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the Socialist

Issue 1351

15-21 January 2026

formerly **Militant**

DEAL A BLOW TO STARMER'S LABOUR

Prepare the biggest possible anti-cuts stand in May

MILA HUGHES
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Councils of all shades are yet again preparing budgets that slash services, close libraries and hike charges, with the familiar excuse that their 'hands are tied'. Tied only by their complete unwillingness to stand up to what the 'profit before people' system demands!

In Coventry, Socialist Party members and Your Party supporters are helping to build for a people's budget - a fighting

manifesto that starts from what communities actually need, not what Labour says is 'affordable'. That includes organisations such as CRASAC (Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre) whose funding recently got slashed, campaigners that argue against library closures and many others.

A people's budget exposes the lie that councils must act as 'little Tory chancellors' so as to not rock the boat. It demands the use of reserves, borrowing powers and a mass campaign to force the government to cough up the money that has been stolen from our areas.

These coming elections in May will show huge disdain towards Labour. In the big cities, it will be the first time the working class has gone to the polls since Starmer's government began its attacks on us over eighteen months ago. We need the biggest possible stand, pointing towards the new party of the working class that is needed. Socialist candidates fighting for decent jobs, council homes and re-opened local services.

Across the country, people are looking for an alternative. Trade unionists facing real-terms pay cuts, young people locked out of jobs and housing, and campaigners against racism, sexism, Trump, war and climate destruction - all know the current system is failing. What's missing is political representation that actually fights on the side of the working class.

That's why the task now is to fight for a clear, anti-cuts socialist stand. We need a mass working-class party rooted in our real needs - democratic, accountable, and prepared to take on the bosses, not manage austerity with a friendlier face.

In May, voters have the chance to land a real blow against Starmer's Labour. Not by drifting towards dead-end, establishment-backed parties, including those who try to divide the working class and our communities. Instead, by backing socialist candidates who will refuse to make cuts and lead a united fightback for the fully funded services and council homes we need.



PHIL MATSON

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Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.

The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

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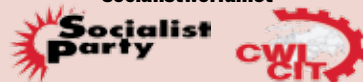
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The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International socialistparty.org.uk socialistworld.net



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ISSN 1366-9621

Published by Socialist Publications, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office
Printed by trade union labour at Reach Printing Services

Militant issue 1: October 1964
The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997

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



MARY FINCH

Workers face new year's debt crisis Fight for a socialist alternative

RAE COX
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

Workers across the country have been feeling the squeeze of the ever-present cost-of-living crisis this winter. Debt advice charity StepChange had "3,958 visitors on Christmas Day, and 15,401 on New Year's Eve and 1 January combined." While the Debt Justice campaign reported a 300% increase in outstanding council tax since 2014, now totalling £8.3 billion. And with the backdrop of growing global instability, many will fear the cost of energy could spike dramatically, as we saw at the outbreak of the Ukraine war.

After years of cuts and underinvestment, the UK economy is practically stagnant with it growing by a paltry 0.1% last autumn. Some analysis predicts no growth at all occurred at the end of 2025! What this means is the bosses will try tightening our belts, with wage restraint at best and job losses at worst, all as prices continue to rise. Many workers have turned in the short term to borrowing and debt to make ends meet, with credit card debt growing at its fastest rate in the past two years this winter.

And Labour's answer? Their hopes are banked on more private investment. But most of the bosses are largely uninterested in the tiny stagnating UK economy, and the rest are demanding deeper cuts and further

attacks on workers' living standards. No wonder Labour is historically unpopular, but with £91 billion of pledged cuts in his first 100 days if Nigel Farage becomes prime minister, Reform would be no alternative either.

Only the fighting working class can change this. Workers in Unite alone have won back £620 million by taking action since 2021. The May elections will be a key chance for workers to make electoral gains too, with local councils still responsible for over 800 services and functions. Bringing services back in-house, building more council housing and fighting to reverse a decade of austerity would go a long way in reducing workers' bills.

But under capitalism, any gains workers win will be under threat from the bosses who try and maximise their profits. We need a socialist society to make these gains permanent. To take into the top 150 companies and the banking system and run them under democratic working-class control and management. To massively expand public services and renationalise what has been lost. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, environmentally sustainable council housing.

If you want to fight for a socialist world then join the Socialist Party today.

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Bosses' high pay bonanza

Fight for £15 an hour min now!

Like death and taxes (although often not taxes for those concerned in this item), a new year and new damning inequality statistics.

The average FTSE 100 CEO earnings surpassed the median UK workers' salary by lunchtime on 6 January. The High Pay Centre estimates an equivalent wage of £1,353.23 an hour, assuming they 'work' 62.5 hours a week. Wouldn't it be nice to pretend to be working while eating a slap-up dinner or 'networking' on the golf course?

Don't worry, some of these fat cats want others to get their share too. Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary isn't happy with the calibre of capitalist politicians either. He thinks that, to 'attract the best talent',

"If you're a PM or cabinet minister you should be paid £1million a year".

Actually, they already do very well indeed. The last PM, Rishi Sunak, made £2.2 million in the financial year 2022-23, mostly from investment funds. Boris Johnson made an estimated £5 million in his first year out of Number 10. 'Poor' old Liz Truss hasn't done quite so well. But she did get paid £80,000 for a single speech in Taiwan after being ousted.

The demand for a £15-an-hour minimum wage now, with no exemptions, sounds pretty modest in comparison. And yet the Labour government hasn't even done that. Trade unions have to get organised to fight for it and more!

Student cost of living crisis: fight for full funding not fees

BECCA BAYMAN
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

As a new semester begins, millions of students in higher education continue to face the brunt of the cost-of-living crisis. Maintenance loans fall short of covering basic living costs, leaving many students struggling to meet essential expenses.

For most students, rent is the biggest cost. Student housing companies and private landlords drive up rents year on year, and the quality of the housing only gets worse. In many cities, students pay through the nose for small rooms in cramped, unsafe, and poorly maintained houses.

After rent, many students are forced to take on multiple part-time jobs to afford the rest, which has a direct impact on grades and well-being. The rising cost of groceries means students skip meals to save money. Financial pressure also has an impact on students' mental health. Surveys show that 78% of students experience significant stress as a result of financial worries. Students are cutting back on

socialising and extracurricular activities because they cannot afford to take part.

Furthermore, tuition fees will continue to rise every year, amounting to over £10,000 by the end of this government. This is a result of Starmer's Labour government refusing to fund higher education, blaming the financial instability of universities on the previous tuition fee cap to justify forcing the costs onto millions of students.

Therefore, the frustration of students and young people must be directed into organising a socialist fightback. Socialist Students groups are organising demonstrations, supporting striking workers on pickets, and building support for socialist ideas on campuses. Socialist Students calls for fully funded, free education, instead of more fees and cuts.

- **If you agree, come and discuss the next steps for Socialist Students, and the student fightback in 2026! For more information see page 11**



MARY FINCH

Primary school application deadline passed Fight for fully funded, quality education for all



Teachers on strike during the 2022-23 strike wave
PAUL MATTSOON

Elon's AI used for sexual harassment Take big tech out of billionaire hands

SMITH SAMSON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

In a meeting with his tech employees, billionaire Elon Musk expressed his frustration with the 'guardrails' that had been placed on X's - formerly Twitter - AI bot Grok. Despite workers' reservations, the already limited safeguards were turned off in order to, in the eyes of Musk, unleash its full potential. The result was the replies of users being flooded with AI-generated pornographic images of themselves in states of undress and in compromising positions.

Unsurprisingly, the most affected users have been women, laying forth the rampant misogyny which exists unchecked on the platform. When users reported the posts, X's content moderation team replied, saying no policies had been breached and it would not remove any of the nonconsensual pornographic content. Things came to a head when it was revealed that paedophiles had started using Grok to make images of underage children.

X is under pressure to prevent the

from having their images repurposed by AI into graphic content. The only way real change can occur is through democratic public ownership of these big tech companies and control of their products, like AI and social media, by the working class. Big business will continue to propagate the worst the internet has to offer because they profit off of it, and the vast majority of us have no say how new technology is used. Tech workers getting organised in their trade unions could play a powerful role. Workers can stand up to the bosses and say they will not work on any technology, which creates so much harm when they know collective strength is backing their actions.

What will Starmer do?

Keir Starmer's response to the scandal was one of disgust combined with inaction. He said that X needed to "get a grip" and the government has now urged regulator Ofcom to look into X's AI tool. Much hand-wringing has been made by right-wing online commentators who say Ofcom may ban X in the UK, but the regulator's past inadequate responses to scandals embroiling social media companies suggest its reaction will be lacklustre. Trump has already threatened the EU with sanctions if it takes steps towards regulating US tech giants. Once again, Starmer is likely to submit to the forces of US capital and fail to protect women and children

BEA GARDNER
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

This week, hundreds of thousands of parents have submitted school applications for their children to start reception in September 2026. They now face a nervous wait until April, when they will find out if their child has been offered a place in their 'preferred' school.

Even though the number of children starting primary schools is falling, so far this has not resulted in less competition over places. Last year, fewer children were offered places at their preferred schools.

Where I live in Waltham Cross, our first and second preference schools, both within walking distance from our home, had 112 applications to 60 places and the other 67 applications for 30. When we looked around the schools, we saw classrooms clearly built to accommodate 20, over-packed with 30 children.

Pushed out

That's because more and more families have been pushed out of London due to sky-high rents and costs of living. Many have been forced to move outside of the city to places like ours. In fact, London councils forecast a 3.6% fall in reception pupil numbers over the next four years. That's around 3,195 children; roughly a drop of 117 reception classes.

Every child should have access to a high-quality school, in the area they live. And their families should be able to afford to keep living there! Shockingly, 1 in 5 of the children in London that started in reception had left the capital by the time they reached year 6.

