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Issue 1353 | 29 January - 4 February 2026 | formerly Militant

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Make the super-rich pay!

NICK CHAFFEY
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The damage of austerity is colossal. Rents and council tax have risen sharply, bearing down on workers and their families receiving falling wages and benefits. The housing crisis leaves 1.3 million on council waiting lists.

Essential services are run on a shoestring delivered by overwhelmed council workers pushed to the limit. Trade union Unison estimates one million council jobs have been cut or privatised.

After 15 years of Tory-led cuts to council funding, Keir Starmer's new year announcement to deliver a three-year 'Fair Funding' settlement falls way short of what is needed.

£24 billion of council cuts have been carried out since 2010, and now Labour is boasting of a £3.9 billion increase in funding – it doesn't even touch the sides! And half of it is expected to come from increasing council tax by 5%. With the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation this is squeezing money from empty pockets.

Redirecting funds to poorer areas at the expense of supposedly 'more affluent' areas as part of this three-year proposal will not restore jobs and services. In reality, it will mean attacks on the working class and most vulnerable in those areas.



Birmingham bin workers fighting back PHOTO: DAVID ELLIS

Starmer's solution is no solution. Significant battles are already under way. Most prominently the heroic year-long Birmingham bin workers' strike. Local council workers fighting back is certain to spread. National Education Union members are balloting for action on school funding. Firefighters are facing job cuts and station closures with the new Fire Brigades Union general secretary raising the prospect of national strike action.

It points clearly to the urgent need for a national trade union-led campaign, calling on councils to set no-cuts, needs-based budgets and to fully fund council services, restoring jobs and services. Demand the ailing Starmer government coughs up the money - make the super-rich pay!

Such a campaign would be enormously strengthened if it was backed by thousands of trade unionists, socialists and other campaigners standing as anti-cuts candidates in the May council elections. Socialist Party members are making the case for the widest possible, socialist, no-cuts stand.

Help us put the working class on the ballot paper in May, pointing the way towards the workers' party with socialist policies that we need.

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the Socialist
formerly Militant

Issue 1353
29 January - 4 February 2026

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

Starmer bars Burnham from by-election

Unions must lead working-class stand



Keir Starmer (right) moves to keep Andy Burnham (left) in the background SIMON DAWSON / NO 10 DOWNING STREET/CC

ROB WILLIAMS
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The blocking of Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham from contesting the selection process to be Labour's candidate in the Gorton and Denton by-election opens up a new stage in the crisis in Starmer's New Labour Mark II government. It brings the whole question of the need for a political voice for the working class front and central.

It has been reported that Labour's Starmer-dominated Organisation Sub-Committee of its National Executive Committee (NEC) made the decision on Sunday 25 January by a vote 8-1, including Starmer himself, just the day after Burnham beat the deadline to apply for permission to stand.

Members of GMB and USDAW unions will be asking why their representatives on the sub-committee reportedly voted to bar Burnham from standing, actually confirmed by USDAW on its website. They will correctly see this as further evidence that their respective union leaders are tied hand and foot to the Starmer project, and will build the campaigns for a real debate about the unions' political strategies.

It's clear that Starmer moved to bar Burnham because, on the basis of him winning the by-election, it would have effectively triggered a leadership election against him. Instead, he has now given Burnham a 'put up or shut up' ultimatum. As we go to press, Burnham has told the media that his "full focus" is on his position as mayor of Greater Manchester. But this move and counter-move opens up a further rupture in Starmer's Labour.

> **Being tied to Labour means having to accept the diktat of Starmer and his pro-big business acolytes**

Saving Labour

In many respects, Burnham was putting his name forward in an attempt to 'save' the brand of Labour from potential election oblivion, as Starmer's party dwindles in the opinion polls. Ultimately, Burnham would be trying to save Labour as a party that supports, defends and protects capitalism. It is this that underpins the crisis in Labour, as with other mainstream pro-capitalist parties.

But given the crisis-ridden character of British capitalism, attempting to ride the storm of a chaotic world, tipped into ever greater turbulence by Trump, to set himself up as an opponent to Starmer is forcing Burnham to position himself to the left of his party leader. Many workers will rightly argue that that is not a difficult task!

Writing in the Guardian newspaper on 22 January, Burnham counterposed what he claims is his record as mayor, in contrast to "the British right and not the Labour government". But in reality he is attempting to contrast himself with Starmer's 18 months of austerity.

Some union leaders will claim his 'Manchesterism' is the way forward, but Burnham hasn't faced down the cuts of Tory and now Labour central government, despite having a platform to lead a mass campaign of defiance. Members of Unison and Unite are currently taking strike action on pay at Transport for Greater Manchester, which is headed by Burnham.

Unions

New left Unison General Secretary Andrea Egan, an expelled Labour Party member had called, on officially taking office, for a "democratic process" for selecting the candidate. This is a departure from the uncritical support given by the previous right-wing pro-Starmer leadership that was defeated in the union's general secretary election.

But Starmer's decision now poses what is the way forward for the unions, particularly Labour-affiliated ones like Unison and Unite?

Unite already has policy from its conference last July, initiated by Socialist Party members and close allies, to open up a debate in the union about its relationship with Labour.

In response to Burnham's ban, Andrea tweeted: "I know many, many trade unionists will be so disappointed and angry at local members not being given a say over who their candidate should be. This isn't the way any democratic organisation should be run. Now's the time to unite our movement not divide it."

But Unison members will now ask on what basis does our movement unite? We need political representatives who stand and fight for the programme of the unions and the workers' movement. Both Unison and Unite's policy for local government is to call on Labour councils to refuse to pass on the cuts and instead implement no-cuts needs budgets. Another Labour-affiliated union, the CWU, supports renationalisation of Royal Mail and had the policy passed at Labour Party conference in the middle of their national 2022-23 strike, but was then ignored by Starmer.

A workers' candidate

Union after union supports the Unite Birmingham bin workers, brutally fired and rehired by a cutting Labour council to the tune of £8,000 a year, using vicious strike-breaking measures. The unions demand the scrapping of the undemocratic 50% industrial action ballot threshold, that still persists a year and a half into a 160-seat majority Labour government. And the unions have supported motions at TUC Congress against the murderous assault of the Israeli regime on Gaza, propped up by Starmer.

That is the programme that a workers' candidate should be standing on in Gorton and Denton, and in the elections that are coming in May. The events of the last few days have shown that being tied to Labour means having to accept the diktat of Starmer and his pro-big business acolytes.

The unions, both Labour-affiliated and not, must immediately declare their intention to stand a candidate in the by-election on a union programme, that can take on and undermine the divisive bile and poison of Reform, and open up the road to a real political vehicle for the working class.

Councils cancelling elections mean more cuts for us

BASIL BOWDITCH
CRAWLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

29 local authorities up and down England have been allowed by Keir Starmer's government to postpone local elections this May, ostensibly to help smooth along plans to reshape county and district councils' structures. This means councillors who last year enacted devastating austerity budgets have had their seats protected for another year. There will be harsh cuts to council services on the way again this year.

Locally, Labour-led councils like Worthing-Adur and Crawley, have opted to back out of this year's local elections. These are councils which last year made cuts of over £3 million, alongside hiking up council tax and other penalty charges, hitting workers right in their pockets. Starmer's government has not restored the overdue and desperately needed funding for councils, hit hard by over a decade of Tory austerity.

West Sussex County Council has also chosen to abandon elections this May. A council that made almost £40 million in cuts last year, and £30 million more are expected this year.

29
local authorities have postponed this year's elections

Union response

The trade union movement must use its strength as to push back these plans. Local government unions such as GMB, Unite and Unison, must stand against this blatant disregard for democratic obligation, and any attempts to implement another round of austerity. Lobbying local councils and building anti-cuts campaigns can give confidence to council workers to fight back industrially.

There should also be questions to ask about unions' continued affiliation with Labour, a party willing to go against the unions' 'no cuts to public services' policies. Discussions should be taking place in areas of Sussex that are still holding local elections, to support candidates that align with the position of their members – to fight all cuts! There needs to be real political repercussions for all parties and councils who still opt for austerity over fighting for full funding. A clear message must be sent: that any plans to continue attacks on public services will be met with organised resistance from the working class.





MARY FINCH

Unemployment 'zombie apocalypse'

Fight for socialism against the dawn of the living dead jobs

HANNAH PONTING
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

It's no secret that an unemployment crisis has been looming over Britain for years.

The employment rate has been falling for the past two years, exposing the fragility of the capitalist system.

Young people entering the job market are particularly affected by this crisis. It has been reported that, for some entry-level jobs, as many as 141 graduates are competing for a single job. At the same time, one in seven young people are now currently unemployed.

This figure doesn't even take into account the thousands of people trapped in precarious employment circumstances, such as those in exploitative zero-hour contacts, with no certainty as to their income from one month to the next, and little-to-no protection in case of sickness.

1 in 7
young people are not in education, employment or training

As we enter 2026, the situation is set to worsen. Economists warn that an increasing number of so-called 'zombie firms' are likely to collapse, as increased energy prices, an end to cheap credit, and increases to national insurance contributions 'kill' them off.

For defenders of capitalism, the closing of zombie firms may be masqueraded as good for the economy, but it is ultimately workers that bear the price of their collapse with mass redundancies.

This incoming crisis is not the result of bad managements or unfortunate timing. It flows directly from the short-term, profit-driven logic of capitalism.

So to fight this crisis we have to fight against capitalism itself. Workers and young people can fight for a socialist future that guarantees jobs, pay and conditions and offers real possibilities for retraining. We should demand that any failing industries be nationalised under democratic workers' control, and take the economic power held by the bosses into our own hands to plan to provide a decent job, housing and standard of living for all.

Kent water shortage: nationalise the water industry

ALBIJON KURTOLLI
KENT AND EAST SUSSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

What do you get if you're the head of a water company that is responsible for a mass water shortage in one of England's largest counties, leaving thousands of homes without water or heating in the heart of winter? If you're South East Water (SEW) CEO David Hinton, you get the promise of a £400,000 bonus if you remain in your position until 2030, thanks to a long-term service award.

