while the US was the banker of last resort.

The Chinese regime responded in 2008 with a massive investment stimulus. And was able to do this because the state's control of its capital account meant that it could effectively depreciate its currency, the yuan, against the dollar. The US allowed this, but in doing so suffered a cumulative loss of about \$4 trillion. At the start of the 2008 crisis, China's economy was 20% of the size of the US, now it's 60%.

But the Chinese economy is not without its problems. There are the effects of tariffs and economic barriers, and of economic slowdowns around the world. The housing and infrastructure boom has been slowly unravelling. Property company Evergrande, once the most valuable real estate company in the world, has now gone completely bankrupt. The post-Covid economic rebound has been weaker than hoped so the People's Bank of China has started to cut interest rates in order to try and encourage growth. Meanwhile, youth unemployment soared to something like 20% before they stopped releasing figures.

Growing crisis

Against this background of a growing economic crisis, nothing can prevent huge social explosions. The centralisation of power around Xi Jinping can give an impression of strength, but this could very quickly turn into its opposite as economic crisis develops. The voice of the powerful Chinese working class has not yet made itself fully heard. The Chinese state is terrified of that changing.

This year, China Dissent Monitor documented about 2,500 protests in the first six months of the year, a 73% increase from last year. Labour protests are the most common. Most protests are almost certainly undocumented.

The reasons for these protests repeat themselves consistently. Wage cuts, redundancies without compensation, forced transfers to other provinces. There have been strikes. For example, at Shenzhen Advanced Semiconductor, about 1,000 workers went on strike and won a pay rise.

In this era of capitalist crisis and economic instability, it is the mighty Chinese working class, which is now potentially the most powerful in the world, that can develop society. The crucial task for the working class is to develop its own independent organisations, including trade unions.

The growth of China is a factor destabilising world capitalism, but the growth of the Chinese working class will further the struggle for genuine democratic socialism. There's no way out of the long-term problems for the Chinese regime.

Only a genuinely socialist China, which would include a planned economy under democratic workers' control and management and real socialist internationalism, a workers' state in China acting as a spur for socialist revolution in the region and worldwide, can secure peace and prosperity globally.

DISCUSSING CHINA – STATE INTERVENTION, WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CLASS STRUGGLE



Shanghai PHOTO: KING OF HEARTS, CC



Bulgaria: Mass protests force government to resign

MIHAELA IVANOVA

On 1 December, the biggest protest in over 30 years took place in Bulgaria. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of the capital Sofia, and many other cities across the country chanting “Mafia, out! Mafia, out!”

This was a culmination of protests which began on 26 November after the Prime Minister Rosen Zhelezkov's coalition government announced a 2026 budget plan full of tax hikes and spending cuts. The government withdrew the budget but protests continued, calling for their resignation and new elections. This reached breaking point on 12 December. Protests demanding resignation took place across Europe, including in London.

The next day, the televised resignation of the PM and his government came minutes before the National Assembly was due to vote on a no-confidence motion. The electric energy of this wave of protests has reignited a mood for change among young Bulgarians.

In London, social media networks have been established between protesters with hopes of more planned action in the new year for the implementation of a fair voting process in the next general election.

The Zhelezkov government's 2026 budget plan was set in euros for the first time. The budget included rises in social security contributions and higher taxes on dividends. This is under a regressive tax system where the poor pay more than the richest in society.

Some of lowest pay in Europe

While Bulgaria has one of the lowest minimum wages in Europe, where doctors take on part-time work to survive, the police have had their wages increased by more than 50%. This is one of the many reasons the protests have erupted.

Since this coalition government took office in January 2025, after the country's 7th general election since 2021, Bulgaria has been ranked the most poor and corrupt country in the European Union. Despite this, Bulgaria's ascendancy to the eurozone was approved earlier in the year. Anti-euro riots and protests swept the country, sparked by far-right ultra-nationalist party Vazrazhdane



(“Revival”). There has been a fear of pro-Russian influences stopping the ascension of the euro, with President Rumen Radev being a focal source of this.

Since the fall of the Stalinist regime in the 1990s, successive governments have kept state spending low through mass privatisation, chronic low wages and pensions, while concessioning public services to Stalinist-era elites who transformed themselves into business oligarchs.