The application system gives the illusion of choice. Yet, we have no genuine choice over what really matters, including funding. Schools are funded per pupil, so fewer places means

less funding, exacerbating existing pressures. In London, local authorities are proposing to close and merge schools altogether. In fact, there are now 23 fewer schools in London than in 2020.

Instead, falling overall numbers could mean reducing class sizes. We could have higher staff-to-child ratios, meaning more 1:1 time for kids and a lower workload for teachers. Instead, it is the opposite.

The existing system reinforces inequality between schools, as well as for individual children. The best performing schools are always over-subscribed, they can budget for the maximum funding in the per pupil formulas.

Plus, they have fewer 'disadvantaged' children, who may need additional support resources. That's because those on lower incomes can't afford the house prices or rents closest to the best-performing schools. Even when they are in the catchment area, it often comes down to distance from the school. It's no wonder that in the 'worst performing' school near us, around half the children are classified as 'disadvantaged'. Education should be a means by which to lessen inequality, not make it worse. Not in this system!

The National Education Union is set to carry out an indicative ballot of its members on the issue of pay and funding. We will be right behind them if they take action to defend education. And we will be doing our part to fight for a socialist political alternative to Starmer's Labour, helping to build an anti-cuts stand in May's local elections.

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



Elon Musk GAGE SKIDMORE/CC

LETTER TO YOUR PARTY, FROM THE SOCIALIST PARTY

A request for clarification on CEC election rules

The following letter was sent on 7 January to the interim leadership of Your Party, the Independent Alliance MPs, including Jeremy Corbyn, as well as to Zarah Sultana MP. As we go to press, the Socialist Party has so far received no response.

Dear comrades,

I am writing to you, on behalf of the Socialist Party, to seek confirmation that members of our party are eligible to stand in the elections to Your Party's Central Executive Committee (CEC). A number of our members, including Dave Nellist in the West Midlands, are considering putting themselves forward, but would like to have the rules clarified before doing so.

As you know, Socialist Party members have been enthusiastic advocates for, and participants in, the development of Your Party at local and national level from the early pre-discussions to today. We have assumed that our members would be allowed to stand in the elections for the first democratically chosen leadership body of the new party. However, we read in the 'Who can stand' section in the CEC election rules, circulated on 23 December 2025, that: "For the avoidance of doubt, members of other political parties shall not be permitted to stand for election. Per the constitutional amendment passed at Your Party's conference, dual membership of Your Party and any other national political party is not permitted until the CEC approves specific national parties as aligning with the Party's values, before ratification by conference."

Clearly we, along with the vast majority of members of Your Party, would be opposed to members of pro-capitalist political parties being eligible for dual membership. However, we are assuming that organisations such as ourselves, who wholeheartedly agree with Your Party's aspiration, summarised in its founding statement, to build a "democratic, member-led socialist party" with the "working class at its heart", are welcomed as part of Your Party.

This was certainly the mood of the majority of the members who took part in the vote on the issue during the founding conference. 69.2% of the 8,947 who voted agreed that Your Party "members shall be permitted to hold membership in other national political parties where they have been approved by the CEC as aligning with the Party's values, to include those with whom the Party cooperates electorally. The approved list shall be subject to ongoing CEC review and annual ratification by National Conference." The only other option selected for members to vote

on was "that members may not hold membership of any other national party", which was overwhelmingly rejected.

However, the interpretation of the members' decision in the CEC Election rules appears closer to the defeated "no dual membership" proposal than what was actually passed. Nowhere was it agreed that membership of other political parties "shall not be permitted" until CEC proposals were ratified by the next conference, but rather that dual membership would be permitted, with the CEC approving a list of parties that align with Your Party's values, which would be subject to annual ratification by the conference. Given that the CEC does not yet exist, surely all Your Party members, including those who are also members of other left parties, should be allowed to contest these first CEC elections, provided they are in good standing?

We hope that you are able to confirm that this is the case, and that the election will be run on the inclusive lines clearly favoured by the big majority of Your Party members.

Of course there are some, a small minority judging by the conference votes, who believe that Socialist Party members should be welcome in Your Party only if they leave the Socialist Party or, better still, that the Socialist Party agrees to dissolve into Your Party. However, in our view this is a profoundly mistaken standpoint, revealing a lack of understanding about what approach is required to bring the mass workers' party that is needed into being. Even if there were currently no different trends within Your Party, which is patently not the case, attempts to impose from above political uniformity on Your Party's membership would be doomed to failure.

A top-down approach, banning different political trends arguing for their ideas within the broader framework of the party, could result in this new party being stillborn, as was the case with Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, for example, notwithstanding his authority in the movement. And if, as we are all working towards, Your Party was to make serious gains, political debate and discussion will be absolutely inevitable, no matter what the rules. Can anyone seriously imagine Your Party dealing with the political challenges



Jeremy Corbyn (centre) joins a protest outside 1991 Labour Party conference in Brighton, against Dave Nellist (right) and Terry Fields' (left) expulsion from the Labour Party. PHOTO: MILITANT

“ Socialist Party members take extremely seriously the struggle to build a new, broad mass workers' party, and strive to work together in a common struggle with all other forces who want to achieve this, whatever other political differences we may have

Dave Nellist

Dave Nellist was Labour MP for Coventry South-East from 1983 to 1992, and a supporter of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor. While in office Dave took the average wage of a skilled worker in the city, the level of which was determined by the city's trade union movement.

Acting in defiance of Thatcher's Poll Tax, with millions of others led by the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, in which Militant and Militant-supporting MPs played a central role, he refused to pay.

Dave was expelled from membership of the Labour Party in 1991, while serving as MP, as part of the right-wing witch-hunt against socialists.

Dave also served as a Coventry city councillor for St Michael's ward from 1998 to 2012.

Today, Dave is a member of the Socialist Party National Committee and chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

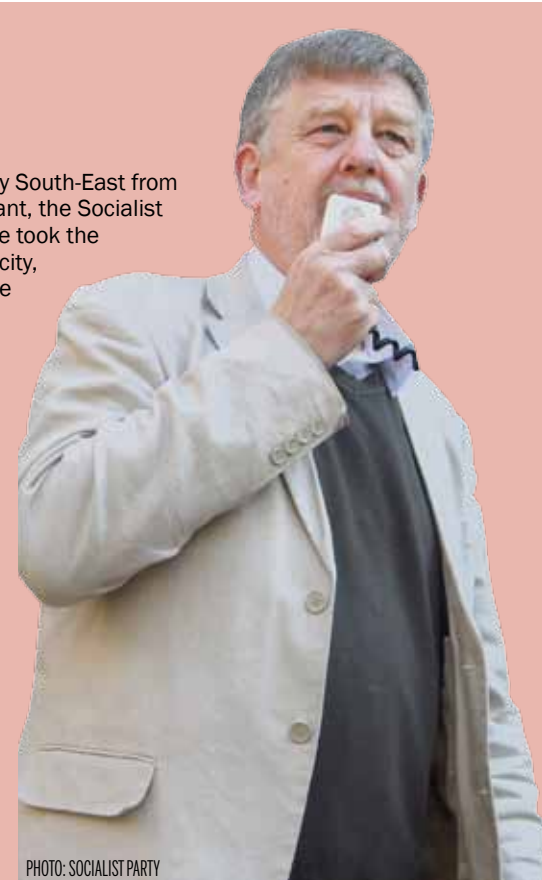


PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

ahead - from how to fight the cuts at local authority level to how a Your Party government could defeat the sabotage of the capitalist class and implement socialist policies - with-out trenchant political debates?

Some may respond by saying 'yes, but those debates should just be between individuals, not organised trends', but this is also totally unrealistic. Individuals who share a common position will inevitably start to organise to argue for it, and it will be vital for them to do so, because it is absolutely clear from history in Britain and internationally that, if Your Party takes off, pro-capitalist forces will join in order to try and move it to the right, attempting to make sure it is no threat to the existing order. When Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour leader, the pro-capitalist forces were already dominating the party machine, but it would be naïve to imagine that similar attempts at sabotage won't take place in a new party. To say that should only be countered from the top of Your Party, rather than via democratic organisation and debate at the base, would be certain to hand victory to the pro-capitalist 'moderates'.

Of course, it is possible to accept

these arguments about debates and organised trends inevitably developing in the future, but to still argue that Socialist Party members and others have to 'leave their organisations at the door' in order to be allowed to participate in Your Party. But this would be to take a dishonest approach to Your Party and its members.

We, along with our co-thinkers internationally, have a developed programme and approach to the struggle for socialism. It is based on the historical experience of the working class summed up in the ideas of Marxism, and on our party's own experience in class struggle over more than six decades, first as Militant and now as the Socialist Party, including in leading two mass struggles that successfully defeated the Thatcher government, in Liverpool City Council and the poll tax.

Today, we have a sizeable base in the trade union movement, and also play a leading role on the university campuses. Our resources - including our weekly newspaper and monthly magazine - have been built by the dedication and self-sacrifice of our members who see our programme as vital to the working class carrying out

a successful struggle for socialism. Would it not insult the intelligence of Your Party members if experienced fighters for the working class now suddenly 'renounced' their history and ideas to join Your Party only as individuals? Dave Nellist did not do so in 1991, when it was a matter of remaining as a Labour MP, a stand supported by Jeremy Corbyn at the time. Nor did many other Militant supporters with positions in the Labour and trade union movement.

Socialist Party members take extremely seriously the struggle to build a new, broad mass workers' party, and strive to work together in a common struggle with all other forces who want to achieve this, whatever other political differences we may have. As an organisation, we fight for every step forward for the workers' movement, and have been campaigning for a new party since Tony Blair transformed Labour into New Labour, as a vital means of strengthening the cohesion and confidence of the working class. When Jeremy Corbyn was Labour leader, we saw an opportunity for Labour to be transformed into a workers' party, applying to affiliate to Labour in order to assist in that struggle. Following Starmer's victory within Labour we have welcomed every step towards a new party, not least Your Party which, at its inception, clearly had the potential to be a decisive step

towards what is needed.