This is the situation Kent is currently facing. I spoke to an individual in the Tunbridge Wells area who told me that he has been without water twice this month; both times lasting well over a week. Many MPs in Kent have called for Hinton's resignation and Hinton himself has stated he will not attend Tunbridge Wells council's scrutiny meeting on the 26 January; telling the council's head of governance the meeting is "happening too soon."

A failure to prevent this shortage and be held accountable after the fact is a perfect example of why nationalising SEW is necessary. We have had to contend with water company CEOs constantly cutting corners to line their own pockets and make sure their shareholders get ever richer.

It is a complete disgrace that we have raw sewage being pumped into our rivers and seas by these companies. Hinton was the CEO when SEW was handed a record £90 million fine in 2021 for this practice; a practice might I add that SEW is still participating in, and he has been allowed to keep his position. Nationalising the water companies will put the power back into the hands of the people, who will have no incentives to keep us from having clean and usable water. Give power back to the people and keep the wealthy from depriving and contaminating a vital resource we know to be crucial to all life on earth as we know it.

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

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

The Socialist Party fights to

- Take the water industry out of the hands of the fat-cat profiteers. Nationalise the entire industry with compensation only paid on the basis of proven need
- Put the environment and our lives before the profits of a few. Stop the dumping of sewage in our rivers and seas. Stop the leakage of water that wastes millions of litres every day
- Take the banks and big industry into democratic public ownership to provide the resources required to plan production to invest in infrastructure like sewage treatment works and water pipes

EYEWITNESS: THE MINNEAPOLIS ANTI-ICE 'GENERAL STRIKE'

ISG AND CWI REPORTERS

Tens of thousands mobilised in a day of action in Minneapolis on 23 January against the state repression of Trump's administration and its brutal deployment of three thousand ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents to the state of Minnesota.

This mass mobilisation was termed an 'economic blackout' by sections of the capitalist media, 'a shutdown', a 'day of truth and freedom' and importantly a 'general strike' by layers of activists, workers, youth and campaigners. The call came from a wide section of society, stretching from labour unions to immigrant organisations, small businesses and churches for Minnesota to 'not work, don't shop, don't go to school' in protest at the execution by an ICE agent of local mother and protester Renee Good, and generalised and escalating repression by ICE and the White House in the state.

It is a step forward that this mass mobilisation took place despite the terror inflicted by ICE and Trump, which has not in any way let up. For example, in the days before the action a five-year-old and a two-year-old were detained in house raids by agents, while the Department of Justice arrested activists who protested in a local church. There is also widespread speculation in the media about the Trump administration invoking the Insurrection Act and sending federal troops into the state that helped mobilise such a turnout of defiance. This would be for the first time since the 1992 LA riots after police beat Rodney King to death.



Downtown Minneapolis on 23 January PHOTO: LORIE SHAULL

23 January

In freezing temperatures, Independent Socialist Group (ISG, CWI supporters in the US) activists spoke to many on the mass march through the downtown area, many of whom were on their first ever demonstration. 20,000 packed an indoor rally at the end. Earlier in the day, thousands protested against deportation flights at the airport and blocked roads, with over 100 being arrested and a section of airport workers walking out.

The turnout of young people stood out. The city's youth have fought back against ICE thugs tear gassing their schools and physically attacking teachers by organising walkouts over the last few weeks. There were also families with small children marching. The large turnout in Minneapolis will lift confidence and push back some of the real fear generated by ICE locally and will inspire those enraged by Trump and ICE across the US; over one hundred solidarity actions took place on the same day.

The action was supported by the Minneapolis and St Paul AFL-CIO union federation and many union locals (branches). In the run-up to the day of action, workers in the letter-carrying and postal sector demonstrated in the city against ICE using their workplaces and attacking fellow workers. However, while 'supporting' the action publicly, many union leaderships were not willing to organise the necessary elements of an actual general strike to really disrupt the operations and profits of the bosses in Minneapolis, and strike a severe blow that would have echoed across the US and internationally. Despite the demand of 'no work', the leaders were not prepared to defy 'no strike' clauses in contracts or legal bans on strikes by federal workers.

This meant that although large numbers of workers locally called in sick and others walked out, most of the city's operations were still running. Small and independent businesses either supported the action or were forced by social pressure to close, but the big chains remained open. This isn't just the responsibility of local union leaders, but those nationally who missed an opportunity to put the potential power of the labour movement at the centre stage of the struggle against Trump. ISG activists met many union members and activists on the mass march, from the construction and transport industries, teachers and nurses, but bar the official stewarding, the visible presence of the labour unions, even in terms of banners, was absent.

Nonetheless it is extremely positive that the response to repression prominently included the idea of a 'general strike' and the key role the working class plays in confronting the capitalist state. The tradition and memory of the 1934 Teamster strikes, and general strike led by Trotskyists in the city, has been rediscovered and is being discussed now in Minneapolis and across the US by a new generation. Socialists have an even greater responsibility to explain how such action by the working class can be organised and win. Many workers who participated in the day of action will be looking for ways to organise real strike action soon.

Leadership

The idea of independent action by the working class has never been more relevant. Part of the reason for the weakness of the union leaderships is their ties and political support for the Democratic Party and its local Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) political machine. The state governor and city mayor have gained attention and a layer of support for their recent calls for ICE to be removed, despite their failure to stand up to racism, division and attacks by the bosses in the past. Under social pressure for now, they adopt an oppositional stance to Trump. The city council came out in support of the action and there are a range of conflicts around the local police department not cooperating with ICE. This has been enough for Donald Trump and JD Vance to whip up division with a visit to support locally based ICE agents and local business leaders on the eve of 23 January.

The local Democrats cannot be relied upon to defend people from ICE, let alone lead an effective struggle for their removal. They are attempting to cool down the mood in the city, which is currently failing. Their appeals for fairness, in being allowed to participate in any investigation into the shooting of Renee Nicole Good, alongside legal challenges to ICE brutality, is being ignored by Trump who is going on the legal offensive against them with subpoenas.

It is clear that tens of thousands of people are currently involved in action against ICE across the state. In Minneapolis-St Paul a certain collective action tradition has persisted since the days of heavy industry and the battles of the Teamsters, rediscovered by a new generation since the major 'Black Lives Matter' mobilisations after the 2020 police killing of George Floyd. Neighbourhoods are organised in mutual aid, but also in 'rapid response' teams that disrupt ICE raids and attempt to protect those under attack. This is despite the real risks involved. Activists have been hospitalised and permanently maimed by pepper spray and 'non-lethal' munitions.

There is huge interest and large support for the idea of fighting back nationally, with activists preparing in areas like Portland, Maine, for the next major ICE mobilisations. ICE has succeeded in arresting over 10,000 in the state, and in spreading such fear in communities that aid has even extended to support groups buying groceries for those hiding indoors.

Where next?

The questions of 'where next?' and 'how could ICE and state repression be defeated?' are critical. Many on the march said they were fearful about the future and whether state repression would be stepped up further. Another aspect of the mood, often expressed by the same person, was a total lack of faith in the political establishment and a feeling that there is no option but to fight back. It is a very dangerous situation under the Trump presidency for all working-class people and youth. Trump is also creating dangers for his rule, through repression and an utter failure to deal with the ravages of the high cost of living and poverty, while he and his cronies enrich themselves. The ingredients and the social conditions are present for revolutionary conclusions to be drawn by a militant layer who are looking for the best methods and ideas to fight back. There will now be discussion among the most militant workers, youth and activists about the way forward, especially in Minnesota.

ISG activists got a warm response for material outlining the following programme:

- All out for the 23 January day of action! Maximum turnout of the working class and youth to send the strongest possible message to Trump and his ICE thugs!
- Minneapolis labour unions to make the day of action a real strike! Organise workplace walkouts and join the demonstrations! Rank-and-file activists should work together to bring our unions over to the position of taking job action
- Plans should immediately be made for escalating follow-up actions, with all anti-ICE organisations working together to coordinate day-to-day resistance to ICE as well as bigger and more disruptive demonstrations and strike actions until ICE withdraws completely from the city
- Solidarity events should be organised around the country to show support for Minneapolis, but also to begin to work towards similar actions wherever ICE is present
- We need a workers' party! Despite Democrats like Jacob Frey putting on an anti-ICE show, ICE has been expanded, reinforced, and empowered by Democratic Party governments, even when the Democratic Party controlled both the Presidency and Congress. ICE has received local support for its operations from municipal and state agencies, including those run by clear Democratic Party majorities. There are two corporate parties in favour of the deportation machine: the Republicans and Democrats. They both refuse to abolish ICE. The anti-ICE movement, unions, and the working class needs its own political party. Working class activists should run for election with clear pro-labour and anti-ICE platforms, independent of the Democrats and Republicans and the billionaire money that backs their parties. We can start laying the foundation for a workers' party which not only runs in elections but also builds and unifies the fightback in the streets
- Organise a mass socialist movement for international working-class solidarity across borders

After this day of action, workers in Minnesota need to discuss and plan the best ways, through resolutions and other mobilisations, to force official strike action, whether legal or illegal. This can lead to an escalation of industrial power, linking the need to fight state repression with action against the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Any worker who is victimised for taking action on 23 January needs to be defended.

There is also a need to elevate the current level of community and neighbourhood organisation, including the rapid response groups, immigrants' rights organisations and the school student strikers to a higher level, linked with worker and labour struggle. This could take the form of democratic conferences to discuss the best tactics for resisting ICE and Trump's 'divide-and-conquer' strategy, defence of activists and stewarding and the election of joint committees or councils of workers, neighbourhood activists and school students to conduct a mass coordinated struggle to remove ICE.