The recent political and social discontent is a reflection of the deeply fragmented and shallow trust in establishment politics. The most recent coalition government was formed of three parties – one of which is the direct successor of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Many people support the EU and the eurozone

as a way, they see it, to challenge and eliminate corruption. However, the EU's Maastricht Treaty which sets out the criteria needed to enter the eurozone, has meant Bulgaria's 2026 budget plan foreshadows the undemocratic and unelected decision making wielded by the EU. Governments prioritise the interests of business and the banks over the desperate funding of essential services for the working class. And Bulgaria is no different with income spending in proportion to its GDP being one of the lowest in the EU.

European Union

After millions of euros of funding given to Bulgaria, none of that money has benefited the lives of working-class people. With increasing fears of a financial crash on a scale similar to

that of 2008, the EU would be likely to try to force the Bulgarian government to implement austerity measures like those of Greece, where the minimum wage was lowered by 22%.

Events like those would further exacerbate the problems faced across the Balkans. It is not a coincidence that there have been similar expressions of anger in Romania, Serbia, and Hungary. The rise of ‘Gen Z’ protests, as named by international media, are a welcomed step towards fighting back against undemocratic and corrupt politicians.

But the current leadership of this movement in Bulgaria has been the right-wing capitalist party that was founded on the basis of being anti-corruption and pro-EU. PP-DB (‘We Continue the Change - Democratic Bulgaria’) has been the largest

parliamentary opposition to the government.

Not another capitalist regime

A government made up of any collection of capitalist parties will inevitably fail to improve the lives of workers and young people. In fact, on the basis of capitalism in crisis, it will be compelled to attack them. It will therefore fuel further protests.

Youth and workers should organise independently of the capitalist parties and elites, linking up protests through democratic committees at a local, regional and national level. These bodies could put forward demands for a living wage, properly funded housing, education and health, and so on – linking that to the need for public ownership and democratic planning to meet the needs of all.

Talking, art, and music are not enough – we need to organise

Why I joined the Socialist Party

CHRISI SCHAFFER
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

For a decade, I have been politicising myself by exploring intersectional feminist and anticapitalist ideas. This has shaped and strengthened my understanding of power imbalances, structural oppression, and

exploitation, and the many ways these forces shape our everyday lives. This long process of learning and unlearning has made it impossible for me to remain a passive observer of the world around me.

I consider myself a political artist. Music has been a space where I explore and express these ideas. However, I have come to realise that artistic engagement – while meaningful – is not the same as organising.

When I moved to London last year, this sense of urgency only deepened.

I began attending Socialist Students meetings because I felt a need to be politicised, not only in theory, but also in practice.

It was no longer enough to read, discuss, and critique within my like-minded bubble. I wanted to understand what organising really looks like – how people come together, build solidarity, and work collectively toward meaningful change.

The current political climate intensifies this need even further. With the alarming global rise of the right,

it has become clear that occasional protests, and even genuine personal or interpersonal growth, while important, are not sufficient on their own. I feel a responsibility to make political work a consistent, intentional part of my life, not something confined to private conversations or creative expression alone.

It took time to overcome my internal hesitation. But I've reached a point where discussing political ideas over a glass of wine with friends feels inadequate. I feel the

need to organise, to participate, and to connect with people who share a commitment to building a more equitable and hopeful future. Because change is possible, but only if we actively work to make it happen.

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

Cardiff and Welsh Labour – cuts, council tax rises, and union busting

JOHN WILLIAMS
CARDIFF CENTRAL SOCIALIST PARTY, AND UNITE THE UNION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CANDIDATE

I stopped caring what the Labour Party put through my letterbox a long time ago. But Labour's recent local newsletter caught my eye.

It claimed that council tax in Cardiff is now officially the lowest in the whole of Wales. £242 below the current Wales average.

This is 100% correct. But that only tells half the story.

Cardiff Labour council increased 2025-26 council tax by 4.95%. The rest of Wales increased council tax by 7.2% on average.

So, the real story is that Cardiff Council didn't increase as much as the rest of Wales!

Sacked union rep

And if that wasn't bad enough, I noticed that on the newsletter, they used an image of sacked union rep at Cardiff council, Tom Watkins. He used his own tools to fix a bin, but in reality, there is an anti-union campaign at Cardiff council, which Tom fell victim to.

Tom is furious, and so he should

be. They use him in election leaflets. But let him get sacked after 33 years of service. It's clear that Cardiff Council don't care about its workforce or protecting vital council services.

Cardiff Council has reserves of over £134 million. It should use that in the short term to fight cuts. And, at the same time, use borrowing powers and the full might of the working class and the trade union movement to build a mass campaign with other councils to the demand full funding from Westminster. That is the policy of Unite the Union – the union that many Labour councillors are members of – and of Wales Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Wales elections

We don't have council elections in May next year. But we do have Welsh Senedd elections.