Nor can it be argued that Socialist Party members are unwilling to abide by the democratic decisions of broader workers' organisations of which we are part. On the contrary, we have demonstrated consistently in our long history in the trade unions and labour movement that we do so, working alongside other forces to further the immediate interests of the working class. We have also shown that in our work in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) where we have collaborated with various other forces over fifteen years in order to help provide an inclusive electoral banner under which workers' candidates, from different organisations or none, can contest elections on an anti-austerity programme.

We look forward to our members continuing to prove our constructive approach in practice, as they work as part of Your Party, and we look forward to your confirmation that this includes our members' rights to take part in the elections to the CEC. In taking this approach, Your Party will be adopting the best traditions of the workers' movement in Britain, which involved Marxist organisations from the beginning.

Yours in solidarity,
Hannah Sell
Socialist Party general secretary
On behalf of the Socialist Party

For a fighting socialist stand in May's elections

Socialist Party members are fighting for the strongest possible socialist stand in this May's elections. Millions will go to the polls to express their anger at Starmer's Labour government. They should not be left without an option that points towards the party of the working class that is needed.

If you are a trade unionist, young person or campaigner, determined to fight against Labour's austerity policies, and to offer an alternative to Reform UK's divide-and-rule policies serving the rich bosses, then why not stand?



Private companies to cut jobs at HMRC offices – fight to bring contracts in-house!

JP ROSSER
PCS HMRC GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

What does 'next generation facilities management' mean for government departments under Starmer's Labour? It means public money used for private profit, amid a backlog of repairs, temporary office closures, and staff resignations.

In May 2025, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC – the government tax and customs authority) moved from multiple private contracts for 'facilities management' (FM) to one contract for the west of the UK, awarded to Sodexo, and one contract for the east of the UK, awarded to Mitie.

The new contracts bring together 'hard FM' – maintenance and repairs, with 'soft FM' – cleaning, reception, catering etc. This was supposed to deliver savings for HMRC.

It does appear that the winning bids from Sodexo and Mitie came in at a lower cost. But cheaper is rarely better.

On 'hard FM', key performance indicators aren't being met. Statutory requirements aren't being completed. Without statutory safety of offices, they have to be closed to staff. HMRC is then left paying rent on buildings it can't use.

Other repairs are mounting up too – broken doors, cracked windows, fallen ceiling tiles, broken taps,

broken toilets, faulty plug sockets – the list goes on.

On 'soft FM', standards are barely met or not met. This isn't the fault of the hard-working staff – they are doing as much as humanly possible, but are expected to deliver the impossible. Due to cuts to headcount and hours, the workload is too much.

Turning taxpayer money into profit

The only winners are the companies siphoning taxpayer money into shareholder dividends.

Even this isn't enough for Sodexo and Mitie. Sodexo is seeking to make soft FM staff redundant across all the sites it has responsibility for. Rubbing salt into the wound, the redundancy consultation was conducted in December. What kind of Christmas did Sodexo staff have?

There's mounting evidence that Sodexo is ignoring its own redundancy policy and possibly employment law as well. And now Mitie has made the disgraceful decision to make its own cuts.

Neither company recognises the PCS union and both refuse to engage.

PCS has raised concerns with HMRC management – ie representatives of the Labour government. But HMRC says these cuts are a matter for the private contractors and it won't intervene.

Time and again, HMRC has entered into contracts with the private sector that don't deliver benefits. Whether it's Mapeley, Concentrix,

Fujitsu, Sodexo or Mitie, the private sector is a parasite on the public sector.

This Labour government stood on a manifesto that included the words: "Labour will bring about the biggest wave of in-sourcing of public services in a generation". This manifesto promise – like many others – has been ignored.

Broad Left Network strategy

The PCS Broad Left Network, in which Socialist Party members participate, is putting forward a strategy for the PCS HMRC group executive:

- Publicly call on HMRC to end the contracts and bring services in-house. Current staff at Sodexo and Mitie offices should be offered roles in HMRC, on the pay, terms and conditions negotiated by PCS for all HMRC staff

- While the FM contracts remain in place, PCS must organise to seek recognition rights with Sodexo and Mitie

- Every PCS branch in HMRC needs to campaign to recruit the FM staff into PCS

- Every PCS branch should organise meetings of HMRC and FM members, to fully brief members, and gather their views and fighting ideas

Let's build up a fight to defend all jobs and services in HMRC.

PCS members at the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) on strike 12.15 January against the 2% 'lowest pay rise in the public sector' – considerably less than Labour mayor Sadiq Khan got himself BERKAV KARTAV



PCS national elections

Nominations run from 15 January to 5 March for election to the PCS National Executive Committee and group executives, including HMRC.

Socialist Party and Broad Left Network members are seeking nomination to stand, alongside others in the union who want to see change.

We desperately need a leadership that is prepared to stand up to Starmer's government and fight to defend jobs, services and pay.

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with the NSSN bulletin
shopstewards.net

Newham school strike over workload



Part of the big picket JAMES IVENS

JAMES IVENS
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Members of the National Education Union (NEU) at Little Ilford School in Newham were out on the picket line on 8 January. The strike was of teachers and support staff together, over workload.

The head has responded to falling funding by cutting preparation time, insisting on internal cover instead of supply staff, plus other measures.

It was a huge picket line, in the fine tradition built by Newham NEU. The school was all but closed – a few students went in but very few staff.

The mood was really confident. One picket told me that alternative measures the union group wants, described as "not possible" by the head, in light of the strike are suddenly described by management as possible.

At time of writing, negotiations were continuing and two days strike action were taking place this week.

Leeds council transport workers strike over conditions



LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

ALI MANSFIELD
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Facing an unsafe working environment after cuts to funding, Unite members at Leeds council transport service have taken strike action. The service provides school transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as transport for medical services.

Drivers have been given no means to access safety-critical information on passengers' needs and behavioural issues. One striker reported having been punched and kicked while at work within the week preceding the strike, with

others recounting incidents of service users being hurt due to a lack of appropriate safety equipment. Office support staff also face pressure due to understaffing.

Despite all this, workers have been told the situation won't be addressed until at least April, due to the lack of funding from Labour-led Leeds council. This shows again the need to prepare a bold anti-austerity stand at the May elections, with councillors prepared to put forward needs-based budgets which would protect vital services like the transport service, mobilising a coordinated struggle in the workers' movement.

UCU further education strike: 'No pay rise, cuts, and the daily grind'

DAVID KAPLAN
UCU REP AT WM COLLEGE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

University and College Union (UCU) members at WM College in Camden will be taking part in the national strike action for pay parity on 14-16 January.

We are an adult education college, and as such we have had to face a real cut in funding from central and local government.

Funding

This year, my college faced a double whammy of cuts: a 6% cut in funding from the Labour government and a 3% cut in regional funding. Despite our college being in his constituency, the large number of letters from our principal to Keir Starmer have not persuaded him to properly fund our sector.

We are taking action because we desperately need more funding for our college. Management's proposal of no pay rise but two additional day's holiday was rejected by UCU



Capital City College SARAH SACHS ELDORIDGE

members. Our demands include more funding to make sure that any pay rise doesn't come with strings attached – either increased workload or cuts in jobs or provision.

Casualisation

The majority of our tutors are sessional: they are on flexible contracts and are paid for each hour they teach. They have just as many administrative duties to carry out as permanent tutors but aren't paid for that. The union needs to take up a determined campaign against the casualisation of teaching in our college.

The mood of staff was buoyed by the London UCU lobby of parliament on 19 November, to raise the need for more funding for adult education ahead of the Budget. Over 100 staff and students attended the lobby, most participating in a demonstration for the first time.

But the proposal for no pay rise, coming after a number of redundancies in the summer, further angered everyone. And all of this at the same

time as the daily grind of admin tasks, which staff feel serve no real purpose.

Adult education has such far-reaching benefits but is the easiest sector to cut. Staff feel they have a huge amount to contribute, given the funding and opportunity. All of this has fanned the flames for strike action.

● After the three days of strike, the UCU Further Education Committee will discuss next steps. Socialist Party members will argue for an escalating campaign

● At the end of January, voting opens in the UCU National Executive Committee elections. It is a vital opportunity to strengthen the numbers of those on the national and further education committees who want to build a serious fightback. Vote to re-elect Socialist Party member Duncan Moore in the UK-elected FE seat

Victory to the Lea Interchange bus strikers!

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

On 9 and 10 January, bus drivers at Lea Interchange garage in east London were on strike again against victimisation of Unite reps.

In the run-up, it was reported that management were looking to bring in bus drivers from outside to try to break the strike, in a blatant attempt to maintain bullying management in the bus garage, and hold down wages.

But the workforce stood strong. The strikers only spotted one driver from their own depot working during the rush hour, the rest were managers, some other Stagecoach employees who weren't part of the ballot, and some drivers sent from other depots. Strikers told us that bosses had been desperately trying to get those people up to speed on the routes, but on the strike days there was a garage full of unused buses.

Bosses' strike-breaking efforts can be defeated

Pickets were inspired to hear that in the year-long Birmingham bin strike, Unite has recruited agency workers brought in by management to undermine the strike, and many of these have joined the action.

The whole trade union movement must come to the aid of the bus workers. The Lea Interchange Unite reps, Waltham Forest Trades Council and Socialist Party members have been working hard to make contact with other garages and build solidarity among the trade union movement in the borough and among bus passengers.



In an example of the solidarity needed, members of Barts Health Trust Unite branch, including branch secretary Len Hockey (front, fourth from left), visited the bus strikers SOCIALIST PARTY



Addressing the pickets, one rep said: "The management say they haven't got the money [to settle our 2025 pay rise] but they've got plenty of money to pay people to do our job for us today. But there's not many – buses are still here in the garage."

A Unite branch organiser told strikers: "We send solidarity to the Cambridge Stagecoach drivers who are also on strike right now. Stagecoach is in trouble, because a lot of the garages are saying, 'Why aren't

we on strike too?' Drivers in Go Ahead, Metroline, they're watching. Unite members at Bow garage are now balloting.

