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Issue 1361 | 2-8 April 2026 | formerly Militant

We won't pay for Trump's wars!

FIGHT ENERGY PRICE HIKES

Councils should step in now – expand hardship funds to bail us out

Looming £2,000 household energy bills, thanks to Trump's war, pose the question: why does it always have to be the working class that pays?

The government "is examining plans to support households with energy bills", the Guardian reports. But then the article adds that chancellor Rachel Reeves "is under pressure from financial markets to limit the extent of the support to keep within budget spending limits". In other words, big business is weighing in to try to ensure the working class carries the can.

The 2026 council elections in England and elections in Wales and Scotland provide an opportunity to say: 'We won't pay!' Most candidates on the ballot paper will claim there is nothing that can be done – but that just isn't true.

Local councils have powers to award grants to those unable to pay sky-high bills. Councils allocate support payments to households, as of 1 April, through the Crisis and Resilience Fund, for example. The Fund is for "households who encounter a financial shock". As one immediate measure, the miserly portions currently allocated to the hardest hit could be expanded to cover the higher bills caused by Trump's war.

Councils still account for over one-fifth of all spending on public services – billions of pounds! What is the point of councillors having authority to set huge budgets if they won't use them to defend our services and communities?

Councils should first spend what's needed – and then organise a campaign to demand the money back from Starmer's government.

Let's not forget that, under the pressure of the pandemic in 2020, Boris Johnson's Tories increased public spending by £203 billion. This Labour government could be forced to make the billionaires and big business pay and not our class – if the pressure on it is big enough. Electing councillors committed to such a strategy would be a great start to building the mass working-class campaign we need!

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is standing 300+ candidates in May's elections – the sixth-largest bloc of candidates and the only one committed to saying that working-class communities won't be made to pay for Trump's wars.

We demand

- Councils should expand their support payments to households to allocate payments to all those struggling with increased energy bills
- Councils should set emergency 'needs budgets' based on the public services our communities need. No cuts and no council tax rises
- Mobilise a campaign to demand the government fully funds councils. Take the wealth off the 1%
- Cut bills – nationalise energy under democratic working-class control and management, with no compensation for the fat-cat bosses

Socialist Party campaigners will be petitioning local councils demanding they act. To print off copies of your own, visit: tinyurl.com/CouncilsCoL

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IRAN WAR: US IMPERIALISM'S HUBRIS AND WE PAY THE PRICE ▸▸▸ p2 & p5

UNIONS FIGHT FOR PAY AND FUNDING ▸▸▸ p6-7

the Socialist
formerly Militant

Issue 1361
2-8 April 2026

DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?
The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party members. We want you to write for the Socialist.

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

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

Iran war: US imperialism's hubris meets reality

"The conflict that has raged for over three weeks in the Gulf, and continues as we go to press, is the third US war in the region since the end of the Cold War more than three decades ago. Every aspect of the current conflict demonstrates the weakening of US imperialism over that period. President Donald Trump's chaotic and reckless approach is both a reflection of the USA's relative decline and an accelerator of it. Whatever happens from here, the consequences are certain to include a new, qualitative undermining of the power and authority of US imperialism...

"If George W Bush's Gulf War was a tragedy for US imperialism and above all the Iraqi people, Trump's is a farce. A bloody farce that has already led to death and huge destruction. Even if it was to end tomorrow it would have serious consequences for Trump's presidency, US imperialism, the Middle East, the world economy, and world relations.

"In this conflict even the capitalist Labour government of Britain, historically since the loss of its empire the most slavishly pro-Atlanticist of all the European countries, has not simply asked 'how high?' when Trump said jump. Britain's right-wing capitalist opposition parties, the Conservatives and Reform, initially tried to compete to show they were the most enthusiastic about jumping off a cliff if Trump asked them to, but then retreated to an essentially identical position to Starmer. In part this reflects the high level of public opposition to the war in Britain, but it also indicates that British capitalism, like the other European capitalist powers, no longer sees unconditional support for US imperialism as in its best interests. The multipolar character of the world will be written far larger after this war and will not be fundamentally reversed when Trump is gone from the White House...

"The pressure is mounting on Trump and the US regime to find a way to bring the war to an end. Much easier said than done, however. Always happy to fly in the face of reality, there is no doubt Trump is weighing up just declaring a US 'victory', just as he claimed to have destroyed Iran's nuclear potential in June last year, in another example of the 'Trump Always Chickens Out' (TACO) tendency not to carry through on his threats. But it takes two to TACO in a war! The Islamic Republic has declared it will decide when there is a ceasefire, and even Trump can't claim victory if Iran is still firing missiles and blocking the Straits of Hormuz."