Responding to Alex Pretti killing

Unions must lead mass response

EXTRACTS FROM A STATEMENT PUBLISHED ONLINE BY ISG ON 25 JANUARY

Yesterday morning, 24 January, ICE agents in Minneapolis shot and killed Alex Pretti, an anti-ICE activist, Veterans Affairs nurse, and union member in the American Federation of Government Employees. This comes a day after tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis against ICE, in what organisers called "A Day of Truth and Freedom."

Minnesota has 379,000 union members, and union density sits at 14.2%, higher than the nationwide 9.9%. Unions should get political and throw their weight into the fight against ICE. The unions, by endorsing and supporting the day of action, have put themselves in a position of leadership of the anti-ICE movement in Minneapolis, at least in the headlines and media, but they have not yet mobilised their own membership out into the streets.

Already last night on Nicollet Ave where Alex Pretti was killed, Independent Socialist Group members saw the beginnings of an occupation. There, were multiple blockades set up, 'warming stations', medic stations, etc. Multiple tables on the streets provided food and water, hand warmers, masks, and there were activists in the crowd with hand warmers to ensure community safety. The warming station at Glam Donuts, outside of which Alex Pretti was killed, had coffee, water, and restrooms activists could use. People inside were discussing what next for the fight against ICE, raising ideas and strategy. Occupations such as these in Minneapolis could empower working people to protect themselves against the capitalist state and its violent forces.

Occupations and blockades

Working people, youth, and other activists can take over Nicollet Avenue and do a total occupation of the area, set up blockades, and refuse to let ICE, Minneapolis police, and other police forces into the neighbourhood. This can be run under the democratic control of working people through elected committees.

An emergency mass meeting of unions, community groups, left groups, and individual activists can be organised to plan out next steps to escalate the fight against ICE. Neighbourhood meetings can allow activists to come together to discuss and debate what needs to be done and to elect representatives to attend a joint citywide emergency meeting, where a plan of action can be discussed and voted on. With larger and broader organisation, coordinated action, and a strong plan to stop ICE such as a serious general strike fully backed by union members, Minneapolis working people could make real the demand for ICE out now!

CWI CIT-CIO

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









Photos from the rally at the site of the murder of Alex Pretti PHOTOS: ISG

UCU NEC elections: Re-elect Duncan Moore

Build now towards serious national action in 2026

Elections to the University and College Union (UCU) National Executive Committee (NEC) open on 30 January. Socialist Party member Duncan Moore is standing for re-election in a UK-elected Further Education (FE) seat.





Left: January 2026 FE strike
Above: Duncan Moore
PHOTOS: SOCIALIST PARTY

DUNCAN MOORE SAYS

These elections come at a crucial time for our union. After 18 months it is clear that Keir Starmer's Labour government has no intention of solving the enormous crisis of funding, pay, privatisation and casualisation in post-16 education.

UCU members have said loudly and clearly: no longer will we put up with our sector being ignored, our workloads increasing, our pay falling behind the cost of living.

In ballots in the autumn in both further and higher education (HE), UCU members voted overwhelmingly for national action.

Members in HE were scuppered by the anti-union turnout thresholds, disgracefully still left in place by Starmer – our union must demand they are repealed immediately.

Members in 17 FE colleges in England took coordinated strike action for a 10% pay rise and for funding in January, in a show of strength against employers and the Labour government. In many more, concessions on pay have been won.

Funding and national pay bargaining

Members demand that FE is properly resourced so that education workers can meet the needs of our students. We also demand a proper, national bargaining mechanism with the government, instead of fighting each college management separately.

To fight to win that needs serious national action, which I have argued for since being elected to the NEC in 2024.

Opening 2026 with nationwide strikes was a step forward, but we could have been stronger. Our action could have taken place sooner, and it could have involved many more branches.

But the majority on the Further Education Committee (FEC) - those who support the current general secretary Jo Grady - voted to delay the ballot and delay the action. I argued to reballot branches which narrowly missed the thresholds, but that was opposed by the majority on the FEC.

Now we need to build the action, for those colleges still fighting to win the best possible settlements. If the leadership of the national union will not act, then I will give support to those branches discussing and coordinating their own strike dates. That action will pressure the government and inspire others.

I will be arguing for an aggregated national ballot of FE colleges in June, to be strike-ready in September.

I am clear that most members in FE are not content with the state of our sector. Unfortunately, too many on our FEC simply are not willing to lead a fight.

That needs to include fighting to end marketisation and casualisation - FE should be under democratic public control and management, not unelected corporate directors. The rich are getting richer while the education crisis deepens - make them pay!

On the NEC, I also fight for the UCU to build national action alongside other education unions, including the National Education Union in schools. September's TUC Congress agreed to call a national trade union demonstration against Labour austerity. UCU must campaign for that to be called as soon as possible.

And we need our own political voice. Along with my fellow Socialist Party member on the NEC, Marco Tesei, I have campaigned for our union to open up a debate about how we can achieve that. UCU Congress voted overwhelmingly for that last May.

UCU has now set up a parliamentary group, but we need the lay elected leadership of our union to call in all politicians who say they stand on our side to put our demands to them, so that we form a parliamentary group that really fights for us.

UCU should take the lead in discussing with other unions about political representation. And encourage our members to stand as anti-austerity, socialist candidates in the council elections. We need socialist policies!

And that applies to standing against the rising support for Reform as well. They are seeking to exploit the deep-seated desperation of people driven down by decades of poverty and austerity. That is why, to undercut support for Reform and the racists who want to divide us, we have to fight for jobs, homes and fully funded services for all.

- Vote Duncan Moore #1 for UK-elected (FE). Back fighting, left candidates for other NEC seats and Regi Pilling for Vice President
- If you would like to know more or get involved, contact: mooredalex@googlemail.com

Organise together for a democratic, fighting UCU

A number of candidates are standing in the NEC election who want a more democratic, fighting union. Some are members of the SWP-led 'UCU Left' grouping, others are independent lefts.

I have argued for a united left stand to maximise our chance of winning a fighting leadership.

There are three UK-elected FE seats up for election. Given what is at stake, it is very disappointing that the UCU Left have chosen to stand for all three seats, against myself as the left incumbent.

Thanks to all those in UCU Left who argued against that. I want to work with all serious activists to build a strong, genuine broad left within UCU.

Birmingham school strike: 'The CEO has got to go'

TED WOODLEY
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

500 striking teachers and support staff crammed into Victoria Square in Birmingham city centre for a rally on 21 January. Schools in the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (ATLP) across the Midlands were closed down by the National Education Union (NEU) strike action, provoked by the trust boss's decision to slash 10% of the staff.

The rally heard speeches from NEU reps alongside solidarity speeches from other unions, including the Fire Brigades Union and Unite bin workers. Matt Reid, Unite convenor of the bin workers, expressed his members' support, and thanked the teachers and school workers for their ongoing support of the year-long bin workers strike.

NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede gave a speech in which he savaged the ATLP leadership and called for the resignation of CEO Richard Gill, along with the rest of the ATLP board, provoking massive cheers from the crowd. He drew still bigger cheers when he rightly called for an end to the failed academies programme of privatisation, and a return of schools to local accountability.



PHOTO: CORINTHIA WARD

Birmingham is being rocked by workers' action - see facing page for the bin strike

Heroic Brum bin strike continues

Let's stand workers' candidates in May's 'bin strike election'

NICK HART
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

It's nearly 13 months since the Birmingham bin workers started their heroic strike against deskilling and pay cuts of up to £8,000 a year. In that time, Labour council bosses have thrown everything at them, running up a bill of at least £33 million in their attempts to break the strike.

You might think that after all this the council would be keen to talk to Unite the Union representatives to strike a deal to get the bin workers back doing the job they've dedicated years of their life to. But, despite the false picture painted by councillors and the government-imposed commissioners sitting above them, the council has not been willing to come to the table to negotiate since May last year.

For want of formal discussions, Unite representatives recently attempted to speak to the deputy leader of the council, Sharon Thompson, outside her advice surgery last week - she blanked them on the way between her chauffeur-driven Porsche and the door!

With the backing of Unite, other trade unionists and many ordinary Brummies, the bin workers are prepared to carry on striking as long as it takes, and have shown so in overwhelming strike ballots - not just of the permanent workforce but the 50-plus agency workers who have come over to the right side of the picket line in the last few months.



Braving storms to lobby the Labour council on 27 January NICK HART

This means that this May's council elections - the first across the city since the council declared bankruptcy in 2023 - could take place with the strike ongoing, fly-tipping piling up, and only black bins collected intermittently. If the council want to make it the 'bin strike election', then so be it!

Bin workers, their families and the overwhelming majority of working-class Brummies won't be voting Labour, and Keir Starmer and his stooges running the council know it.

But with each of the Tories, Lib Dems, Greens and Reform currently carrying out cuts at other councils, a change of regime in Birmingham won't in itself be a guarantee of a fair deal for bin workers, or any other council employees and service users.

That's why it's all the more important we do all we can to get genuinely pro-worker candidates on the ballot paper and elected to the council. Birmingham Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is aiming to encourage this process by hosting a people's budget conference in February.

This will seek the views of local trade unions, community organisations and campaigns on what services Birmingham needs and how the council could be run with and for working-class communities in this city. The list of demands and policies drawn up from this will form part of the platform of TUSC candidates standing in May's elections. We'll be asking other candidates who have opposed cuts in words whether they will pledge to help lead the fight for decent services, not a race to the bottom.

Birmingham Summit for a People's Budget

Monday 23 February, 6pm
Comfort Inn, Station Street, Birmingham City Centre B5 4DY

- Hosted by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

Camden teaching assistants fight to be valued

HUGO PIERRE
FORMER CAMDEN UNISON SCHOOLS CONVENOR

Unison members at Richard Cobden Primary School in London are taking four days of strike action to end the undervaluing of their role in the school. Teaching assistants (TAs) are now working strictly to their job descriptions and the senior leadership's perceptions of the work they do in school.