"Across all these privatised companies you see the same thing: the bosses are trying to attack the leaders of the workplaces that stand up to the bosses on behalf of the workers."

Bringing solidarity from the National Shop Stewards Network, Rob Williams said: "It's no secret why they go for shop stewards, because if they discipline or suspend union reps they're trying to make the union weaker. But the opposite is true as well. Because you have been prepared to fight for your union reps, you're going to win a victory against

bullying management, and after that you're going to be in a better place to get the pay rise.

"Managers are trying to break the strike, but look at all the buses in the garage – they're not breaking this strike. Our answer is union solidarity."

Rob explained that he spoke to the driver of a bus that came out earlier, and said to her: "Have a look at the people on this side of the road. They're your friends. The management, they're not your friends. If they were your friends they'd have sorted the pay rise out in April."

Socialist Party member Linda Taaffe described the campaign of pensioners in both Waltham Forest and Hackney in support of the strike.

"We've given out 3,000 leaflets on the buses. We got on the buses and spoke to the drivers, and they all bar one took a leaflet. When we gave leaflets to the passengers they were all reading them. Several times I did a little pop-up meeting and addressed the passengers and talked about the bad management. They all knew what we meant – all workers face this every day of their lives."

A striker told Martin Reynolds: "The union is doing a very good job here. The union is ready to negotiate, but management are not listening. We all feel very disappointed getting treated like this by such a big company. We are the backbone of the company – without us, nothing moves."

Unite executive elections: Future of the union at stake

Nominations have opened for the Unite Executive Council elections.

The industrial and political approach of the union is at stake in these elections, which take place as Keir Starmer's Labour government steps up anti-working class austerity.

Socialist Party members are standing on the left 'Workers Unite' slate, that supports the manifesto on which Sharon Graham was elected as general secretary in 2021.

The slate includes fellow supporters of the Unite Broad Left, including:

- South West: sitting EC member Suzanne Muna
- London and Eastern: Len Hockey
- Construction, allied trades and technicians: Dave Walsh
- Community, youth workers and not-for-profit: Tanis Belsham-Wray
- LGBT+: John Williams
- Young members: Oisín Mulholland
- Local authorities: Kathy Smith

See the full list of candidates at backtotheworkplace.org

TONY SAUNOIS

SECRETARY OF COMMITTEE FOR WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

The kidnapping of Venezuelan President, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, through the military assault by US imperialism has, in a dramatic fashion, ushered in 2026. This naked colonial attack by the Trump regime will have profound consequences in Venezuela, throughout Latin America and in global geopolitical relations. This modern version of 'gun-boat diplomacy' starkly illustrates the nature of the era we are now in.

This was not the peaceful operation claimed by Trump and much of the Western media. Venezuelan forces claim most of Maduro's bodyguards were killed as they fought back during the operation. In addition, 32 Cuban fighters were also killed. The Venezuelan regime reports that over 100 were killed in the fighting. The crucial question is what follows now in Venezuela.

Trump's actions were preceded by imperial piracy, with Venezuelan oil seized at sea and the amassing of a US armada with 15,000 troops in the Caribbean.

Maduro, in his first court appearance, stated he regards himself as "a prisoner of war", which in many respects he is. The charges against him border on the ludicrous. The drug cartel he is accused of heading, 'Cartel de los Soles', branded a narco-terrorist organisation by the US, does not even exist as an organisation - in Venezuela it is an acronym for officials taking bribes! Maduro may or may not be corrupt or involved with drug cartels. However, that is a matter for the Venezuelan working class to judge and decide upon. Not US imperialism

desperate to get its hands on Venezuelan oil.

Trump gloatingly proclaimed the US will now "run" Venezuela and boasted US oil companies will seize Venezuela's oil, which he calls "our oil". He went on to threaten that the US was not afraid of a further invasion, or "boots on the ground" should the Venezuelan regime not comply with the dictates of US imperialism.

Trump's claim that this is about "democracy", echoed by other western capitalist leaders like UK prime minister Starmer, is farcical. Brazenly, Trump and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio have dismissed the idea of new elections in Venezuela until the US "has sorted it out". The previously lauded leaders of the Venezuelan right-wing opposition, like María Machado and Edmundo González, (recognised by Washington and others as the supposed winners of the 2024 Venezuelan presidential election), have for now been unceremoniously ditched because they are "lacking support".

Trump has openly and shamelessly laid claim to Venezuelan oil on behalf of US companies. Now he claims that he will seize fifty million barrels of Venezuelan crude and sell it on the open market. The revenue will be under his control and the funds raised can only be used to purchase US-produced goods! He blurs out the real intentions of US imperialism and brushes aside the sham hypocrisy of capitalist diplomacy, which is hated by sections of the US and other ruling classes globally. Western capitalist denunciations of Maduro as a dictator are echoed by a deafening silence about their 'allies' heading brutal dictatorships, like in Saudi Arabia.

This intervention, as Trump boasted, marks a return to the 'Monroe Doctrine' in a modern form. Declared



PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN



Trump monitors U.S. military operations in Venezuela, from Mar-a-Lago 3 January PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

by US president James Monroe in 1823, it asserted the right of US imperialism to intervene throughout Latin America in any way necessary to advance and protect its interests. Then, it was motivated to extend US influence throughout the Americas against continued European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Today, the 'Monroe Doctrine' is aimed at warning both China and Russia to keep out of what the US still regards as its 'backyard', despite the weakened position of US imperialism throughout the continent and globally.

Significantly, Maduro was meeting a Chinese trade delegation only hours before he was kidnapped. China is the largest purchaser of Venezuelan crude oil. The White House's National Security Strategy, released in December 2025, asserts the unilateral right of the US to deny rival powers the ability to own or control "strategically vital assets" in the Americas, and declares that the US should "make every effort to push out foreign companies that build infrastructure in the region", something that China has done rapidly in Latin America. Chinese goods trade with Latin America has grown forty times since the turn of the century to reach \$518 billion in 2024. Increasingly, Latin Americans are driving BYD cars, using Xiaomi smartphones, and ordering taxis and food from Didi rather than Uber.

The assertion of US imperial might has decisive implications beyond Venezuela and Latin America, in the new world geopolitical order. This has been reflected in the seizure of an oil tanker flying a Russian flag in the

Atlantic by US and UK forces. In the UK, Starmer is paying a price for his collusion with Trump and refusal to condemn the kidnapping of Maduro, with further divisions opening up in the ruling Labour Party as a result.

'Rules-based' order

The former so-called 'rules-based' international order of 'international law', which supposedly existed following the Second World War, presided over by capitalist bodies such as the United Nations, has been shredded. Yet even in the past the 'rules' were frequently broken by all the imperialist powers. Witness the interventions in Vietnam, Iraq, Iran and elsewhere. US imperialism has invaded or instigated military coups in almost every country in Latin and Central America.

However, in the new geopolitical situation, with weakened US and European imperialisms, mirrored by the rise of China and some other powers like India, greater consequences will flow from the new 'Monroe Doctrine'. After all, if the US can intervene to defend its interests in its 'backyard' why can't other powers like China, Russia, or India do the same? The scene is now set for further military conflicts globally and greater polarisation.

Some of those in Trump's circle refer to a desired goal of the contending powers holding spheres of influence - in effect carving up the world between the US, China, Russia and others, and with 'agreement', tacit or openly, of no interference in each other's spheres. In a globalised economy and multipolar, fractured world, this is wishful thinking. The redivision of

the world between imperialist powers will only bring more tensions, shifting alliances, conflicts and new wars.

The Trump regime now proclaims that it only wants "friendly" regimes on its borders. As a result, Trump rages against the Cuban regime, and the Colombian and Mexican Presidents threatening that they could face regime change if they fail to comply with the agenda determined by the White House and Pentagon.

The White House now brazenly states it is seriously looking at how it can take Greenland. It has done this historically. In 1946 it offered to buy Greenland from Denmark for \$100 million, an offer turned down by Denmark. Military occupation is apparently not being considered at this stage. An attack on Greenland, currently a Danish self-governing autonomous territory, would constitute the US attacking another member of the NATO alliance, threatening its existence, which Trump would not be concerned about. Trump will probably try to 'buy' Greenland, or back a campaign to bribe the population into agreeing to US investment and exploitation of its natural resources, but this could change.

Trump's demand for Greenland is already and will further split and increase the growing conflict between the EU and US. This is reflected in the official US policy outlined in the National Security Strategy document. These developments are also accumulating divisions and splits within the EU.

It was not an accident that Trump threatened intervention in Iran

should the regime continue repressing the significant mass protests that have erupted there in recent weeks. A further military attack on Iran cannot now be excluded.

Domestically, Trump is running into increasing problems, difficulties and crises. The mass "No Kings Day" protests in 2025 illustrate the growing opposition and disenchantment he faces domestically. The sizable protests against the intervention in Venezuela in the US are a further illustration of this. The execution by federal ICE paramilitaries in Minneapolis of Renee Nicole Good, and the protests that erupted as a result, illustrate the polarisation and conflicts taking place in the US. Trump faces the prospect of suffering serious setbacks in the upcoming midterm elections in November 2026.

One factor driving his turn to the Monroe Doctrine internationally at this juncture is precisely the domestic opposition and crisis that is unfolding.

In Latin America, large protests against US intervention have taken place in most countries. The continent and each country on it is extremely polarised, socially and politically. The governments of Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba and Chile (the outgoing government) have all condemned US intervention and demanded Maduro's return.

On the other side, Milei in Argentina, the new Chilean president Kast, and others have enthusiastically supported Trump. They, along with the ruling classes internationally, are using the situation in Venezuela to try

and discredit the idea of 'socialism'. This will be attempted in the US, particularly following the election victory of Zohran Mamdani as Mayor of New York. He presented himself as a "democratic socialist" despite wrongly remaining in the capitalist pro-imperialist Democratic Party. Despite the limitations of his programme, his election has put the idea of socialism back on the agenda for debate in the US.