Socialist Party general secretary **Hannah Sell** assesses the origins and global consequences of Trump's war on Iran in April's issue of Socialism Today.
Read the article in full online 'Iran war: US imperialism's hubris meets reality' at socialistparty.org.uk

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Millions march against Trump

An estimated 8 million-plus people took part in 'No Kings' protests across the US on 28 March, in around 3,300 locations

PHOTO: WAFFLEIRON692/CC

Over 300 socialists standing in May elections – but still time for more!

Over 300 candidates will be standing with a clear working-class, socialist identifier in May's elections, after the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee approved 114 new applications to use a TUSC-registered description on the ballot paper at its most recent meeting on 30 March.

This takes the total number of candidates using one of the TUSC descriptions in the English local elections to 287 across 59 councils, including three mayoral candidates, alongside a challenge in six Scottish parliament seats and two Welsh Senedd constituencies – but with further council candidate applications anticipated as negotiations with groups of local independents and individual anti-austerity Greens continue.

Although the timetable is tight, as the TUSC steering committee stressed - with the final deadline to submit the official paperwork to council officers being 9 April - a 'late applications procedure' was agreed to give every opportunity for candidates to come forward and join what will be the sixth-largest bloc of candidates in the elections.

An application form for a legally necessary Certificate of Authorisation to use one of the TUSC descriptions on the ballot paper is available at tusc.org.uk, and should be returned to the TUSC National Election Agent – Clive Heemskerk, cliveheemskerk@socialistparty.org.uk – as soon as possible.

TUSC AGAINST CUTS

Socialist Party

WHAT WE THINK

Hundreds of thousands of people took part in the anti-far right Together demonstration on 28 March. The driving force behind the mass turnout was a desire to show that far-right ideas and politics are not welcome in our streets, communities, and workplaces.

The demonstration would not have been the size it was without the backing of the trade unions - which collectively made up the largest organised bloc. Had the trade union leaders themselves called the demonstration under a slogan such as 'No to austerity – jobs and homes, not racist division,' it could have appealed to an even broader layer of the working class, including to unorganised and demoralised layers, drawing them into the struggle for a better life and livelihood. Unfortunately, on this occasion, organisation and leadership was franchised out to organisations like Stand Up to Racism and the Together Alliance. The slogan raised was a completely insufficient, 'Love, hope and unity.'

Taking part in a huge demonstration, particularly if it is your first one, can be an empowering experience. It can be an antidote to the sense of helplessness felt by the continuation of wars, conflicts, and environmental and cost-of-living crises.

The 2024 far-right anti-immigration riots, last year's large 'Unite the Kingdom' demonstration organised by Tommy Robinson, and the fact that Nigel Farage's Reform UK is leading in the polls are all reasons why people are feeling worried.

Divisive, anti-migrant, racist propaganda are not unique to Reform. These are carried out by all the capitalist politicians and their parties, to make migrants and other minorities scapegoats for the crises caused by them and their system.

Those who attended the demonstration would have come back feeling a sense of unity, the collective strength, and the power that we can defeat the far right and the establishment parties thriving on divisive policies.

Where next?

This positivity, energy and momentum need to be built on. The need to combat racism and the far-right has been an urgent task. Following the demo, a serious discussion needs to take place in the trade unions, workplaces and local communities about what strategy, programme and tactics are needed to cut across the support for Reform and far-right ideas.

Our placard on the demo called to 'unite the struggles against racism, austerity, and war.' You cannot fight one without fighting the others. The cost-of-living crisis and the brutal continuation of austerity, which is seeing our services atomised, is pushing people into towards Reform.

A serious alternative that campaigns for jobs, homes and services for all, can unite and mobilise millions of people to cut across racism and division. The organised working class, the trade unions with 6.5 million workers, should lead.

Hundreds of thousands march against the far right

Unions must lead anti-austerity struggle to cut across Reform and the right



Trade unions mobilised thousands for the Together demo - just a glimpse of their ability to mobilise mass numbers (top). Socialist Students marching on the demo (right)
PHOTOS: JAMES GLOS SOLIDARITY NETWORK AND ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

Union lead

For the Together demo, unions such as the National Education Union put significant resources in. Socialist Party members on the union's executive argued that therefore the union and its members should have a say over the slogans and demands put forward. For example, to link the struggle against the far right to the struggle the NEU is engaged in against school funding cuts and for a pay deal to meet rising inflation.