We need to replace pro-austerity politicians with socialists who will stand by workers and who will fight austerity. We're pushing at an open door, with the recent Your Party founding conference passing a motion demanding that Your Party councillors do just that.



Peter Redfarn (1938-2025)

It with sadness that we report long-standing member of the Socialist Party, Peter Redfarn, passed away

on Friday 12 December, aged 87. An obituary will follow in the next issue of the Socialist



CIEAN ELAN BUTLER
ESSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

Students and workers protested against a shock announcement on 10 December. The Southend campus of The University of Essex is to close from October.

The plan cuts 400 staff. 800 students are expected to move studies to Colchester.

This leaves many without a realistic way to continue their education. Many courses include unpaid placements. “Everyone's jobs are now at risk,” protesters told Socialist Party members.

Compensation offered to students is minimal – £400. Students told us it'll cost them around £40 a day to travel! One teacher explained they were offered just £3,000 redundancy pay.

“Decisive steps towards a sustainable future” – that's what the uni has claimed as their explanation. This is despite students starting courses in

September and October this year, when higher-ups knew the campus would close.

This disproportionately affects women and parents. Many chose their local university, because of its accessibility.

This whole situation has been building from 14 years of Tory austerity, carried on with this current Labour government. Uni management have presented no alternative proposals. The decisions made by the vice chancellor, on an eye-watering £280,000 salary, prioritise profit, even if it means cutting education.

There has been a 52% decrease in international students coming to Essex, driven by visa changes, alongside increasing hostility. It's not fair, people suffer, while those dividing us are rewarded.

Tuition fees, maintenance loans, all this debt, for what? It's yet another barrier to a higher education.

All 3,000 staff across Essex uni have been threatened with redundancy.

And the University and College Union (UCU) is now balloting for strike action to stop Southend's closure. They could strike in February.

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS SAY:

- Open the books. Student representatives and staff trade unions should have access to the financial information held by Essex University. No hiding behind ‘business confidentiality’
- No job cuts
- Students should be allowed to complete their course at Southend campus
- Trade unions and student bodies to continue to hold the Southend Labour MPs to account – we demand emergency funding from the government to prevent Southend campus closing

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



CHRIS GILMARTIN
CANNOCK SOCIALIST PARTY

So it's official. Cannock Chase Council is demolishing the Prince of Wales Theatre.

This is a massive cultural hit to the working class of Cannock. Our museum's already gone – what's next?

It's a place many young people of the local area found their confidence and discovered their dreams. A safe place for locals to spend time and money in the local area.

Cannock Chase Labour council has gone back on many things in this ‘redevelopment’. The theatre was originally due to be refurbished,

using £20 million levelling-up funds, not demolished.

The nearest permanent theatre is now Lichfield or Stafford, with poor public transport links. Expensive private alternatives are not viable in the current cost-of-living crisis. There have been vague promises of the council building a replacement cultural space. But nothing is guaranteed.

The council claims it can't afford to subsidise the theatre. Never mind that the council's ‘cost-cutting’ consultants SLC have overestimated this by 40%. The real subsidy in the theatre's last year is only £111,000.

Cannock Chase District Council currently holds over £15 million

in reserves. In the short term, they could fund the ongoing activities of the theatre.

A council that fought for local residents would draw up a plan based on expanding and restoring art and culture, alongside other public services. It could mobilise people in Cannock Chase to demand central government pays the bill. People like the dozens who protested outside the cabinet meeting that signed off the demolition of the theatre in December, or the 20,000 who signed a petition to save it.

We haven't seen this approach from Labour councillors in Cannock. We need candidates in the 2026 elections who will.

Nigeria: Victory at last! 'Treason' Trial cancelled

Pressure forces Nigerian government to abandon sham trial of Adaramoye Michael Lenin and ten other #EndBadGovernance protesters charged with treason and terrorism