Polarised world

The explosive events following US intervention in Venezuela are a reflection of the polarised geopolitical arena that global capitalism has fostered. The multipolar world and the existence of the highly erratic Trump regime, together with right-wing nationalist Bonapartist regimes like Putin's in Russia and Netanyahu's in Israel, is an explosive cocktail.

The struggle for economic and political spheres of influence on all continents means that this is an era of national, ethnic and regional wars and conflicts. The Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and other conflicts illustrate this. The clash between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Yemen in December 2025, narrowly averted, for now, a major war erupting between these two powers rather than the proxy war that is being fought.

The US bombing of Islamist bases in Nigeria has intensified the division and clashes within the country. Crucially, the prospect of a major clash involving China and Taiwan is ever-present in the situation. More serious conflicts than those already seen are likely.

Capitalism means war in this era. But not only military wars and conflict. Important features of the class war also emerged during 2025. In December 2025, millions took to the

streets in Portugal in the biggest general strike for decades. General strikes have also rocked Italy, Belgium, Greece and India. The mass protests that have shaken Iran in the last few days are also an indication of the struggles that lie ahead. The general strikes that have taken place at the moment have assumed the character of protest strikes rather than a struggle for power. Yet they have put the issue of the general strike back on the agenda of social and class struggle.

The prospect of a global economic recession or crash in 2026 is a serious possibility. This will have a decisive impact socially and politically. Combined with the geopolitical crisis and conflicts, the worsening climatic and environmental catastrophe that is unfolding, the development and introduction of AI, it can polarise the situation and consciousness still further. A layer can be drawn to right-wing populist forces for a period. Yet it will also have a radicalising effect to the left, on millions searching for an alternative social system.

The crucial challenge for the working class and revolutionary socialists is the need to build support for an alternative social system, socialism, and the programme and organisation necessary to achieve it. The struggle to build new mass socialist parties of the working class and all those oppressed by capitalism, together with the need for a revolutionary socialist programme, is now more urgent than ever. This era is to become a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution - between a socialist future or barbarism.

● This is a shortened version of the article 'Venezuela, Trump and a New Era of Imperialist Aggression', published online at socialistworld.net on 8 January 2026

Protesting against Trump during the youth walkout against Trump in Britain, September 2025 PHOTO: LIVERPOOL SP





Venezuela solidarity protests



Socialist Party members on protests

Leeds

Following a weekend that saw Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and first lady Cilia Flores, kidnapped by US forces; and a week that saw Israeli aggression towards Palestinians continue, despite the supposed October ceasefire being in effect; the need to vent rage and disdain towards this abhorrent behaviour at international level came in the form of a 'Hands Off Venezuela and Palestine' rally in Leeds.

Roughly 400 people gathered outside Leeds Art Gallery to show staunch opposition towards US-Israeli imperialist and colonialist aggression. Particular attention was paid to Heba Murasi and Kamran Ahmed, two hunger strikers currently at risk of death, imprisoned waiting for trial for their alleged

Reading

involvement in Palestine Action protests. Jeremy Corbyn attracted a slightly larger crowd than usual. He spoke of a weak international community, unable and unwilling to stand up for international law. He described how, unchallenged, US/Israeli aggression sets a dangerous precedent for the world we now live in. Corbyn called on solidarity with the working class in both Venezuela and Palestine, and indeed Colombia, Cuba and Mexico, all of whom have received flagrant threats from the US Trump administration.

As the speeches drew to an end, the march made its way around Leeds City centre, blazoned with flags and chanting slogans of support, a sight that is becoming familiar in Leeds.

RICHARD CHAVES-SANDERSON
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

SAMUEL FISHER
READING SOCIALIST PARTY

2025 ends with huge success

Now help fund the fightback in 2026!

ISAI MARIJERLA
SOCIALIST PARTY TREASURER

Every quarter, the Socialist Party has a target to raise £25,000 for the fighting fund, which pays for the campaigning materials needed in our fight for socialism. We had a fantastic end to 2025, with quarter four raising £66,558. Thank you to all who contributed!

A large part of that was down to the marvellous financial appeal during our Socialism 2025 weekend. Of the £68,150.25 that was pledged, £65,123.25 has been paid in. £10,000 of it has been donated to the Committee for a Workers International, to build the international struggle for socialism. We also raised £14,272 in public activities and fundraising - primarily in small donations from workers and young people we meet campaigning.

Every week, our members are out campaigning on local issues and putting forward the demands and programme needed to win.

2026 is going to see a continuation of struggle. Now, more than ever, socialist ideas provide an alternative to the rotten capitalist system that is fuelling war, poverty and environmental crisis.

One of the Socialist Party's key demands is for the working class to have its own mass party - one which fights for decent jobs, council homes, and fully funded services. We will be campaigning for that in this May's elections - fighting for candidates who pledge to resist further austerity, and reject the logic of the capitalist system which delivers endless austerity.

Help us raise the funds this quarter to carry out that fight!

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



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	%
North West	3,752	1,200	313%
Wales	7,063	2,400	294%
South West	5,075	2,100	242%
Southern & SE	5,500	2,400	229%
London	10,621	5,000	212%
Eastern	2,738	1,300	211%
East Midlands	4,035	2,050	197%
Yorkshire	4,523	2,650	171%
West Midlands	3,472	2,700	129%
Northern	676	800	85%
Other	19,104	2,400	796%
TOTAL	66,558	25,000	266%

Q4: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2025 DEADLINE: CLOSED

Model Motion: Oppose Trump's attack on Venezuela

This [union conference/branch/NEC] condemns US President Trump's escalation of violence against Venezuela, which has seen the bombing of the capital Caracas and the abduction and arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

This is on top of the US military airforce bombing shipping off the coast of Venezuela and in the Caribbean and the seizure of oil tankers by US military forces.

This [union conference/branch/NEC] rejects any notion that these actions and threats are in response to 'drug cartels'. Trump has blatantly said that the US will "run" Venezuela, particularly targeting the publicly owned oil industry - which has the world's largest proven crude oil reserves.

He has a blood-stained record - backing up the genocidal attack by the Israeli Government and military in Gaza. Disgracefully, they have been joined in this by Starmer's Labour Government.

Trump has also ordered bombing of targets in Iran while totally defending the Saudi Arabian feudal dictatorship which executed at least 356 people last year.

The US has a long history of capitalist imperialist aggression in South and Central America, including assisting the brutal and illegal coup by Pinochet against

the democratically elected socialist government of Chile in 1973 and the murder of the president Salvador Allende.

When previous Venezuelan president Chavez was deposed via a coup, the US rushed to recognise his 'successor'.

However, through mass action, the coup was defeated and Chavez was restored. His government implemented policies such as the nationalisation of the oil and gas industry.

This [union conference/branch/NEC] believes that Trump's actions are aimed at ensuring a regime in Venezuela in the interests of US capitalism, as well as trying to intimidate the working-class and poor masses throughout the region, suffering from brutal austerity. Whilst not endorsing the programme and methods of Maduro's government, it is the task of the Venezuelan masses to settle their own accounts with it. We stand in total opposition to this imperialist intervention by the Trump regime aimed at getting control of Venezuelan oil, and the country itself. Neither Trump nor the right-wing Thatcherite opposition led by Machado are concerned about the interests of Venezuelan workers or poor.

This [union conference/branch/NEC] welcomes the protests that have taken

place in the US against Trump's attack on Venezuela.

They are a further indication of the emergence of opposition to Trump's big business government in the US, particularly its anti-worker, anti-union policies and its scapegoating of migrant workers. In June, SEIU trade union California President David Huerta was arrested in ICE Raids. An estimated 7 million people took part in the 'No Kings' demonstrations throughout the US in October.

This [union conference/branch/NEC] calls on our union to:-

- send support and solidarity to workers and their unions in Venezuela and the US in their fight against Trump's policies and aggression, and for our union to support protests and demonstrations and to mobilise our members for them
- call for international workers' solidarity against Trump's imperialist aggression and big business policies. We welcome the incredible mass strikes by Italian workers in solidarity with the Gaza flotilla in October
- support the building of a political alternative for workers in the US and here in the UK in opposition to Starmer on a socialist programme, and call on our union to play an active role in this

BUILDING FOR SOCIALIST STUDENTS CONFERENCE 2026

JAMES TAYLOR
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST STUDENTS

The Socialist Students annual conference is taking place in Manchester on 14 February. Members will be voting on the adoption of a new constitution, as well as debating the role we can play, fighting for socialist ideas in the student movement.

The huge enthusiasm for Corbyn and Sultana's Your Party in the summer, and for Zack Polanski's leadership of the Green Party shows the huge appetite for socialist ideas. This conference will help us sharpen our understanding of the political processes taking place, and prepare us for the opportunities and challenges of getting stuck into the struggles ahead.

The capitalist system offers no way forward for young people. In fact, by trying to look after the profits of the bosses, governments like Keir Starmer's are attacking young and working-class people. We anticipate significant student movements in the coming years, and want Socialist Students to be prepared to play a role in leading those struggles.

We have already tested our ability to lead youth movements by organising hundreds of students walking out against Trump in September, when Starmer's government and the King rolled out the red carpet for the president.

We want to get as many students as possible, prepared to help get organised and fight for socialist ideas, to come to this conference.

In Birmingham, we have organised to hire a people carrier to get

our Socialist Students members to Manchester. There are a few benefits of this over individual transport. First, it is slightly cheaper for each passenger to pay their share for car hire than to buy a train ticket. Second, attendees are more likely to make a firm commitment to come if they pay up front to confirm their place with us, rather than facing the additional and more expensive hurdle of having to organise their own transport. Third, it will give us a chance to discuss politics and the proposed constitution together on the journey.