Hidden away in their offices, the senior leadership team (SLT) continues to deny the essential, creative and important role the TAs play in making sure all children in class can access learning. The school, in a very deprived area of Camden, has children with a wide variety of learning needs. In order to downplay their role, the SLT says that teachers direct the TAs' work. But even the most experienced teachers rely on either a dedicated class TA, or one that is dedicated to individual children with the most complex needs, to make sure the class runs smoothly.

The TAs are now demanding to see papers and plans before they work with children. They are only supporting children when they've been given explicit instructions by teachers.

Previous strike action has had a big impact on the school. SLT and the governing body continue to mislead the council, which did the grade evaluation for the posts, about the true extent of the work they do. Many of the teachers back their TAs, even though the work-to-rule can be difficult for them, and parents and students have been very supportive.

The TAs are organised and sticking together. They know they play a bigger part in the school than management gives them credit for, and they are determined to only stop their action when that's recognised in a higher pay grade.

Liverpool workers in IT and business support fight a pay freeze

HANNAH PONTING
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

On 26 January, Socialist Party members in Liverpool joined a Unite the Union picket of striking Diligenta workers, at one of five sites currently taking action. Diligenta is a company that provides IT and business support to private and public sector contracts.

Workers explained that the dispute has been ongoing since the 2025 pay deal. That 'offer' initially imposed a pay freeze, with the company claiming it could not afford anything more, despite making profits large enough to pay £14 million in dividends to shareholders the same year.

Following a consultative ballot for strike action the company made further offers, including a proposal to backdate pay to the correct date. However, it has still failed to offer workers the correct amount.

In response to the most recent offer, 80% of members turned out to vote within a week, with a decisive 87% rejecting the deal.

Pickets told us this dispute is not "a flash in the pan or a quick argument" but the result of a long-term issue lasting years. Staff on average have been facing 15% real-terms pay cuts going back to 2020.

Over half the membership were out on the picket lines in the freezing cold.

This dispute also highlights a wider lack of transparency from the company. As one worker put it: "Why do we have to take this? Why do we have to just keep getting told what the narrative is?"

One of the workers told us that they appreciated young Socialist Party members showing their support. "If people come down to the picket line they will be welcome. It's just great if people want to show that level of support".

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National Education Union members have been striking for better pay and conditions at Access Creative College in Tower Hamlets
PHOTO: HUGO PIERRE

DESPAIR IN DAVOS



WORLD CAPITALIST ORDER IN DISARRAY

PHOTO: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM/CC

WHAT WE THINK

Every year a few thousand bankers, industry chiefs, media moguls and capitalist politicians gather at the World Economic Forum in Davos, a resort in the Swiss Alps, to discuss the state of their capitalist system. This year, measured in terms of the wealth of the very richest, Davos participants had every reason to be cheerful. According to Oxfam, billionaire wealth jumped by over 16% in 2025, to $18.3 trillion – its highest level in history. Not a few of those billionaires were there in person at Davos, but cheerful is the very last word that could be used to describe the mood.

US President Donald Trump dominated the entire event. Writing in the Financial Times Howard Lutnick, Trump's Secretary of Commerce, declared, "We're not going to Davos to uphold the status quo. We're going to confront it head-on. For far too long, the fate of the global economy has been decided by an international establishment who took America's economic power and gave it to the rest of the world." Instead, "this administration is putting America First". He was heckled at the World Economic Forum when he put it even more crudely: "We are here at Davos to make one thing crystal clear: With President Trump, capitalism has a new sheriff in town."

Greenland

Prior to his arrival at Davos, Trump completely dominated the global news and the minds of those already at the World Economic Forum, with his escalating and frenzied demands to 'own Greenland', including threatening new tariffs against 'allies' who dared to oppose him on the issue. The world looked on in alarm.

In Greenland itself, which has a population of less than 60,000, thousands took to the streets under banners proclaiming 'Greenland is not for sale'. Opinion polls there show overwhelming opposition to being part of the US. Knowledge of how badly indigenous people are treated in America, given that 90% of Greenlanders are Inuit, is a factor in that mood. That did not mean, however, that demonstrators saw the US working class as their enemy. On the contrary, one protester, a nurse, interviewed by the Guardian, explained that she was marching "to give a message to the American people" to appeal for them "to stand against their own President".

Nine out of ten Americans do oppose taking Greenland "by force", with a sizeable majority also opposing attempts to 'own it' by any other means. No surprise that, as the stock markets start to get jittery at the developing crisis, Trump dialled down his rhetoric on the issue, claiming to have agreed "a framework for a future deal" with Mark Rutte, the general secretary of NATO.

In no way does that mean, however, that Davos ended with a return to 'business as usual'. It represented a qualitative step in the ripping up of the so-called 'world order' of the previous era: "a rupture", as Canadian prime minister Mark Carney described it. At the start of January, defending the US kidnapping of Venezuelan President Maduro and his wife, Steven Miller, White House Policy Chief, baldly stated the approach of this Trump regime to global relations, saying: "You can talk all you want about international niceties and everything else, but we live in a world, in the real world, that is governed by strength, that is governed by force, that is governed by power."

US imperialism using its military and economic strength to defend the interests of US capitalism is nothing new. We do not join Carney, Starmer and the rest in crying over the ending of the old allegedly 'rules-based order.' Set up by US imperialism in the aftermath of the second world war, it was always designed to defend US interests, and the US ruling class was always happy to break 'the rules' whenever it suited them. In alleged defence of that 'ruled-based order,' US President George W Bush, backed by Tony Blair's New Labour government in Britain, invaded and occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. More than 600,000 died in Iraq alone and it led not to the peace and prosperity promised, but to civil war and social disintegration. There has been widespread condemnation of Trump's suggestion that non-US NATO troops in Afghanistan avoided the front line. The biggest crime, however, are all those who died – around 170,000 Afghans and 3,500 NATO troops (just over 1,000 not from the US) – during the twenty-year occupation.

1/5
of the population of Minneapolis took to the street on 23 January in opposition to Trump

Changing role of the US

Nonetheless, Trump and his coterie's crude attacks on the 'international institutions' do reflect profound changes in the role of the US, and of the global geopolitical situation. Fundamentally, they reflect the decline of US imperialism, summed up in Trump's retreat to try to police the 'Western Hemisphere', rather than the whole world. At this stage it is still the strongest power on the planet by some distance, but it is on its way down. Back at the start of the century when Republican President George W Bush was in the White House (see 'Socialism Today editorial: Behind Trump's imperial delusions' at socialistparty.org.uk for more background) US imperialism was the single world hyperpower, confident of its ability to mould the whole world in its interests.

That enormous confidence - hubris in reality - flowed from events just over a decade earlier, when the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe. Brutal totalitarian regimes, they bore no resemblance to genuine socialism but were nonetheless not capitalist, based as they were on very distorted planned economies, and were therefore outside the domination of US imperialism. In the Cold War era the US had dominated the capitalist world; now for a while it bestrode the whole planet under the banner of 'globalisation'.

But that seemingly unlimited power is long gone. The disasters of Iraq and Afghanistan (the legacy of which in the US still leave Trump very cautious about committing ground troops to foreign interventions), the 2008-09 financial crash and the Great Recession it triggered, and above all the rise of China as a powerful rival which now dominates global manufacturing – all have left US capitalism weakened and its elite increasingly split on how best to defend their interests. Much of the American capitalist class is alarmed by Trump's reckless approach, but his anger at the international institutions represents a real mood among a section of them, because international institutions that US imperialism set up are no longer serving their interests.

> **The working class as an organised force is beginning to re-enter the scene of history. Rather than banging the drum to arm one capitalist class against another, the workers' movement internationally needs to urgently fight to build its own independent strength as a first step to building a new world**

Davos then was full of leaders of second tier global powers bewailing a reality that has been obvious for some time, but is now completely unavoidable. Regardless of the international institutions that still exist on paper, the US is no longer going to 'police the world' but only crudely defend its own narrow interests, as it attempts to take a bigger share of the spoils, hitting out at foes and 'friends' alike. Bart de Wever, the right-wing Belgian prime minster, pathetically summed up the European capitalists' miserable situation saying, "Being a happy vassal is one thing, being a miserable slave is something else." The European capitalist powers are prepared to crawl on their bellies before Trump, but this 'strategy' is no longer working.

Trump's approach is particularly crude, but whoever is in the White House it is clear that the decline of the US means there is now a multipolar world, more comparable to the era between the first and second world wars than anything since. Every national capitalist class is struggling to defend its own interests, increasingly outside of any stable framework. And the European capitalist powers are in a greater relative decline even than the US. Growing pressure is therefore on the ruling classes of all European countries to 'club together', economically and militarily, in order to try and maximise their strength.

However, they cannot overcome the fact that Europe is a series of individual nation states, each with its own interests. Less than one-fifth of military procurement – much of it buying US-made kit - in the EU is done jointly, the rest is by individual countries. And it is not only the pressure to club together that is increased by the international situation, so too will the centrifugal forces, particularly in the face of a new global economic crisis. British capitalism – outside of the EU trading bloc, and always the most Atlanticist European power – is in a particularly acute dilemma.

Military spending increases

One thing that every capitalist class agrees on, however, is ramping up military spending. Across the EU it increased by 17% in 2024, and another 10% in 2025. So while living standards and public services continued to be squeezed, spending on weaponry rockets. Starmer has also promised increased military spending, but is under pressure from the generals to hike it much more.

Looking on in horror at Trump, and the increasingly unstable global situation, some who consider themselves on the left have naively supported Britain increasing its military expenditure. But this is based on the completely false premise that Britain's capitalist class – and its political representatives and state apparatus, including the army tops – have the same interests as the working-class majority.

Have they forgotten the generals who indicated they would not obey orders from a democratically elected Jeremy Corbyn-led government? This government and its predecessors act on behalf of the capitalist class, not the majority, and they have played their part in making the world a more dangerous place. By, for example, backing the Israel Defense Forces' slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza; or by taking part in the US-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan; or by countless other measures including recently helping Trump grab an oil tanker in the Atlantic.