The trade union movement has the power to mobilise millions onto the streets and into action, as was seen during the 2022-23 strike wave. And for example in the 2011 anti-austerity demonstration of over 750,000 - that led directly to the N30 pensions strike of 29 unions, effectively a public sector general strike, involving 2 million workers.

The broad nature of the Together Alliance meant that those that have different interests from the working class are brought together and, in order to achieve that, the demands that can win a united struggle of working class and young people are not put forward. It also means some right-wing politicians, including Starmer loyalists, who are responsible for carrying through brutal austerity measures, were uncritically included.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan sent a video message, a poem about how 'you are welcome in London.' But it is him and his Labour Party that is also pushing more working-class and young people out of London as they can't afford it. As mayor, he is head of Transport for London, engaged in attacking the terms and conditions of London Underground workers who are set to take strike action. Mistakenly, most trade union leaders who spoke at the demo, and others including Socialist Workers' Party general secretary Lewis Neilson, speaking on behalf of Stand Up To Racism, made no criticism of the New Labour government's austerity measures. This approach will not win the support of workers angry with Labour.

The main demand of the demo 'Love, Hope and Unity,' does very little to cut across the increase in right-wing populist ideas. Together Alliance's tactics for turning the tide is to encourage people to register to vote, forwarding messages to five WhatsApp groups, and beginning to organise. These steps do not address the fundamental tasks required to build a mass anti-racist, anti-far-right movement.

What we need is struggle and a fightback against the conditions that breed support for Reform and the far-right. And that also means challenging Reform and pro-cut candidates in the May elections.

Kevin Courtney, former joint general secretary of the NEU, explained very clearly that the Together Alliance is a non-political party alliance and therefore will not tell people who to vote for and who not to vote for in the 7 May local elections. Ironically, he said that as he encouraged people to register to vote. With hundreds of thousands on the streets, just getting them to register without putting forward who they should vote for is not an effective approach.

Workers' political representation

It is urgent that the trade union movement discusses how to solve the crisis of working-class political representation. If in these elections there had been a big, nationwide anti-austerity election stand led by the trade unions it would have had a huge appeal, and would be the most effective way to cut across support for Reform in May. It would be a big step towards the mass workers' party that is needed.

That there is huge desire for such an alternative is shown by the fact that in 2022, over 500,000 signed up to Enough is Enough and in 2025, 800,000 people signed up to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's Your Party.

The increase in membership and support for the Greens also reflects the cry for a political alternative to Starmer's Labour. Voters are looking to punish Labour, as shown by historic defeats for both Labour and the Tories in two significant by-elections: in Caerphilly Senedd, won by Plaid Cymru, and Gorton and Denton, won by the Greens.

Zack Polanski received the loudest cheer when he spoke at the end of the demo. He was introduced as 'a beacon of hope.' Many see the Green Party as a viable alternative to Labour. However, the record of Green councillors has so far been one of carrying through the same policies and measures as other establishment parties.

That's why the Socialist Party supports the petition launched by leading trade unionists calling on Zack Polanski as a new leader to change course and mobilise his party in the struggle against local council austerity. The petition calls on Zack Polanski to commit that "no candidate shall appear on the ballot paper on behalf of the Green Party who has not made a public commitment to vote against all cuts and closures to council services, jobs, pay and conditions."

So far, when it has been put to him, Zack has been unwilling to give that commitment. However, there has been enthusiasm from a layer of new Green members and supporters, as well as Green candidates and existing councillors signing.

Continuation of austerity measures - from Green councils or any of the establishment parties – is divisive. Attacking one section of workers against another, closing one service at the expense of another - it is such policies that have created fertile ground for the growth of Reform.

The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). We are campaigning for the biggest possible anti-cuts, anti-war, stand in the May elections. All TUSC candidates are committed to a no-cuts position. A genuine anti-cuts stand which rejects the logic of the capitalist system and mobilises local communities and workers to fight for more funding and resources to meet need. The wealth is there; we just have to campaign to take it off the billionaire and profit-driven bosses, part of a struggle for socialist change.

A fight against austerity - for jobs, homes and services for all - led by the trade unions, including as part of that building a new party of the working class, is the most effective way to build on the enthusiasm from the Together demo and to cut across support for Reform and the far right.



- This week's Socialist is 12 pages, owing to staff sickness and absence. We will return to 16 pages next week!

ZACK POLANSKI, WILL YOUR COUNCILLORS REFUSE TO PASS ON AUSTERITY?