Our activities on campus will include leafleting and organising our usual fortnightly meetings. These meetings focus on issues which students are engaged in. Our first meeting back after Christmas is discussing Trump's abduction of Nicolás Maduro, and the character of the Chavez-Maduro governments.

Another practical measure we have taken is creating and updating a beautifully colour-coded spreadsheet of contacts gathered from meetings and stalls this year. In the coming weeks we will be contacting all 80+ names on the spreadsheet to encourage them to come along to the conference.

I encourage all to push for maximum participation in this conference, reaching out to every student we have met this year, including members of other socialist-adjacent student societies, to get as broad a layer of youth along as possible. Building strong foundations for us to play a role in future struggles of youth and students.

PENELOPE DAWBER
PRESTON SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Preston Socialist Students members at University of Lancashire (UCLan) and Cardinal Newman College are working extremely hard to prepare for Socialist Students conference. In just three short months, we have formed a society at the university and are on the way to one at the college. We have been out campaigning, including helping organise a counter-demo to a far-right organised anti-immigration protest.

But we're not slowing down this new year! Ahead of the conference, some of us are going to the UCU strike at Lancaster and Morecambe College against unfair, below-inflation pay rises. We plan to speak to students about why they should support their teachers on strike, and join them in a fight for decent, fully funded education.

On 17 January, we are joining a march through Preston against the Reform council's planned closure of several nurseries and care homes across Lancashire, organised by local authority trade union Unison. There we will be making a call for a workers' budget conference in the city, to draw up a council budget that would meet the needs of our communities. We are also planning meetings to discuss the draft constitution documents for Socialist Students, to be voted on at the conference, including to discuss any comments or amendments that we wish to make.

We are going to advertise the conference with campaign stalls at the college and uni. Using our position as an official society, we will try to get the Students Union to advertise the conference.

When we hold our next meetings we will also be discussing transport down to the conference. Even though in Preston we are still only small, we are having a big impact, and our new members can be thanked for that!



Solidarity with UCU Further Education strikes!

This week from Wednesday 14 to Friday 16 January, members of the University and College Union (UCU) will be taking industrial action over funding, pay and conditions. College students face many issues due to the lack of funding. Our education suffers due to higher class sizes and overworked and underpaid staff. This is what striking UCU members are fighting against.

Socialist Students sends its full solidarity to all UCU members taking strike action and our members will be on the picket lines in support. We will stand alongside workers fighting back against the funding crisis to fight for the education we deserve.

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

Socialist Students Conference 2026



Remove private provision from social care



DAVE GORTON
CHESTERFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

In my lifetime, the delivery of residential care in the UK has shifted dramatically from the public and voluntary sector being responsible for over 89% in 1960 to a position where today, private provision stands at 83%. The public sector is now responsible for just 4% of provision.

Devolution means England's figures are now counted separately and studies sometimes include other adult (and children's) social care. But nothing alters the fact that there has been a deliberate policy pursued by the capitalist class over the last few decades of turning a lifeline for those in need to a huge accumulator for the already rich.

There is even a new word being used for this – 'extraction'. It's a friendlier word than 'theft' but amounts to the same thing – a massive transfer of wealth from the public sector to big business.

'Extraction'

A November 2025 report "Ending extraction in the UK care system" published by Reclaiming Our Regional Economies declares:

"Instead of facilitating the care of children, older people, disabled and learning disabled people, our care system facilitates the extraction of value and wealth from places and local public service budgets. While executive pay booms, frontline workers receive little more than the minimum wage. While local government and central government struggle to pay the bills to meet increasing demand, private company profits continue to rise."

But the report's aim of reaching a fairer outcome relies on governmental intervention to limit capitalism's rapacious reaches. Crucially, it has no answers for when governments refuse to intervene. In these times of potential development of new parties of the working class, it needs to be reassured that only a socialist society will have the capability to remove private provision from social care.

Private equity and hedge funds

Of the 20 largest providers in the children's homes and fostering sector, 50% have a private equity or sovereign wealth fund owner. Four of the five largest providers in adult home care are either owned by private equity firms, US hedge funds or by billionaires based abroad.

Private equity firms – investment companies looking to make a large profit in the shortest possible time – use borrowed money. They utilise debt to buy, grow and run companies. This means making interest payments on the debt. As interest payments are in part not taxed, this provides a means of removing money from a business while paying less tax than would be the case for dividends.

This use of debt improves profit margins for owners, while transferring risk to operating companies in the care sector.

The residential care sector in the UK is borrowing £7 billion and a small group of private equity funded businesses in the sector is responsible for the vast majority of this. The total debt of the UK's 26 largest care home providers is £35,000 per bed,

so 16% of weekly fees paid for residential care goes to service debt interest payments.

Complex arrangements separating property and operations into different companies mean care providers can rent their premises from related companies within the same organisation. As a result, property rents have become another major factor in robbing the social care sector.

The largest for-profit care homes in the UK are spending 11.1% of their income on rent, compared to only 2.3% for the largest non-profit providers.

Money 'leaking out'

Nearly £50 billion is spent annually by local authorities in England on care services. This amounts to 70% of all local authority spending. This is in addition to the costs paid for by individuals and their families, estimated to be 50% of social care costs, and the huge levels of care done unpaid.

The report states "the truth is that money exists in the care system but too much of it is 'leaking out'" – another euphemism, better translated as 'stolen'!

The Socialist Party argues for 'needs budgets' – for councillors to implement budgets that provide the services local communities want and need, instead of what's 'affordable'. The finances for these services can be fought for with the active joint participation of local councillors, trade unions and community groups. It is not sufficient to simply declare there isn't enough money while the billionaires rob ordinary people of their health and quality of life. If you're not going to struggle, then stand aside for those that will!

McDonald's sexual harassment scandal: we can't trust the bosses

JOHN WILLIAMS
UNITE HOSPITALITY MEMBER

The McDonald's sexual harassment scandal is back in the news again. Investigations two years ago revealed widespread sexual abuse and harassment of many teenage workers. A group of five trade union bodies, including the bakers' union (BFAWU) and the TUC (Trades Union Congress) have said that McDonald's had violated international labour standards and submitted a complaint to the UK National Contact Point (NCP) – a semi-independent government body – in a serious escalation.

After the initial BBC investigation and coverage, the company promised to sort things. But since then, the BBC has received more than 160 complaints, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission over 700! Unions put in their complaint to the NCP that this is "further evidence of persistent, deeply rooted gender-based discrimination." Bosses have said more training will be done, which is welcome, but how will workers make sure that this is acted on and the rot cut out?

Ian Hodson, president of the bakers' union called the allegations "horrific" and said: "The most important thing to me is the workers. Their voices need to be heard. Everyone deserves the right to be safe when they go to work". Absolutely. And a horrifying detail, is that most of the allegations are coming from teenagers. The appalling behaviour they've had to endure will be, for many of them, their very first experience of life in the workplace. The stress, anxiety and mental health struggles many of them probably have or will

develop is truly upsetting to think about.

Unions and workers should be at the heart and centre of any investigation into the allegations and decide the measures that need to be taken. No stitch ups! Far too often have voices of trade unionists been ignored and swept aside by bosses thinking they can control the narrative. That's why many workers feel powerless. Especially as the company makes profit and relies on their labour in exchange for low pay, making them feel like small cogs in a machine.

The Labour government is now offering to negotiate between employers and unions. But how on Earth can we trust this Labour government to fight for the material interests of precarious workers? They've U-turned on their workers' rights pledges, including protections from sackings from day one, and will now allow some zero-hour contracts.

The best way to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace is for all workers to join fighting trade unions where they can collectively take on the issue, removing perpetrators and bad managers. It should be the organised working class that come up with the necessary processes to keep workers safe. Unions should be willing to escalate to further action if necessary, such as protests and strike action if workers continue to be made unsafe, as they did in 2017 when McDonald's workers went out on strike against low pay and bad working conditions.

● **John is standing for the LGBT+ seat in the Unite Executive Council elections as part of the 'Workers Unite' slate, see page 7 for more information**



McDonald's workers on strike in 2018 alongside other hospitality staff PHOTO: SCOTT JONES



Bristol far right outnumbered but assisted by police

ROGER THOMAS
VICE PRESIDENT BRISTOL TRADES UNION COUNCIL

Once again, the far-right Bristol 'Patriots' named the day, Saturday 10 January, for a march in Bristol and managed to produce probably their smallest gathering so far. Heavily outnumbered by counter-protesters, around 40 of them gathered at the Cenotaph, ostensibly to protest against the Starmer government but in reality to pedal their racist ideas.

Despite being so outnumbered, they were enabled to gather, as has been usual in the last few months, by an enormous police operation. We counted as many as 14 vans of police plus horses lined up in two lines between the contingents. Police officers, some of who were openly joking with far-right activists before the protest, spent a disproportionate amount of time filming the counter-protesters, and serving notice to remove any face covering.

Once again the police had one ambition, and that was to enable the far right to march, whatever the cost – financial and physical. A request for the counter-protesters to be permitted to follow behind the far right and to expose their pathetically small protest was declined by the police.

As a consequence, the counter-protesters sought to outflank the police cordon and try to cut off the far right. Pursued by large numbers of police, protesters marched up Corn Street only to be blocked. They then moved onto Baldwin Street, Bristol Bridge, Castle Park and finally into the shopping centre.

Each attempt to block the far right was unsuccessful due to the numbers of police. Finally, back to the Cenotaph, where a final stand-off between the two groups lasted for a further hour until the far right were dispersed under heavy police protection.

At the rally towards the start, all speakers correctly attacked the Labour government for its slavish attitude towards the US and its pro-business agenda.

Socialist Party members argued for a working-class alternative to the far right, and for the trade union movement to take up the issue of building a movement against austerity. We pointed to the TUC policies for a union-led campaign for 'jobs and homes not racism', and the policy passed at this year's TUC for it to organise a union-led weekend demonstration against Labour's austerity.