Capitalism today is a system wracked by crises. Its rotten character is summed up in the abhorrent figure of Trump. We do not face world war, but wars and conflicts are clearly on the rise. The only way to bring that to an end is to overturn capitalism and begin to build a new socialist world based on peace, planning and cooperation. To achieve that requires the cohering of potentially the most greatest 'superpower' on the planet: the working-class majority worldwide. It is still at a very early stage, but the working class as an organised force is beginning to re-enter the scene of history. Rather than banging the drum to arm one capitalist class against another, the workers' movement internationally needs to urgently fight to build its own independent strength as a first step to building a new world. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which is fighting for every possible step in that direction.

Increasing opposition to Trump

Trump is facing increasing domestic opposition. Less than a third of voters think the country has improved under his rule. There have been a serious of massive protests against him. Last Friday, in Minneapolis, with a population of half a million, up to 100,000 took to the streets in freezing temperatures to demand ICE left their city. Strikes took place in support, despite a lack of lead from most of the trade union tops. That day the second horrific ICE killing in Minneapolis took place. In response, the protest movement is continuing to develop. The force that can defeat Trump, and beyond him the US capitalist system he defends, is above all the US working class.

For the working class in Minneapolis and in the US as a whole, and every country come to that, the most important assistance they could see from the working class in Britain is not to back up our own elite, but on the contrary to build a mass movement against Starmer, Badenoch, Farage, and all of the capitalist politicians. Central to that is fighting for the creation of a workers' party – giving a political voice to the trade unions, independent of all the rotten capitalist elites and fighting for a socialist programme: for power to be taken out of the hands of the major corporations and banks that dominate the economy, so society can be run democratically in the interests of the majority, instead of capitalism's ruthless pursuit of profit which is leading to evermore poverty, environmental destruction, and war.

SOCIALISM TODAY



Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party

February issue includes...

- **Behind Trump's imperial disorder** The Trump administration's kidnapping of Venezeulan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife has been swiftly followed by the ramping up of Trump's demands for the US control of Greenland. The editorial looks at what lies behind Trump's naked colonialism.
- **The real Chávez legacy** Following the US action in Venezuela, Socialism Today reprints an article by Tony Saunois that was first published in April 2013 following the death of Hugo Chávez, Maduro's predecessor, which draws up a balance sheet of his legacy and that of the 'Bolivarian revolution'.
- **Revisiting Corbynism and its lessons** The annual Socialism weekend in November included a discussion, led by Clive Heemskerk, on the lessons of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party.
- **Assessing the 'fascist' Meloni government** What is the character of Giorgia Meloni's coalition government in Italy? Is it fascist as some left groups claim, asks Christine Thomas?

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PHOTO: MADDIE ROONEY

Socialist candidates disqualified

Where next for Your Party & the fight for a new mass workers' party?

SOCIALIST PARTY STATEMENT

The eruption of enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party in summer 2025 was a product of the huge forces exerted by the acute need for the working class to have its own party.

They are forces that are greater now than at any point since Tony Blair completed his counter-revolution to turn the Labour Party into an out-and-out party of the capitalist class. For the first time since the immediate aftermath of the 2007-08 economic crisis and Great Recession that followed, the working class is experiencing the harsh reality of a Labour government ruling in the interests of the capitalist class.

The world is increasingly unstable and volatile, accelerated by Donald Trump's second presidency, with all of the horrors of the capitalist system displayed for all to see.

The collapse of support for the two primary capitalist establishment parties – Tories and Labour – has given space for the rise of Nigel Farage's right-populist Reform. The elections in May – which include to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments and every single seat on London councils, as well as thousands more council seats – present a watershed challenge for the hugely unpopular Starmer. As well as a huge opportunity to put the case for a socialist alternative to fight for fully funded local services and council homes.

Had those in the leadership of Your Party taken the correct approach in the months since its announcement, it could have marked a historic step forward for the working class in Britain.

Unfortunately, however, as a result of the wrong approach taken, Your Party is not en route to fulfil the huge potential it initially had. Your Party has been formed without a clear ideological basis on the need for the socialist transformation of society with the working class playing a central role, and without the necessary orientation to the trade unions. Instead, a top-down and undemocratic approach has been taken.

The Your Party Central Executive Committee elections, and importantly the exclusion of Socialist Party members, is a stark demonstration of that wrong approach.

Despite its initial potential, there is no mass participation in Your Party. In its most recent online poll, open to all members, 10,046 voted. As yet, no official structures have been formed. The huge opportunity to, as the Socialist Party has argued, 'turn to the working class' by taking a bold socialist, anti-cuts stand into May's local elections is not being seized.

And yet those tectonic forces that brought Your Party into existence have not gone away and are in fact increasing. The 800,000-plus who signed up in the first weeks have not disappeared. And Jeremy Corbyn's authority among sections of workers and youth, a legacy from his time as Labour leader, remains.

A rejection of the bureaucratic expulsions faced by socialists in the Labour Party previously, including most recently during Jeremy's battle against the Blairite machine, is in part behind a desire for 'unity' among the majority involved in Your Party. This was shown in the overwhelming conference vote in favour of dual membership.

The instinct that the working class itself is stronger united is absolutely correct. The Socialist Party puts the demand for a new mass party, to bring together the mass of the working class to fight in its own interests, central.

But unity is not achieved artificially from the top down, or through exclusions and bureaucratic measures. In any new party – even without pre-existing organisations, groups and factions – individuals with shared aims and objectives inevitably come together to organise and decide how best to fight for them. Even at its very young age and with modest numbers participating, the existence of multiple slates for the CEC elections, including ones headed by both Jeremy and Zarah, is a case in point.

The Socialist Party has engaged in the Your Party process entirely openly, introducing ourselves as members and selling the Socialist newspaper.

Your Party has a potential mass membership of hundreds of thousands, there is no question of the Socialist Party, with around 2,000 members, being able to numerically dominate votes.

Collective democratic voice

On the contrary, our approach is to try to politically convince others through discussion and debate. In fact, we have argued for Your Party to open to affiliations from trade union bodies and for them to have a collective democratic voice in the party's structures. With that would come the democratic involvement of potentially millions of organised workers.

Neither is the Socialist Party at odds with the aims and aspirations of Your Party, we share the objective to fight for a "democratic, member-led socialist party… with the working class at its heart".

Socialist Party activists have long been the flagbearers for a new mass workers' party, and have demonstrated a serious approach to working with other forces in the struggle for one. Standing in elections as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition alongside others including, until 2022, the RMT transport workers' union.

But the Socialist Party is steadfast in our insistence of maintaining our organisation and banner. Our party has a rich history of leading mass struggles of the working class, in Liverpool City Council in the 1980s and the victorious mass Poll Tax non-payment campaign in the early 1990s. The success of those campaigns contributed to the determination with which the capitalists drove us, then known as Militant, out of the Labour Party.

Those struggles were successful because they were led by Militant, which consciously sought to win the working class to a programme for the socialist transformation of society. A programme of nationalisation under democratic working-class control and management of big business and the banks, with wealth and power taken out of the hands of the capitalists and put into the hands of the working class.

In this volatile era of capitalist crisis and instability, with British capitalism stagnant and especially vulnerable, politicians elected at any level of government will quickly be confronted by the limits of the system. To effectively fight in the interests of the working class requires being prepared to help mobilise workers' struggles, and to help arm those struggles with a programme that points towards the need for the socialist transformation of society. The Socialist Party is vital for that task.

Socialist Party members will continue to be the most determined fighters for a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme. The most crucial arena for that struggle is within the structures of the trade unions. Another is by taking the appeal for a new party to the mass of the working class at the May elections. And as well, by putting forward the kind of approach Your Party needs to take if it is to play a role in the future development of a mass working-class party.

We urge Your Party members to endorse candidates who support the call to 'turn to the working class,' to put the trade unions central, to make the most of the opportunities presented for an anti-cuts socialist stand in May's elections, and stand against expulsions of socialists. And importantly, to join the Socialist Party and assist us in carrying out those struggles.

Socialist Party members will continue to be the most determined fighters for a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme



PHOTO: MADDIE ROONEY

Your Party CEC elections – socialists disqualified

The nominations process for the Your Party Central Executive Committee election opened on 21 January, running until 29 January. On 19 January, two Socialist Party members, Dave Nellist and April Ashley, among a number of others seeking nominations, were disqualified.

Andrew Jordan, Your Party nominating officer, informed Dave and April that this was for being in contravention of item 2 of the CEC election rules that state: "For the avoidance of doubt, members of other national political parties shall not be permitted to stand for election". Both sent an appeal to Your Party Treasurer Marion Roberts which was rejected.

In advance of nominations opening, on 7 January, the Socialist Party wrote to the interim leadership of Your Party, asking for clarification on the published election rules on dual membership. To date, this has received no response. (see 'Letter to Your Party, from the Socialist Party')

In our view, the CEC election rules are clearly in contradiction to what was passed by the founding conference. In fact, Your Party conference voted 69.2% in favour of allowing dual membership, and decisively against the only other option B: "Members may not hold membership in any other national political party." The founding documents and 'roadmap amendments' were drafted behind the scenes through an unknown process, with no avenues for amendments or democratic discussion.

Clearly the leadership interpret the conference decision differently to most members. But, rather than enforce their mistaken view, they could at least have held an online ballot to clarify the situation. An online vote of all members that took place from 23 to 30 December changed the constitution to expand the structure of the CEC to include 18 rather than 16 ordinary members, for example.

The CEC election rules state that Your Party conference agreed that "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."

The CEC currently being elected is set to take office on 28 February. And, according to conference decisions, serve a term of 18 months.

By interpreting the Your Party conference vote on dual membership as being in favour of excluding members of existing organisations until approved by the future CEC and ratified by conference could be used to exclude the Socialist Party until Autumn 2027.

Appealing disqualifications

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM APPEALS LODGED BY THREE SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS DISQUALIFIED.