FRANCIS NWAPA
NATIONAL SECRETARY, YOUTH RIGHTS CAMPAIGN,
NIGERIA

On 10 December, Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court Abuja struck out the treason and terrorism charges against Adaramoye Michael Lenin and ten others. In his ruling, Justice Emeka lamented that the prosecuting counsel had shown a lack of diligence and seriousness in the case they initiated against the protesters. Subsequently, Michael Lenin and his co-defendants, who were detained and put on trial over the August 2024 nationwide #EndBadGovernance protest against mass hunger, economic hardship and anti-poor policies of Bola Tinubu government, were acquitted. The other activists are Daniel Akande, Mosiu Sadiq, Adeyemi Abiodun Abayomi, Angel Love Innocent, Bashir Bello, Nuradeen Khamis, Buhari Lawal, Opaluwa Elejo Simeon, Suleiman Yakubu and Abdulsalam Zubairu. Since the arraignment of the 11 #EndBadGovernance protesters on 2 September 2024, after unlawfully spending many weeks in police cells and prison, the Nigerian government had wasted public resources to sustain charges of treason and terrorism

against them without being able to prosecute their own case. Rather, the police prosecutors repeatedly employed different delaying tactics and sought adjournment after adjournment. At least all of them were eventually given bail and freed from prison. We recall that on 25 June, Justice Emeka warned the prosecuting counsel to desist from further delaying the trial and expressly stated that the case would be struck out if the police further attempted to postpone it, following the resilient agitations of the legal representatives of the activists. The judge was actually compelled to strike out this case due to the relentless campaign of our comrades and supporters locally and internationally. Repeatedly, public protests were held around the world while trade unions and civil rights organisations demanded this trial stopped. It was the same pressure that forced the government and police to abandon the trial as the police prosecutor was absent in court. Left to the government and police, they were prepared to perpetually tie the treason trial around the neck of the #EndBadGovernance activists in order to serve as a deterrent to further mass protests against its anti-poor

policies and attacks on democratic rights. It is fitting and instructive that the news of the court victory came when activists were again on the streets of Lagos, Ibadan and elsewhere in Nigeria to use the occasion of the 10 December World Human Rights Day to highlight and put on the front burner the demand for an immediate end to the sham trial of 11 #EndBadGovernance activists, and an end to other instances of attacks on democratic rights in Nigeria. The Youth Rights Campaign (YRC) expresses a profound appreciation to all the lawyers who rendered free legal service, and comrades, supporters and activists locally and internationally for their sustained pressure and unflinching support throughout the periods of arrest, detention, and trial. We consider this a victory, not just for the 11 #EndBadGovernance activists, but also for all Nigerians desirous of a better society. This is an example that we can fight and defeat a tyrannical government like the Tinubu government. Nigerian working people and youth must continue to fight consistently against bad governance and pro-capitalist policies of the government. The Youth Rights Campaign (YRC) demands a public apology from the Nigerian government to all acquitted #EndBadGovernance activists, return of the properties and unfreezing of the bank accounts. We also demand adequate compensation for the 11 activists and all victims of abuse during and after the #EndBadGovernance protest. We also demand the immediate freedom of all the jailed #EndBadGovernance protesters sentenced to seven years imprisonment in Borno and withdrawal of charges against anybody still on trial over the August 2024 #EndBadGovernance protest. We maintain that protest against anti-poor policies and bad governance is a democratic right and must not be criminalised.



Trump wants regime change in Venezuela - oppose US intervention and fight for a socialist alternative

TONY SAUNOIS
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL (CWI)
SECRETARY

US imperialism, headed by Donald Trump, has launched a military build-up in the Caribbean not seen for decades. The deployment of the USS Gerald R Ford strike group, including the largest US aircraft carrier, a nuclear submarine, and over 10,000 combat troops, is a clear warning that Trump and US imperialism mean business. Normally, two US warships are stationed in the Caribbean, now it is at least ten. Under the pretext of wanting to hit the narco-traffickers, over 20 boats have been bombed, killing over 80 occupants, even though most of the drugs smuggled into the US do not originate from or pass through Venezuela. Now, an oil tanker has been seized by the US in an act of imperial piracy. Asked what he would do with the seized tanker, Trump replied, "I guess we will keep it". Yet it is not just one tanker, apparently destined for Cuba, that the US empire has its eye on. It is access to the vast Venezuelan crude oil reserves, the largest in the world, that Trump and the oil barons who back him want. Venezuela has 303 billion barrels of crude oil in reserve, 20% of the world's total. Furthermore, most US oil refineries are designed to process 'heavy crude oil', which the US only gets from Venezuela, Canada, and Russia. Securing supplies along with an estimated US\$1 trillion gain for US business is in the offing, if they can get their hands on it. Apart from the naval build-up, in preparation for further action, the