PHOTO: ROGER THOMAS

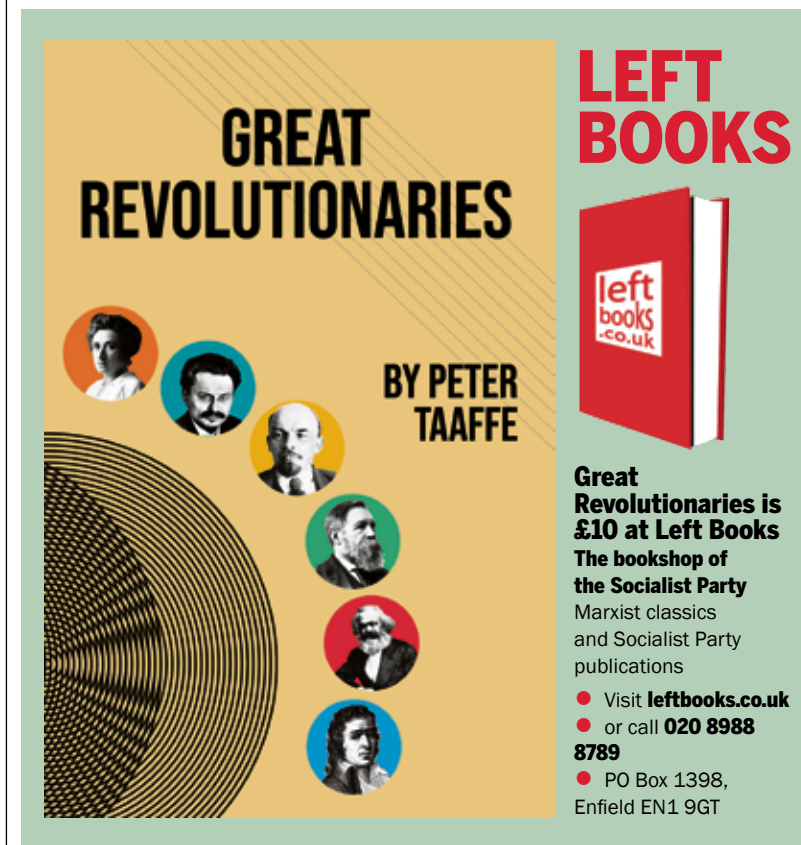
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Book review: Great Revolutionaries by Peter Taaffe

'Marxist ideas brought to life, grounded in real historical struggles and debates'



JOE WOOLFALL
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Great Revolutionaries is a recently published book, written by Peter Taaffe, the former General Secretary of the Socialist Party. It includes a series of articles examining the lives and ideas of key figures in the history of socialism and working-class struggle. Peter passed away on 23 April 2025 after a lifetime dedicated to the fight for socialism.

Peter was central to the political leadership of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, and its role in leading the successful struggles against Thatcher – the Liverpool city council struggle in the mid-1980s and the anti-Poll Tax struggle at the end of that decade and into the 1990s. Throughout periods of defeat and confusion for the workers' movement – particularly following the collapse of Stalinism – he consistently defended the ideas of genuine Marxism and the working class as the primary agent of social change.

The book introduces readers to the ideas of Gracchus Babeuf, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg. It explains clearly what these revolutionaries believed and how their ideas were applied in practice. For young workers and students who are new to Marxism in particular, the book is accessible and concise. It distils the main lessons of the revolutionary socialist movement since

its inception. It equips readers with theoretical tools relevant to the current period of capitalist crisis, in which Marxist ideas are once again essential.

I found the book highly engaging; I read it faster than any other book of comparable length I have previously picked up. Peter brings Marxist ideas to life by grounding them in real historical struggles and debates. He critically engages with existing biographies of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky; through this, he explains not just what such books got right, but also where clarification or correction is necessary. The book makes clear that Karl Marx was not merely a brilliant theorist or writer, but a revolutionary organiser. Engels is quoted as describing Marx's "crowning achievement" as the founding of the International Working Men's Association (the First International). As Marx himself famously argued, it is not enough to interpret the world; the task is to change it.

Lenin is subjected to more distortion and slander than most figures, even within the Marxist tradition, and Peter successfully challenges these misrepresentations. Capitalist academics routinely depict Lenin as authoritarian and undemocratic, extending the same treatment to the October Revolution itself. Peter explains how Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, with majority support won in the soviets (workers' councils), led the first successful nationwide socialist revolution. Although there

were earlier opportunities to seize power, the overthrow of the provisional government occurred only once the Bolsheviks had won the conscious support of the working class. Through experience, workers came to understand that no other party would end Russia's involvement in the World War One, distribute land to the peasants, or provide bread for the starving population.

Despite its relatively short length, this book offers a clear Marxist explanation of Stalinism, the theory of Permanent Revolution, and the respective roles of Trotsky and Lenin in October 1917.

Overall, this is a brilliant text, rich with lessons for socialists today. One chapter that stood out to me in particular was the discussion on trade unions and how Marx and Engels orientated to them. This is especially relevant given current debates on the British left surrounding the formation of 'Your Party', co-founded by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana. When I first joined the Socialist Party, I noticed that our call for a new mass workers' party was distinctive: other forces either clung to the Labour Party or embraced the 'anti-party' mood – an outlook Peter critiques repeatedly in the book. When a new left party was eventually formed, the Socialist Party again stood out in arguing that the organised working class, through its day-to-day organisations such as the trade unions, must be central to any such project.

Engels once criticised the draft programme of the United Workers' Party of Germany for ignoring the role trade unions could play in building a workers' party, warning that this risked cutting the party off from the organised working class. A quotation by Engels included in the endnotes of Great Revolutionaries in a similar vein is as relevant today as when it was written: "The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organisation of workers into an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party." This summarises one of the book's main lessons and is very important for our coming activity as socialists in the new year and beyond.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?
● editors@socialistparty.org.uk
or, if you're not online, write to the Socialist Inbox, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT

USA: Stop the raids and abolish ICE!

INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST GROUP
CWI CO-THINKERS IN THE US

On 7 January, ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents in Minneapolis shot and killed anti-ICE activist Renee Good. This is the latest of at least five murders of civilians at the hands of ICE agents over the last year. The Donald Trump regime's mass deployment of ICE agents into working-class neighbourhoods across the country is terrorising communities, schools, hospitals, stores, and workplaces. Backed by National Guard troops and militarised federal and local police, ICE is emboldened to abduct, detain, and disappear innocent working people, regardless of immigration or residency status.

Families have been torn apart by ICE and children left abandoned. ICE has thrown people into private prisons, where they're made to endure inhuman conditions. There's often a lack of medical care, food, and clean water. Victims have been deported, at times to places other than their native countries. Some have been killed by ICE during raids, others have died in detention centres. Many immigrants fear going to work or being out in public, and some feel they have to 'self-deport' to be safe and to keep their families together.

The Trump administration relies on a divide-and-conquer strategy to implement its wholesale attack on working people. It's carrying out kidnappings and deportations, while at the same time imposing deep cuts to healthcare and food benefits,



Independent Socialist Group at a Boston protest against ICE's murder of Renee Good. PHOTO: ISG

implementing mass layoffs of federal workers, and eliminating many rights won in past struggles, including trans rights, union rights, and civil rights.

In Chicago and elsewhere across the country, strong opposition by community members has sometimes successfully stopped ICE. But most of the time, ICE and other federal police forces get away with their violent assaults and kidnappings. It's difficult for working people to mobilise at a moment's notice, and difficult for us to be everywhere at all times. Immigrant rights groups, progressive groups, left organisations, and unions can unite in organising even larger mass protests and rallies against ICE. These should also include workplace walkouts, occupations, and strikes on a city-wide, regional, and national scale.

The so-called 'resistance' of the Democratic Party has not stopped Trump and the Republicans. Lawyers and lawsuits have not been enough to prevent ICE's armed thugs from carrying out Trump's right-wing agenda. The Democrats have helped lay the groundwork for the ICE raids by increasing funding to ICE when they were in power, and including anti-immigrant propaganda and policies in their campaigns in 2024. In 2020, Joe Biden ran on closing the border camps and ending funding for the border wall yet, once in office, continued both, more than doubling the number of ICE detainees from 14,000 to 39,000. Barack Obama's administration carried out 3.1 million deportations, more than any previous president. Even Bernie Sanders praised Trump in late October, saying: "Trump did a better job. I don't like Trump, but we should have a secure border. It ain't that hard to do. Biden didn't do it."

The working class can't rely on either corporate political party to stop

ICE. We need our own political party, independent of any corporate funding or influence. Corporations are the ones exploiting immigrant labour, including using undocumented children in poultry processing factories, sawmills, and other dangerous jobs, and exposing many immigrant workers to dangerous conditions while using their immigration status as leverage to ignore labour and minimum wage laws.

But union members are in the schools, hospitals, and communities that ICE targets. Unions can play a greater role in fighting against the exploitation of immigrants. Union leaders and activists can use the tactics of the 2006 'Day Without an Immigrant' strikes and protests to help to stop ICE. The capitalist system hyper-exploits immigrants for their labour and tries to divide workers across borders. A crucial part of the fightback against Trump and for immigrant rights is to put pressure on the profits of the corporations and the billionaires.

The Independent Socialist Group stands for escalating the fight against ICE.

We call for:

- An end to ICE raids, stop the deportations, and release detainees
- Abolish ICE!
- No one is 'illegal' - amnesty for all undocumented immigrants
- An injury to one is an injury to all! Unions to organise active solidarity with immigrants, including mass rallies, walkouts, and strikes
- Mass union drives to help organise and defend immigrant workers
- Independent progressive and left candidates to run for office as part of organising a workers' party that can oppose the two corporate parties and fight for immigrant and workers' rights
- Organise a mass socialist movement for international working-class solidarity across borders



On the website: What will New York's 'democratic socialist' mayor Mamdani do next?