April Ashley is a member of Unison's National Executive Council, re-elected as the female black members' rep in 2025, topping the poll with 28,792 votes

As I said in my application statement, I am a member of the Socialist Party. I will not be resigning. But given the decision at Your Party conference on dual membership, as well as the Socialist Party's support for Your Party and its aims, this should not be an issue.

Even more importantly, how are we building this new party? Jeremy and Zarah have said this party will be different, and the founding statement said it will be a 'democratic, member-led socialist party'. It also says that it should have the working class at its heart.

I am a Black woman worker. I am a working-class fighter. I am a member of a trade union national executive – and I am committed to building a political voice for the working class.

I request that you put me on the ballot and let the members decide if they want a socialist trade unionist and a life-long anti-racist campaigner representing them.



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

Dave Nellist, Socialist Militant supporting former Labour MP for Coventry South East (1983-1992) and Chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

In seeking to avoid exactly this problem, Hannah Sell, the Socialist Party General Secretary, wrote nearly two weeks ago to the four MPs currently leading Your Party, seeking to clarify the rules before any of our members, including myself, submitted a self-nomination.

Unfortunately, we have not received a reply to that communication, nor, regretfully, even an acknowledgement.

Your Party conference decisively rejected a ban on dual membership. And Jeremy and Zarah have consistently said Your Party will be different, fully controlled by its members. That cannot be the case if the members do not have access to a full range of views when selecting candidates for the Executive Committee.

I urge you to let members vote for whom they want on the CEC – and reject bans decided in secret.

Muhsin Manir, Unite the Union branch organiser at Lea Interchange bus garage in east London, in an ongoing dispute including strike action

I am a member of the Socialist Party, and I will not be resigning. I shouldn't have to.

We left Labour to get away from this! By excluding socialist activists before a single ballot is cast, you are mimicking the very same top-down, bureaucratic exclusions we saw in the Labour Party, the exact culture this party was founded to oppose.

I've been a London bus driver for 16 years. I'm an elected Unite organiser and have worn several hats in the union, from the Young Members' Committee to the frontline.

If 'Your Party' is serious about being a "party for the working class," how can you block a frontline union organiser just because I'm a socialist?

As an elected Unite organiser, I know how proper working-class democracy functions. In our unions, we don't disqualify candidates from the top down just because they belong to a political grouping or a "Broad Left." We accept nominations from the floor and let the members decide.

A branch of Die Linke, the Left Party in Germany, unanimously agreed to send the following Open letter to Your Party

We have learned that there is currently a controversy within Your Party about dual membership and the right of members of socialist organisations to stand for election. We can say that such dual membership is a matter of course inside Die Linke (Left Party) in Germany and that, since our branch was founded, we have had branch executive members who are also members of the sister organisation of the Socialist Party in England and Wales. This has never been a problem.

We believe it is important that there is transparency regarding such dual memberships. But if that is the case, what is wrong with letting the members decide who they want to represent them?

The success or failure of Your Party will not only affect Britain, but will also mean tailwinds or headwinds for the left internationally. Based on our experience in Germany, we believe that an open and inclusive approach is important for success.

From Die Linke Bad Cannstatt – Mühlhausen – Münster in Stuttgart, 22 January, 2026

‘We’ve had a rough deal, and other workers are struggling too’

Wakefield councillors fight cuts

IAIN DALTON
SOCIALIST PARTY YORKSHIRE SECRETARY

Despite the Labour government’s announcement of ‘extra’ funding for councils, Wakefield Labour council is making £11.5 million “service efficiencies and savings” – i.e. cuts.

Wakefield Socialist Party held a public meeting on 22 January to discuss how councillors can fight back against Keir Starmer’s austerity. We’ve discussed these issues before. But this is the first time we had the leader of the opposition on the council in the room!

Jake Williamson – an ex-Labour councillor, who voted against last year’s cuts budget, alongside another Labour councillor – formed the Unity group on the council. They have been joined by two other councillors, on a pro-worker and anti-austerity basis.

Jake pointed out that the ‘new money’ the council is receiving, isn’t new. Some was raised by baking-in council-tax rises, as well as taking money from other areas. He said: “Whilst we’ve had a rough deal from the Tories, I don’t want to see workers in London lose out, as they’re struggling too.”



Wakefield Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates and supporters in 2023

Jake and the Unity group have scored some victories, forcing the Labour majority to adopt their policies, such as agreeing to ‘in-house’ by default on contracts. Unite the Union research reckons this could free up to £12 million for spending on local services.

Unity group councillors want to take up issues in their alternative budget around housing and ending outsourcing and privatisation of services. Jake raised the importance of a national struggle against cuts.

Socialist Party member Michael Johnson was the other speaker. Michael built on Jake’s references to historic struggles, like the poll tax and Liverpool city council.

New homes, leisure centres, and other services – brought to working-class people as a result of their struggle in the 1980s, led by Militant, predecessors of the Socialist Party – made a real difference. So much so that the Labour vote in Liverpool actually went up repeatedly during their battle with the Margaret Thatcher Tory government.

Michael said that the technical means to struggle can always be found, so long as there is political will. Key in Liverpool’s battle in the 1980s was that councillors were spokespeople for a broader struggle, then organised through the District Labour Party, involving delegates from the trade unions and other workers’ organisations.

Socialist Party members are working alongside Unity group and Your Party supporters to push for the widest possible anti-austerity challenge in May’s all-out elections in Wakefield.

We’re fighting cuts in Reading

SAMUEL FISHER
READING SOCIALIST PARTY

Socialist Party members helped Your Party supporters in Reading organise a public meeting on 25 January. Socialist Party national youth and student organiser Adam Gillman, who stood for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in Reading in the general election, spoke.

20 attended, highlighting education, lack of services, and that “there is no money out there”. We answered these questions, saying how mobilising unions, the working class, and the nationalisation of the economy could combat these issues and reverse the cuts.

We talked about Reading’s ‘people’s budget conference’ on 7 February, to draw up demands to present to Reading Council at its budget meeting.

We want to show the working class that we do not have to take cuts lying down, and can fight them. We have a National Education Union (NEU) rep speaking, and have invited reps from FBU, BMA, Unite, Unison, as well as all Reading councillors. The Greens are sending two members.

A petition to “call upon Reading Borough Council, and other Berkshire councils to reverse budget cuts, set a needs-based budget, and publicly demand the Labour government to provide adequate finds for local councils” was agreed. We will use this at the budget meeting to show that people have had enough.

100 years – 1926 general strike

Back the paper that backs the working class

With May Day greetings in the Socialist

SCOTT JONES
MAY DAY GREETINGS CAMPAIGN ORGANISER

May 2026 marks a century since the 1926 general strike, one of the most important and explosive events in the history of the working class in Britain. Why not celebrate it by backing the Socialist? Our paper keeps this militant history alive, drawing out its lessons, and supporting workers who take to the picket lines and strike back today.

In recent years, there have been strike waves, marathon walkouts like the Birmingham bin workers, and picket lines up and down the country every week. And every week we feature them in the Socialist.

On strike

Socialist Party members join these workers in struggle as supporters, or as workers on strike themselves. These hundreds of struggles, including many victories, are reported every week in the pages of the Socialist.

We also put forward a socialist alternative to the capitalist chaos of war, cost-of-living struggles, and the crisis of working-class political representation.

It’s clear that the rest of the media does not do this, either repeating misinformation or only putting forward the bosses’ side of things. We need organised workers to support the alternative – the Socialist.

For prices visit **socialistparty.org.uk/mayday**
20% discount deadline 30 March 2026



May Day is an annual celebration of workers’ struggle against capitalism. Its origins lie in the general strike for an eight-hour working day. Each year, we ask groups of workers and trade unionists to support the Socialist newspaper, and its revolutionary, anti-war, pro-working-class ideas, by financing a May Day greeting.

Can your trade union branch, community campaign, workplace colleagues, trade union council, or student society send us a donation and short message of solidarity? We publish these each year on International Workers’ Day to help fund the socialist press.

Help us get that message out there and continue to report and support workers in struggle by backing the paper that backs the working class.

- Send greetings, see prices and make payments: socialistparty.org.uk/mayday
- Campaign material and enquiries: scottjones@socialistparty.org.uk
- Read more ‘1926 general strike: when workers tasted power’ at socialistparty.org.uk

Isle of Dogs – council homes not unaffordable private flats

CHRIS NEWBY
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

In the shadow of Canary Wharf, where its unimaginable wealth sits alongside working-class Londoners, private developers are planning to build 850 private flats on the Mastmarker site in the Isle of Dogs.

Just 150 are due to be ‘affordable.’ But at 80% of market rent, even these ‘affordable’ flats will be well out of reach of working-class people. Tower Hamlets Socialist Party has begun campaigning on this outside the local supermarket.

We are arguing for the independent ‘Aspire’ council to compulsorily purchase this site, and all other redevelopment sites in the area, and build much-needed council flats, as the start of a mass council-house building programme across the borough. There are 28,000 people on the Tower Hamlets housing waiting list.

We got a really good response to our campaigning. People are angry that yet more expensive private flats are being planned.

Several people who signed our petition are interested in helping the campaign. We raised £40 to help fund the Socialist Party’s campaigning, with one woman donating £20.

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

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET		Q1: JANUARY-MARCH 2026	DEADLINE: 31 MARCH 2026
South West	333	2,100	16%		
Eastern	192	1,300	15%		
Yorkshire	281	2,650	11%		
North West	115	1,200	10%		
Southern & SE	207	2,400	9%		
West Midlands	226	2,700	8%		
London	265	5,000	5%		
Wales	126	2,400	5%		
East Midlands	88	2,050	4%		
Northern	30	800	4%		
Other	221	2,400	9%		
TOTAL	2,083	25,000	8%		



IAIN DALTON

Hull – Kurdish solidarity protest says: ‘Hands off Rojava’

PHIL CULSHAW
HULL SOCIALIST PARTY

Hull’s Kurdish community protested with those who wished to stand in solidarity on 22 and 24 January. Chants of ‘Free, Free Kurdistan’ and ‘No More ISIS.’