military base on Puerto Rico, closed following mass protests in 2004, has been reopened. Thousands of US troops, amphibious landing craft, tanks, and warplanes are being flown into the base. Puerto Rico, a US colony that was seized in 1898, has historically been a crucial base and training ground for the US military. It was on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, where thousands of the indigenous population were driven off and slaughtered, that Napalm, 'Agent Orange' and other deadly weapons of mass murder were tested before they were used in the Vietnam war. Militarily, Puerto Rico historically has been strategically important for US imperialism - lying close to Cuba and around 1,000km from Venezuela. Trump's claim is that his motive is targeting narco-traffickers. In the narcotics trade, Venezuela is a relatively small player. Regime change for the lucrative 'black gold', which is the mainstay of the economy of the petrostate of Venezuela, is one of Trump's real objectives. Geopolitical factors are also a factor in Trump's objective of regime change. He is also warning rival powers, China and Russia, not to challenge US influence in the Americas. Putin is supporting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, and both regimes have trade relations, including oil. US imperialism has long wanted the overthrow of the Venezuelan government, since the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998. An attempted military coup in 2002 to oust Chavez, a radical left populist, backfired as

millions poured onto the streets defeating the coup and restoring Chavez to the presidency. The mass social explosion which followed drove the radical, well intentioned, Chavez, even further to the left. His government undertook partial nationalisations, spoke of "socialism in the 21st century" and, using revenue from oil, introduced sweeping social reforms. In election after election, Chavez won sweeping victories. A revolutionary movement developed. Popular though Chavez's reforms and his regime were, as the CWI analysed at the time, the government's often top-down bureaucratic methods, corruption, the absence of democratic workers' control and management and, fundamentally, a failure to definitively break with capitalism, resulted in the revolution reaching an impasse. The fall in global oil prices had a devastating effect, resulting in stagnation and then economic decline. Chavez died in 2013 to be replaced by Maduro. With the revolutionary process in retreat, US imperialism imposed crippling sanctions, including under President Obama; an economic blockade, that was tightened under Trump, with the objective of strangling the economy and forcing regime change. At the same time, Maduro did not continue the radical steps of Chavez which encroached upon capitalism but moved in the other direction.

Oil

Of the 303 billion barrels of oil reserves, Venezuela has only managed to sell four billion barrels due

to international sanctions. Venezuela has 161 tons of gold reserves - much of it locked away in the Bank of England as the country's assets have been frozen by imperialist powers. Shortages due to a lack of imports have a devastating effect. These have compounded the crisis which existed due to mismanagement, corruption, the lack of investment, and other factors.

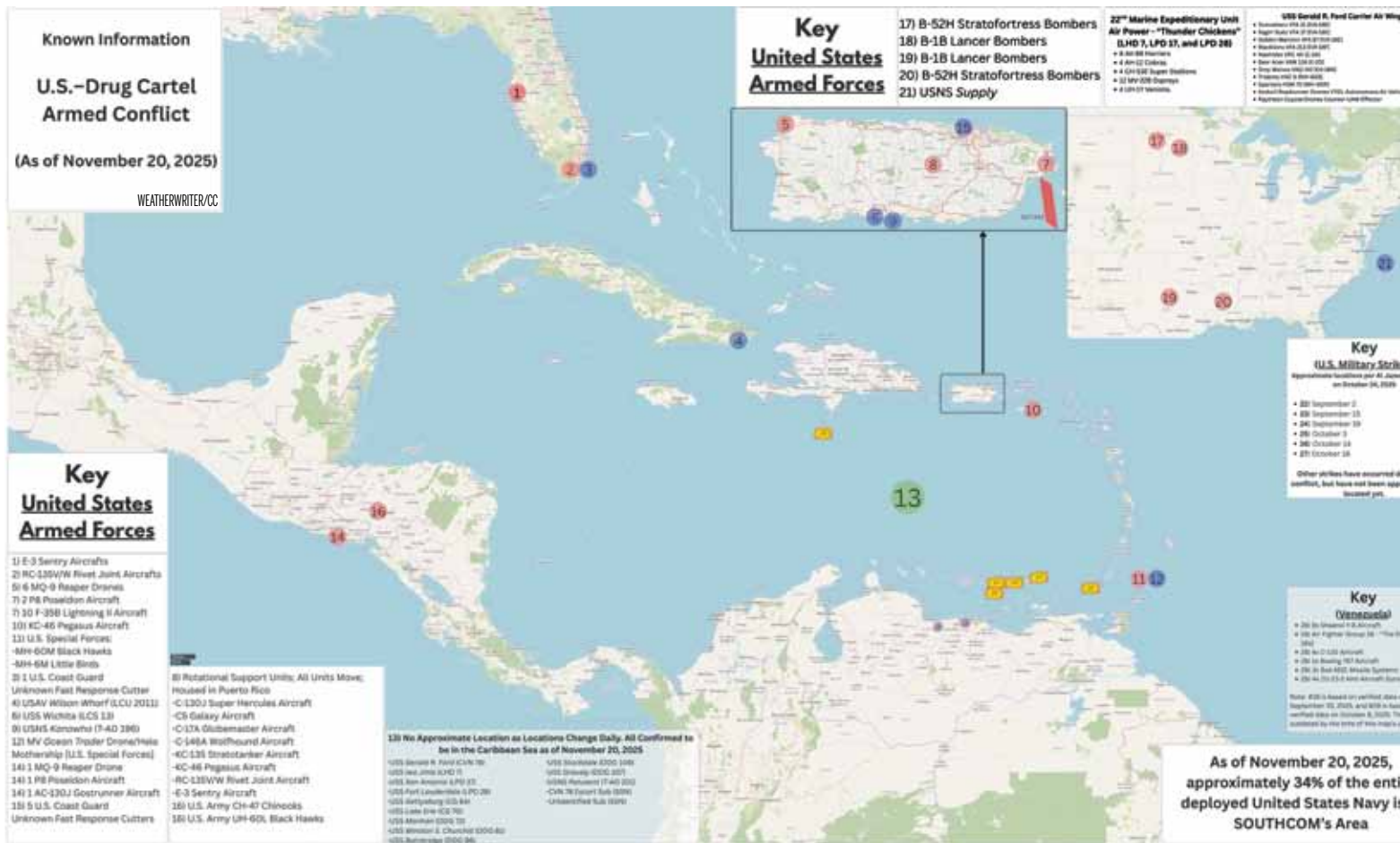
Venezuela is not only rich in oil, it has 80% of the natural gas reserves in Latin America but only accounts for 18% of that used, largely due to lack of infrastructure and corruption. Hyperinflation and shortages have all resulted in a devastating social collapse. Between 2014 and 2021, the GDP plummeted by 75%. The devastating social situation led to