On January 1, 2026, Zohran Mamdani took office as mayor of New York City amid continued interest and anticipation for his "New Era" of affordability for working-class New Yorkers...
[read at socialistworld.net](#)



to create a paradise for itself, while the working masses live in hell. Although the regime under the influence of the revolution, implemented some progressive policies at its inception, it also moved to concentrate power in its own hands, while beginning to limit workers' freedom. Even though the oil sector and others were nationalised, workers' democracy was not only absent, but the regime rapidly developed into a dictatorship of Khomeini and the theocratic ruling class. Workers' organisations were crushed, and democratic rights were buried.

So when Iranians on the street are screaming 'Death to the dictator', it is an expression of how their society has been turned into a big prison.

What next for the movement?

Socialists argue that a mass movement of the working masses can not only defeat Khamenei and the Iranian ruling class, but also challenge the Iranian capitalists, Trump and US imperialism. Without a revolutionary victory of the working people in the power struggle, imperialism cannot be defeated.

Therefore, every advance of the working masses towards seeking power from the ruling class must be supported; in these advances lie

the seeds for the building of a working peoples' republic. However, a clamour for the return of monarchy by a section of the protesters is not only testament to the utter failure of the theocratic rule but also the current absence of an internal opposition arguing for the next steps for the movement and, at the same time, a genuine working peoples' alternative.

The task for the revolutionary movement in Iran is not to commit the 'mistake' of the past. An end to Khamenei without ending capitalism in Iran and instituting a genuine socialist society based on workers' ownership and democratic management of the commanding heights of the economy, would mean nothing significantly for the working masses.

The mass protests must begin to transform from a leaderless protest to democratically electing coordinating bodies, winning the support of more layers of the oppressed population, and urgently developing concrete steps to build the movement and take power.

could be commensurate with the rate of inflation.

Sanctions and actions

It has been argued, by defenders of the Iranian regime, that the economic misery obtainable in Iran is a direct consequence of years of sanctions imposed on Iran by the US and Western imperialism. It is, of course, true that the US has imposed sanctions on Iran; these sanctions are targeted mainly at Iran's export of its oil. Sanctions have also been imposed on Iran's economic partners, isolating it from global trade.

Ever since the Iranian revolution of 1979, which ousted Shah Mohammad Pahlavi, who was strongly backed by the US, and the coming to power of Khomeini, the US has sustained sanctions on Iran. Trump 2.0 has aggravated the situation, re-instating previous sanctions that the Biden administration did not seriously pursue, while also threatening new ones, including sanctions on companies doing deals with Iran. Without doubt, years of sanctions have had a drastic effect on the economy. Ironically, Donald Trump has given a thumbs-up to the protest triggered by the crisis that he and the US ruling class contributed to.

But it is the theocratic regime that is the major player in the economic hardship of Iranians. Since coming to power, it has used public resources

ADARAMOYE MICHAEL LENIN
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (CWI NIGERIA)

Mass protests are spreading across Iran in a show of widespread anger against the regime of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Pezeshkian. What began as a strike and demonstration by merchants in Tehran has now spread to nearly all the provinces of the country.

At present, these protests are decentralised and without official leadership; traders, workers, and students are actively involved, which shows no sign of decline. The emergence of protests in Qom must have been the biggest blow to the regime, which has always prided Qom, the base of the religious leadership, as its stronghold. Now in Qom, traders, students and workers are screaming "death to the dictator".

In suppressing the protests, at the time of writing, hundreds of deaths have been reported so far, and rising. There have been clashes between protesters and the police with more violent repression possible as Khamenei, the 'Supreme Leader', vowed not to bow to pressure.

What is fuelling this fire of revolt?

The immediate detonator of this mass movement is the crashing of Iran's currency, the rial, to historic

lows - around 1.45 million rials to 1 USD on the open market by late 2025-early 2026. 'Abject poverty' is now the reality for many working-class families, with their purchasing power completely wiped out by inflation. According to the Central Bank of Iran, agriculture contracted by 2.9% and industry and mining by 3.4%, while construction had a sharp 12.9% slump. These sectors are among the biggest employers of labour, especially for young people.

Food inflation had a drastic rise, with prices of food, beverages and tobacco up 72% year-on-year, in relation with 43% for non-food goods and services. Monthly inflation climbed up to 4.2%, led by sharp increases in staples such as dairy and bread. Behind these statistics are gory tales of hunger, homelessness, joblessness and mass misery, amid a country with enormous resources to guarantee a better life for Iranians.

Importantly, the new austerity budget awaiting approval of the parliament has worsened the situation for the Iranian regime. This budget is to be mainly financed by tax revenue; it plans to increase VAT and other taxes; the regime is turning to workers and ordinary people to bear the burden of its failure. Also, the budget seeks to implement cuts to certain subsidies.

President Pezeshkian has openly declared that the state has no funds to implement any wage increase that



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.

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PUBLIC SERVICES

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- 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.

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ENVIRONMENT

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

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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.
- For the right to asylum - with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.
- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

- 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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SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

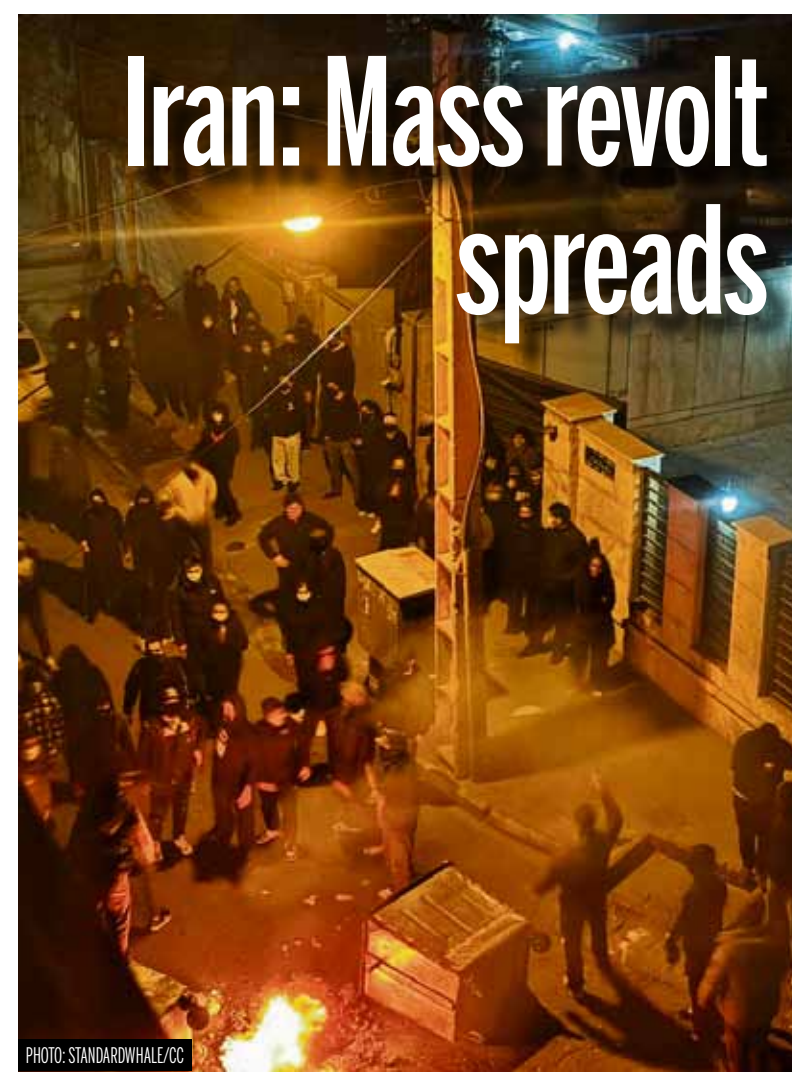


PHOTO: STANDARDWHALE/CC

Iran: Mass revolt spreads

£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

Issue 1351

15-21 January 2026

formerly **Militant**

YOUTH FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE



A US Federal agent shot and killed Renee Good in Minneapolis, USA on 7 January. Videos widely circulated online show Renee using her car to block a road in the city, in solidarity with her neighbours, to obstruct immigration raids carried out by ICE.

Already this autumn, tens of thousands of school students in North Carolina walked out in protest. This latest brutal killing will spur more protests. Under Trump's instructions, ICE agents terrorise working-class neighbourhoods and workplaces across the US. Workers are organising to defend their communities and co-workers.

And the cost-of-living squeeze for ordinary Americans grinds on. No president has ever become so unpopular so quickly. Trump has already faced the two biggest single-day protests in US history.

Already this year, Trump has kidnapped

the Venezuelan President and threatened to take ownership of Greenland – both blatant attempts to pursue US capitalist interests. Including the pursuit of access to oil ahead of their biggest rival, China. The plunge towards deeper climate crisis continues.

Beyond his so-called 'backyard', Trump has threatened intervention into Iran. Mass protests have erupted, fuelled by a rising cost of living and the brutal experience of a repressive regime. Reportedly thousands have been killed by state forces, including 23-year-old student Rubina Aminian, shot in the back of the head at close range.

Youth and workers in Iran can in no way rest hopes on a Trump intervention to help them to pursue their aims. They must get organised to settle their own scores with the theocratic regime.

Trump's second presidency is an accelerator of world instability and crisis. The world is

simmering with uprisings and protests – including those led by youth and students, so called 'Gen Z protests', bringing down governments and regimes in Nepal, Madagascar and Bulgaria, for example. Millions have protested against the Israeli state's slaughter in Gaza, including those who took part in a general strike in Italy in September.

When the red carpet was rolled out for Trump at Windsor Castle by Keir Starmer in September, Socialist Students helped to organise school and college walkouts. Building our own struggles of workers and young people, including a new workers' party to challenge Starmer's Labour and fight for a decent future for young people in Britain, is the most effective act of solidarity young people and students take with those fighting for change internationally.

If you're angry at Trump and Starmer, and the capitalist crisis they represent – get organised!

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

Socialist Students Conference 2026



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on page 15

9 771366 962103 ISSN 1366-9621