The 22 January protest was passionate, youthful, and noisy. The 24 January protest of 300 was more sombre.

Since 2012, Rojava has been a self-governing autonomous area. And the Kurdish-based Syrian Defence Forces (SDF) has fought ultra-reactionary Islamists ISIS.

Now Syria’s right-wing Islamist government has released ISIS supporters from prison, insisted that the SDF disband and integrate into the Syrian armed forces, and that a government-appointed official takes over governing Rojava. Once again, Kurdish people, and their desire for democratic self-determination, are being betrayed by the imperialist powers.

Joe Gibbons, Hull trades union council president, offered solidarity to those protesting on 22 January. Socialist Party member Mike Whale, the trades council’s former president, spoke on 24 January.

Socialist Party placards and leaflets were snapped up. Kurdish protesters were so impressed by our leaflets that they requested to distribute them themselves, giving them to passers-by.

A gang of curious youth approached, and a Socialist Party member spoke with them. When it was explained the role the Kurds had played in fighting ISIS, any animosity they had vanished. For the support and solidarity shown, Iain Dalton, Socialist Party Yorkshire secretary, was invited to speak on behalf of the Socialist Party too.

EXTRACTS FROM HULL SOCIALIST PARTY LEAFLET:

Once again, the Kurds have been abandoned by the US and other Western powers. Reactionary regimes, in particular Erdogan in Turkey, will see US withdrawal as the green light to further attack Rojava.

No reactionary-led state will allow the Kurds an independent homeland. This is because an independent Kurdistan would challenge the dictatorships across the Middle East, and the big imperialist powers that back them – particularly if it was based on socialist principles.

Workers in the UK and across Europe recognise the heroic role that the Kurdish masses in Rojava have played fighting against right-wing Islamic fundamentalism.

With Donald Trump’s new relationship with the Al-Sharaa HTS government in Syria, the US regime has decided the Kurds’ role is “largely expired”. US policy makers have described their limited support for the SDF as “temporary, tactical, and transactional”.

The real allies of the Kurdish people are the working class in the region, and around the world. Demonstrations against the current assault on Kurdish forces and the threat to Rojava have seen demonstrations across the UK and internationally.

The Kurds, and other oppressed peoples of the Middle East, and the entire working class, can only rely on their own strength, self-organisation, and class solidarity.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS’ INTERNATIONAL SAYS:

- Hands off Rojava – working-class solidarity and mass protests around the world to oppose the HTS regime’s advance
- Solidarity with all religious and ethnic minorities and workers who resist the HTS regime
- Democratic rights for all! Full equality for women! The right to organise freely!
- Build democratically run, multi-ethnic defence militias
- No trust in regional and imperialist powers, who have only ever betrayed Kurds
- Build powerful independent workers’ organisations, including trade unions and mass workers’ parties, on a socialist programme, in Syria, Turkey, and across the region
- Full cultural and national rights for Kurds, including the right to self-determination
- Overthrow capitalism! For a socialist Kurdistan, as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East, on a voluntary and equal basis, to bring lasting peace and a transformation of living standards

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

Herts uni sit-in wins for Gazan student

CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM
HERTS SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Two Herts Socialist Students members organised a sit-in in December to advocate for a Palestinian student, who had been denied an offer by the higher-ups at the University of Hertfordshire, for discriminatory reasons.

The student had been granted a series of phone-call interviews to assess their English language abilities, rather than sitting a conventional English language test, due to their circumstances living through the genocide, and currently living in a camp in Gaza.

No management understanding

However, these interviews put them at an unfair disadvantage. Management failed to show any understanding for the student’s lived experiences:

- Damaged infrastructure in Gaza, causing poor phone reception
- Immense pressure of their family’s and their own future at stake
- Inappropriate and inconsiderate questions, such as “what’s your favourite food?”, and “what do you like to do in your spare time?” to someone suffering through starvation and frequent displacements

Herts Socialist Students recognised this institutionalised racism against international students, and decided to take action, acting as last-minute unofficial advocates for the student’s case.

By sheer luck, we met the heads of the uni’s International Office in person. They told us there was nothing we could do. We informed them we would not leave until we had the opportunity to advocate properly.

After several meetings that day, we convinced them to give the applicant a third interview, with questions that were trauma-informed, and took their circumstances into account. They passed with flying colours.

Mass movement

The fact that two students were able to have such a large impact on their decision highlights the sheer disregard for the lives of international students, which was demonstrated with the original decision. The uni insisted it was not negotiable, until it was.

We can stand up to oppression, and unchallenged unelected bureaucrats on campus. If only two students were able to have such an immediate impact, the possibilities for mobilising on other issues are huge.

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

Socialist Students conference 2026

Saturday 14 February 2026, University of Manchester

Register here:



IAN PATTISON

WAPPING dispute 40 years on

When print unions fought back against press baron attacks

On 24 January 1986, print unions went on strike at the News International titles. Press baron Rupert Murdoch was determined to break the unions' 100% membership ('closed shop') by sacking 6,000 print workers and using scab labour. His confidence came from having the support of the bosses' Thatcher government and its anti-union laws, backed by the full force of the police and judiciary. In contrast, the national trade union leaders were unprepared and timid, leading to the collapse of the strike on 5 February 1987.

Peter Jarvis - Socialist Party member and at the time a trade union activist on the London Region committee of the National Graphical Association (NGA) - reflected on this historic strike on the 30th anniversary in 2016. The following is an edited reprint.

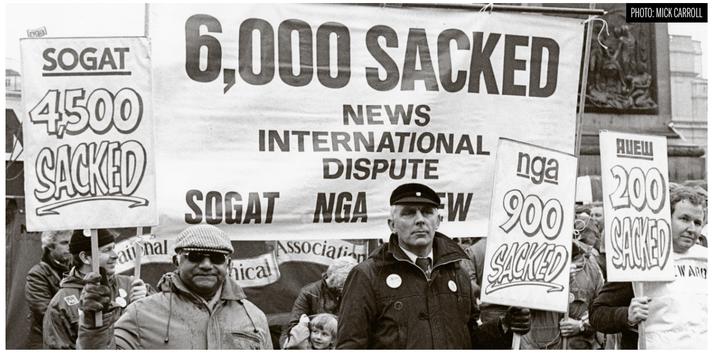


PHOTO: MICK CARROLL



PHOTO: DAVE SINCLAIR



PHOTO: MICK CARROLL

Although it was a battle fought a generation ago, its lessons are just as relevant for our movement today.

Before the strike the print unions, in some areas, had control over hiring. This was a form of workers' control and a powerful weapon in industrial negotiations.

Being a shop steward, called an FoC/MoC (Father/Mother of the Chapel), gave you a sense of the unions' power. Any member applying for a vacancy would introduce themselves first to the FoC and produce a card from the union. Only then would they go and talk to the management. If the employers wanted to reject the member's application they had to explain their reasons to the union.

The press barons hated our power to stop the presses - a form of workers' oversight. For example, during the 1984-85 miners' strike, the Sun wanted to portray miners' union leader Arthur Scargill doing a Nazi salute under the headline 'Mine Fuhrer'. It appeared with the picture missing.

No wonder the likes of Murdoch wanted an end to the influence of print workers.

On 23 January 1986, the print unions voted by 82% for strike action. On the same day, Murdoch announced massive job cuts with no unions or union members at Wapping. At the weekend, the News of the World and the Sunday Times were printed by scab labour at the new Wapping plant, in east London.

These scabs had been provided with the connivance of the leaders of another trade union, the electricians' union, EETPU.

News of the EETPU's scabbing role was leaking out. Scabs were being trained to replace the print workers but our union leaders did nothing.

The battle against the newspaper barons came as no surprise. The Militant (now the Socialist) wrote: "The whole trade union movement must be prepared to rally behind the print unions in the battle to defend the closed shop. Defeat will represent a setback for every trade unionist". (August 1985)

Later: "A campaign of explanation to the rank and file of the dangers if the introduction of technology is on the bosses' terms must be waged.

"This must then be followed up with mass membership meetings. The message must be made clear to every employer who attacks even an individual union member that standing behind them is the full force of the print unions". (October 1985)

Unfortunately, none of this was done. Murdoch's plan for the move to Wapping was well known. But instead of preparing, all the union leaders tried to get an agreement with Murdoch at the expense of other unions' members. They should have formulated a common approach, rather than following their self-interest.

It was suggested that action should start before Christmas, thereby undermining Murdoch's most profitable period. Instead our leaders called for 'reasonableness'. They believed in their ability to negotiate a settlement. No one else did!

The unions showed disunity while Murdoch plotted. The Tories' anti-trade union laws were planned for such a battle with the print unions - including the sequestration (confiscation) of union funds which was used with success during the Stockport Messenger dispute in 1983.

Demands

The strike started on 24 January 1986 and, in the issue dated the same day, Militant's front page headline proclaimed, 'Fort Murdoch - Strike for union rights'. The article outlined our programme:

- A united fight by all print unions
- For a complete shutdown of Fleet Street
- All-Fleet Street union rank-and-file FoC and MoC committee to run the strike
- 24-hour print strike
- Conferences of FoCs and MoCs throughout the trade to discuss the strike
- If any union is fined or its funds sequestrated by the courts an immediate print strike to be called
- Trades Union Congress (TUC) to mobilise maximum support including industrial action
- Expel the EETPU immediately from the TUC unless they stop their strike-breaking role
- Defend the closed shop
- No redundancies
- Maintain manning levels
- Nationalisation of the press facilities under workers' control and management

Re-reading the demands, the strategy still makes as much sense to me now as then.

The demand for a complete shutdown of Fleet Street was crucial for victory. Restricting the battle to the News International workers meant appeals for solidarity would be difficult. It was a fight to save the jobs in Fleet Street, therefore, it needed to be spread to other newspapers first. Other workers are reluctant to support action if those with most to lose are still working.