a dramatic fall in support of the regime. Since 2013, over 8 million people (out of an estimated population of 28 million) have fled the country, in one of the largest global refugee and immigrant crises. Such an impasse in the situation has resulted in big opposition to Maduro's regime, which is more corrupt and authoritarian than which existed under Chavez. The regime has also acted against leftist critics who do not support US imperialism. According to some reports, Maduro has had US\$700 million worth of assets seized in the US. However, revulsion at the rich, right-wing opposition, and the legacy of the revolutionary process (though it ended in stagnation and decline), means Maduro still maintains a significant base of support. This is likely to be solidified and may be strengthened in response to the threats of Trump and fear of US intervention.

Right-wing opposition in Venezuela

The right-wing opposition in Venezuela, a vicious Thatcherite ruling class, if it comes to power, will be ruthless in seeking revenge and enacting repressive anti-working class measures. It offers no solution for the working class and poor. The right-wing opposition has a programme of collaboration with imperialism and to further enrich the Venezuelan rich and powerful ruling class. The stench of hypocrisy of western capitalism in awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the leader of the opposition, Maria Corina Machado, has been smelt in Oslo and around the world. The same Machado urged a coup to overthrow the Maduro regime. The same Machado refuses to condemn US bombing of boats in the Caribbean or condemn Trump for his racist attacks on Latinos in the US, including the deporting of Venezuelans to prisons in El Salvador. Trump is clearly aiming at regime

change. The amassing of a military force threatening Venezuela is going to arouse the strong anti-imperialist sentiment that exists throughout Latin America. It will have a massive polarising effect. It is noteworthy that the right-wing presidents of Argentina, Ecuador, Panama and Paraguay went to Oslo. Others, like Lula in Brazil or Boric in Chile, did not, reflecting the pressure against US imperialism which exists among the masses of region. At this stage, US imperialism has not amassed sufficient forces for a full ground invasion, which is unlikely, although not entirely excluded. This would risk triggering a massive movement throughout Latin America and a war with echoes of Vietnam. Trump may also be hoping that amassing a military threat will be sufficient to provoke a split and revolt by a section of the military in Venezuela. This depends on the situation within the Venezuelan military, which is unclear. A land invasion would provoke a big reaction amongst Trump's support base in the US, which generally opposes further US military interventions. However, bombings, drone attacks, assassinations, kidnappings - including of Maduro - are not excluded, indeed they are more likely. US imperialism has undertaken such interventions in the past in Panama. It kidnapped the 'strongman' Noriega. And members of Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq were kidnapped. The CWI condemns and opposes all US imperialist intervention in Venezuela or elsewhere. There can be no support given to the reactionary right-wing opposition in Venezuela. It is the challenge facing the Venezuelan working class to find a road to fight imperialist aggression, oppose the capitalist right wing and establish a genuine democratic socialist government of the workers and poor. Such a workers' government can offer a solution to the catastrophe affecting Venezuelan society, including an appeal to the masses throughout Latin America and the US for support and solidarity.





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.

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

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

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.

- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

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

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

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Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- 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.

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Young Socialist Party members 'Rock out fascism' in Doncaster



TOM COLLINS SOUTH YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Eight weeks prior to our gig, 'Rock Out Fascism', when planning first started, it would have soothed our nerves to know of the success our efforts would culminate in. The organisers had the full support of South Yorkshire Socialist Party, including with leafletting efforts and social media promotion.

We sold 111 tickets to watch six heavy-metal bands play at a local venue in Doncaster. The event was organised primarily by two young members, Isobelle and Dan; they also kicked off the event performing their own music!

I was asked to get up on stage and speak briefly to introduce the event, and to use this platform to talk about the issues facing young people. I spoke on the Labour Party and Reform neglecting the issues that are important to us. Young people need to organise, to all shout together in unison, a voice so loud as to be heard by people with their fingers most firmly jammed in their ears!

I spoke about Labour's tuition fees hike for already struggling

students, the cruel attacks on minorities including transgender people, Reform's climate scepticism and net-zero hostility, and Keir Starmer's complicity in the Gaza genocide. All were met by cheers from the crowd of young people.

People are receptive to our anti-austerity, socialist message! I explained that the current parties in parliament were all far more interested in short-term profits for the bosses than the youth, and that a socialist alternative is necessary.

The bands were great (a few even threw in their own quite flavourful anti-fascist remarks), and the majority of the attendees signed up to get more information. Socialist Party members in South Yorkshire considered the gig a unanimous success. Everybody else seemed to have enjoyed themselves too.

We all agree that we should consider doing something similar in the future. Next time, without making people sit through a series of lectures, we will aim to have more, brief speakers between bands, explaining why a fight for socialist change is needed, and appeal for those there to join us!

Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate or call **020 8988 8777**
- or make cheques payable to Socialist Party, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT



THE BIG SOCIALIST QUIZ OF 2025

1. In January, which leader and now-boyfriend of Katy Perry resigned as prime minister of his country?

2. The same month, whose mug graced the front page of the Socialist, under the headline 'Capitalism's future', as he re-entered office?

3. At the start of his second term, President Trump tasked Elon Musk, the world's richest man, with sacking thousands of federal workers and cutting millions of dollars in government 'waste'. What was it called?

4. Who, it was revealed, received freebies including Taylor Swift tickets and VIP access to the World Darts Championship?

5. A mass student movement forced the resignation of the prime minister of which European country?

6. What is "not just interesting, but a vital tool" according to a writer in the Socialist?

7. Supporters of which Premier League football club have featured in the pages of the Socialist in their successful fight to keep concessionary tickets?

8. Socialist Party member Marco Tesi was elected to the EC of which union in March?

9. "I hate musicals!" wrote one reviewer in the Socialist. But a production of which piece of theatre, starring a Socialist Party member, changed his mind?

10. April marked the 40th anniversary of school students' strikes led by Labour Party Young Socialists, in which young Militant (the Socialist Party's predecessor) supporters played

the leading role. How many took to the streets in 1985?

11. Issue 1319 of the Socialist was a bumper one. We featured the obituary of Peter Taaffe, international Trotskyist theoretician and fighter for socialism, who we sadly lost this year. And showing the reach and authority of the newspaper and party he helped build, we once again featured a 12-page May Day Greetings pullout. How much did we raise from the movement to support the workers' press?

12. How many people were enthused by the call by Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sultana and signed up to 'Your Party' in the summer?

13. What month did Donald Trump arrive on a state visit to be greeted by Socialist Students organised walkouts and other protests against him?

14. A worker from which car plant, left in limbo following a cyberattack, spoke to the Socialist?

15. A new mural has been painted in Plumstead, south London, with Socialist Party members at its unveiling, what does it commemorate?

16. 'Privatisation leeches £___ off us - we need socialist nationalisation' was a headline in the Socialist in September. Fill in the blank.