However, the idea was stonewalled. First it was 'impractical'. The union tops had an alternative answer - a boycott of the scab papers. A correct tactic but alone it would never work. The tops believed in it so much that it was relaunched a number of times and in the end its failure was one of the reasons for calling off the strike.

Another problem was that the TUC and the union tops were preaching the class collaboration policy of 'new realism'. 'Wait for the return of a Labour government' was the message. Eventually, we got a New Labour government and the same anti-trade unions laws remain on the statute books.

In July 1986 the TUC, desperate to resolve the dispute, sent the 'scab master general' Eric Hammond - general secretary of the EETPU - off to Los Angeles to discuss with Murdoch. Nothing came of it, apart from that Murdoch was emboldened. The print workers needed solidarity.

Solidarity action would make the unions fall foul of the employment laws and lead to the sequestration of our funds. Sogat's (the largest union involved) funds and all its resources were sequestrated within days of the strike because their wider membership took solidarity action.

What was the response of Sogat? They 'purged their contempt' (ie agreed to abide by the law) and things went back to normal. Without solidarity, the unions had no effective strategy. Sequestration was inevitable, so why no counter-plan? Later, it was used to distance members from their press colleagues.

By March, Militant raised the call for a one-day strike of Fleet Street. The argument against was that it would give the Murdoch titles a free run as they would be the only papers on the streets. We suggested a Saturday night for the strike with all newspaper workers picketing Wapping for the whole night. Murdoch's papers would never have got out.

Eventually, the TUC supported a mass picket and the turnout stopped the papers but they ended it at midnight and, as the numbers dwindled, the papers escaped. The lesson was that large numbers of pickets could stop the papers and stop the police violence.

Repression

One demand that did not appear on our original list was the call for an inquiry into police violence.

As soon as the pickets became serious, the police tactics became clear - to ensure that the papers were distributed at any cost. But the violence of the police was something I had never experienced. The mounted police rode at a group of marchers which included children. Away from the main roads and cameras, attacks against individuals were as vicious as anything I had ever seen. Once they were caught by a TV crew but their solution was simple - smash the camera!

Our NGA chapel moved a motion calling for an inquiry into the police brutality, which was duly passed at regional level. But there was little response.

The leaders had no other strategy to offer. They just sued for peace. This was rejected by Murdoch time and time again, and eventually the print leaders walked away.

What made the leaders' lack of strategy puzzling was that three years earlier the NGA fought against the Stockport Messenger where similar tactics were employed by management, especially sequestration.

Although Militant had a strategy that would have given a better chance for victory, unfortunately, we never had the forces to enact it. The idea of an all-Fleet Street strike was rejected by some on the left, especially the Communist Party which had influence in some Sogat branches.

The most important lesson of the dispute was that without a clear strategy and bold leadership, the struggle against the press barons, backed by Tory laws, could not be won.

Today, Thatcher's anti-union laws remain, kept in place by Labour, and added to by Tory governments that have followed. A key demand for socialists is for the abolition of all anti-trade union laws. A key task is to campaign for fighting, democratic leaderships of our unions to ensure success in future struggles.

Police violence

Letter published in Militant:

"On Saturday 15 February the London Young Socialists organised a march from Tower Hill to Wapping (left). The march was peaceful and good natured until the police moved in.

When the march tried to picket the plant the police charged in, knocking anyone in their way to the ground. Snatch squads were sent in to frighten the pickets off... I saw police kicking, pushing, swearing, punching and pulling people's hair.

I was arrested. After I had been fingerprinted, photographed, searched and locked in a cell on my own for one and a half hours I was allowed to go. I am a teenage girl who does not live in London and it was one o'clock in the morning."

RISE OF MILITANT

by Peter Taaffe
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Socialist Party

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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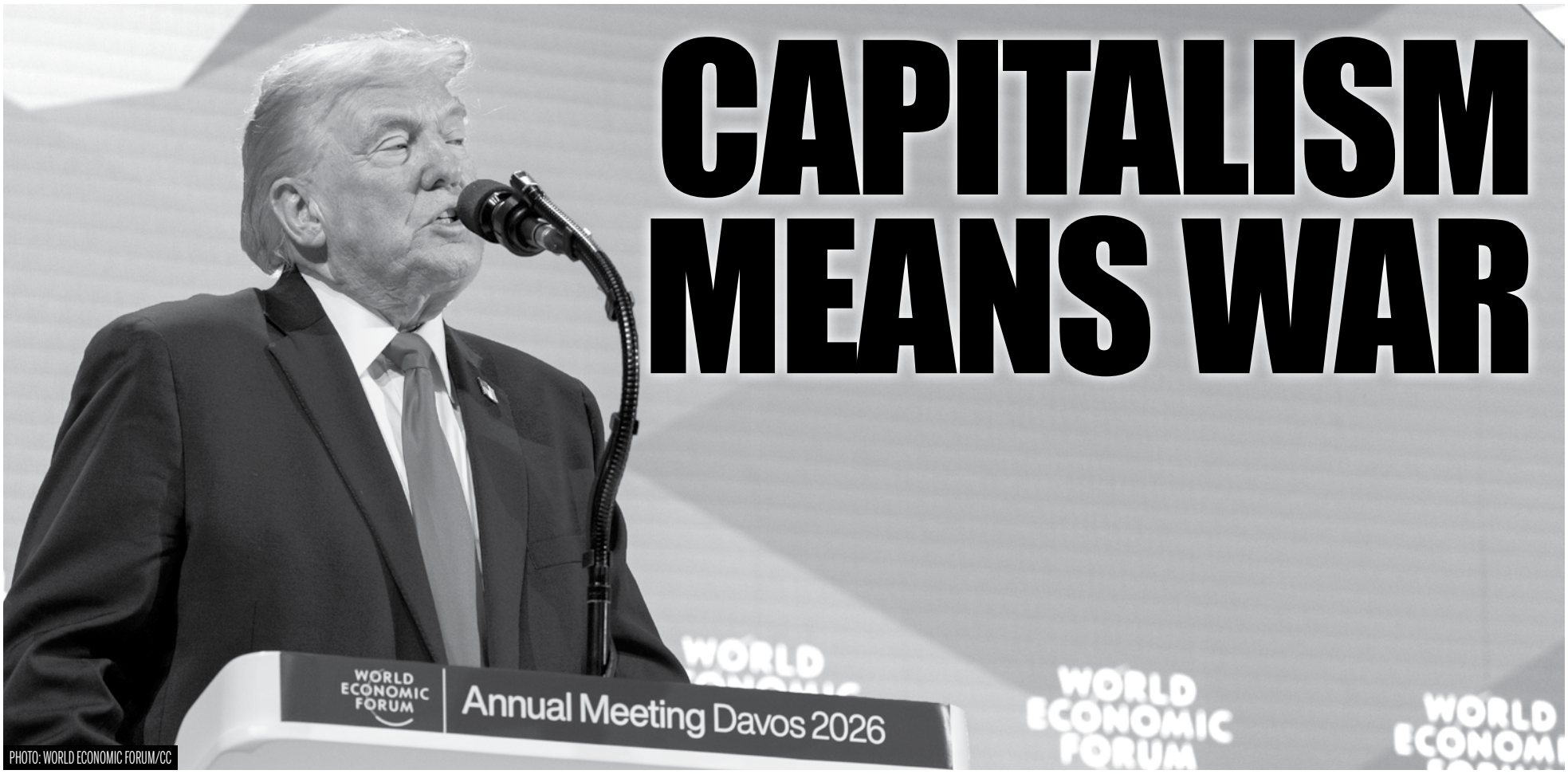


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CAPITALISM MEANS WAR

FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

Socialist Students Conference 2026

Organising the student fightback for socialist change

Saturday 14 February
University of Manchester



Gone forever is the world where capitalist regimes – chief among them the US regime – could confidently pretend to defend 'justice and democracy' internationally.

The brutal state execution of anti-ICE protesters in Minneapolis. Trump's kidnapping of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro. Threats of escalating trade wars in pursuit of acquiring Greenland. Trump's to-the-point honesty in declaring his actions a defence of the economic and strategic interests of American imperialism, illustrates the dangerous and volatile world that capitalism in its era of decay and decline has created.

The brutal truth of the cut-throat competition, conflict and war inherent to capitalism – which capitalist world leaders previously promised us had been consigned to the dustbin of history – is being reasserted. All the capitalist world leaders are scrambling to rearm, in many countries funded by even more brutal cuts to public spending.

The Middle East is increasingly in turmoil. Over two years of genocidal slaughter in Gaza by the Israeli state has been aided and abetted by all the 'good and the great' of the capitalist world, including Starmer's Labour.

Following the so-called ceasefire in Gaza last October, the Israeli army continues to kill Palestinians. It has been reported that between 10 October 2025 and 15 January 2026, the Israeli government violated the ceasefire agreement 1,244 times, pushing the death toll over 71,000.

Trump has since unveiled his proposed 'Board of Peace' to rule over Gaza. At the time of writing, representatives from 35 nations have signed up, which is dominated by Trump and his political allies in the US. Unsurprisingly, there is so far no representation whatsoever for any Palestinian body – or for that matter representatives of the working class of any country.

Trump's 'Board of Peace' will not deliver peace for the Palestinian people, let alone a decent quality of life, with genuine national and democratic rights.

Needed is the building of workers' strength through the development of mass independent workers' organisations – trade unions and parties. Through mass struggles with the aim of removing capitalism in Israel-Palestine, an independent, socialist Palestinian state can be realised, alongside a democratic socialist Israel, as part of a voluntary, equal socialist confederation in the Middle East.

In Britain, we also need a political alternative to all the pro-war, pro-austerity capitalist parties. A party which is rooted in the most powerful force for socialist change in society, the working class, and its organisations – the trade union movement, with over 6 million members.

Building such a mass workers' party, armed with a programme for socialist change, would not only be able to challenge Starmer's war and austerity agenda, but could give solidarity and assistance to the struggles of the long-suffering masses of Palestine and the Middle East as a whole.

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

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