17. Workers in which country went on strike in

solidarity with the struggle against the war in Gaza?

18. The Socialist Party's longest-standing member turned 90 this year and was interviewed in the Socialist saying: "Ideas! They keep the mind working. That's what keeps you alive and working with like-minded, self-sacrificing comrades in a disciplined, well-organised revolutionary group or party". Who is it?

19. A trade union conference pledged to support only candidates and parties that will stand up for the working class in October, where?

20. The Socialist defended Friedrich Engels, socialist and co-thinker of Karl Marx, from attack by?

21. Socialism 2025 showed that "armed with socialist ideas, we can change the world!" A fantastic weekend of discussion and debate culminated in an electric rally that raised how much money for the Socialist Party's fighting fund?

22. Zohran Mamdani became the mayor of which city, showing the popularity of socialist ideas?

23. What is the name of the AI actress who was revealed this year that prompted a heavy backlash from the acting community including one actor writing in the Socialist?

24. What name has been given to the multiple youth-led protests around the world this year?

25. Which group of workers have been on strike for most of 2025, fighting a Labour council over pay and job cuts?

Find the answers opposite to see how many you got right...



- 1. Justin Trudeau
- 2. Department of Government Efficiency, or DGE for short
- 3. Department of Government
- 4. MPs, as Jim Bowen used to say, you can't beat a bit of Bully!
- 5. Serbia. The movement sparked by a collapsed roof at a railway station continues
- 6. The Socialist newspaper itself!
- 7. West Ham United
- 8. The University and College Union (UCU), joining Duncan Moore who was elected last year
- 9. Made in Dagenham
- 10. A quarter of a million
- 11. Over £9,500. Onwards to £10k in 2026!
- 12. 800,000
- 13. September. Apparently the spread at the banquet at Windsor Castle was nationalisation
- 14. Jaguar Land Rover. We call for
- 15. The successful, militant-led fight against Thatcher's poll tax
- 16. £200 billion!
- 17. Italy
- 18. Keith Dickinson
- 19. Wales
- 20. The Guardian
- 21. Over £66,765,25. Thanks to all who donated and remember to get your pledges in!
- 22. New York
- 23. Tilly Norwood
- 24. Gen Z protests
- 25. Birmingham refuse workers. Victory to the Brum bin workers!

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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

**THE SYSTEM
IS RIGGED FOR
THE RICH**

**FIGHT FOR
SOCIALIST
CHANGE!**



PAUL MATTSSON

DEAN YOUNG
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

We live in an incredibly unequal society. The wealthiest 0.001% alone, fewer than 60,000 multi-millionaires (and billionaires), control three times more wealth than half of humanity combined. Outrageous, but not particularly a surprise for working-class people living that reality daily. It is one of the findings in the recently published 'World Inequality Report'.

The speculation of the bankers leading to the Great Recession in 2008, the dodgy Covid contracts handed out to Tory donors from 2020-21, the greed of the energy companies and their price gouging in 2022-23, the list goes on... All are symptoms of the capitalist system which places the greed of very few ahead of the needs of the working class in Britain and worldwide.

The report is filled with stats, some more useful than others. One which is worth sharing is that the richest 1% create 41% of global greenhouse gas emissions, further proving that the problem of climate change is one the mega-wealthy exacerbate. Climate catastrophe can only be avoided if the economy is planned democratically, taking into account the needs of the natural world, rather than plundering it in search of short-term profits!

The report's mission statement says what it thinks is needed is "global cooperation" on the basis of "progressive taxation", among other things. Socialists support taxing the super-rich, even tax rises that are modest by historical standards could raise billions to fund free university education for all who would like to study, including with living maintenance grants, for example.

But the bosses won't just willingly hand over a bigger share of their wealth stolen from the working class; it is struggles of the working class and young people that can force it out of them. The capitalist bosses are in fierce competition with each other for bigger profits. In fact, far from "global cooperation", the world is heading in the direction of more and deeper conflicts and wars.

The report's summary concludes by saying that "inequality is a political choice. It is the result of our policies, institutions and governance structures." This we would not disagree with. But the solution is not just to increase taxes on the wealthy. Instead we need to end the capitalist system which creates such wealth inequality!

We need a system that serves the global majority of workers and poor, not the bosses and mega-corporations. That system is socialism, based on nationalisation of the huge wealth and resources that exist, to begin the planning of a world that can unleash the potential of humanity and end the chaos of capitalism. A system in which the economy is democratically planned on the basis of human need, not the greed of the 0.001%!