This year, Green Party leader Zack Polanski was invited to address the conference of the National Education Union. In the press conference, Rob Williams, covering the conference for the Socialist newspaper, had the opportunity to ask him a question:

Rob:

I think you've had a great response today Zack, because you have come to a conference of teachers who have fought austerity for 16 years, and you're fighting hard in the local elections. But you've also got an opportunity, if you're successful, to send a signal after May, that Green councils are different.

The question that's going to be posed, is: what are Green councils going to do with stringent budget restrictions from a Starmer of government? Are you going to use the opportunity to have councils that run no-cuts, needs-based budgets and refuse to pass on austerity?



Rob (right) on the Together demo



Zack Polanski
LONDON ASSEMBLY/CC

Zack:

So I think people do need to balance their budgets at local council level, which is why I said in my speech more widely: We need to recognise that we're the sixth wealthiest economy in the world.

There are 50 families in this country that own more wealth than the bottom 50% of the population - that's 50 families against 34 million people.

So there's plenty of wealth around. It's just very rarely wealth that's given to teachers, or to schools, or to hospitals. And actually, what I think we ultimately need to do is stop putting councils in this situation in the first place, where they are given such tight budgets.

You know, some councils up to 80% is spent on adult social care. That's outrageous.

And so I think it's about making the political argument right now, both at the national level and then at local council, that we need to challenge the austerity that's coming from national government, as a political choice, because they're not making other political choices to tax multi-millionaires and billionaires.

Zack is right – there are vast quantities of wealth in the bank accounts of the super-rich, and no reason why our local services should be cut and our council tax and charges increased.

Like Rob said, the over 900 existing Green councillors - including in the dozens of authorities where they already form part of the leading administration as part of coalitions and alliances, and in Bristol as the majority group - have a political choice. Will they use their positions and influence to refuse to pass on austerity and build a campaign to demand the money from the weak and divided Starmer government?

That would require a change of approach from Green councillors, who so far have continued to vote according to the logic of capitalist cuts and austerity. Which is why the Socialist Party supports a petition from leading trade unionists - which has so far been signed by a whole number of Green Party members, supporters and a handful of councillors - demanding Polanski instructs councillors to take a no-cuts stand.

Sign online

'Greens must pledge no cuts'

www.change.org/p/greens-must-pledge-no-cuts-to-services





Protest against benefit cuts in 2025 ALEC THRAVES

End child poverty

For £15 an hour, end zero hours, scrap all benefit caps

LOUIE NARDINI
YORK SOCIALIST PARTY

Poverty is increasing and hitting vulnerable parts of society, recent government statistics show. In the year up to March 2025, over 13 million people were struggling in 'relative' poverty – defined as living in households with less than 60% of the median income. The number of pensioners within this has increased by 200,000, showing the callousness of Starmer's, now U-turned, scrapping of universal winter fuel payments.

Due to changes in the calculation methods, previous years' statistics have been revised. The figures show that since Keir Starmer assumed office in July 2024, 500,000 more people are living in poverty.

The figures show that the first year of the Starmer government has not lived up to the hopes of many of the people who voted for it, aiming to get rid of the Tories' policies. Child poverty levels are much the same as they were under the Tories – little wonder when Starmer has had to be pushed by the anger of thousands to finally get rid of the two-child benefit cap. Starmer is in power, seeking to serve the same interests as Rishi Sunak before him - the super-wealthy bosses. The removal of the two-child benefit cap could help to alleviate 450,000 children from poverty by 2030. But with the incoming cost-of-living crisis we need more action immediately.

Reform UK has recently changed its mind and would now re-impose the two-child benefit cap. Ex-Tory minister and now a potential Reform chancellor Robert Jenrick claims the party will generate growth by weeding out those who are supposedly "choosing a life on benefits". Its 'shadow cabinet' of newly minted Conservatives will likely reintroduce the same two-child benefit cap that they pushed in 2017. To cut across the failures of the establishment parties we need a party that alleviates poverty by attacking the heart of capitalism, that is the super-rich and their profits.

The benefit cap is said to save £3 billion a year for the ruling class. That is a drop in the ocean compared to the £772.8 billion owned by the 350-richest families in the UK. By taking the wealth of society out of the hands of a tiny few and democratically controlling what we actually want and need, a socialist society would ensure we all live a life free from poverty.

MAY DAY GREETINGS 2026

Celebrate international workers' day.
Send the Socialist solidarity greetings

- For prices visit **socialistparty.org.uk/mayday**



War in Iran escalates capitalist climate chaos

ALI COOK
SHEFFIELD NORTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

The ongoing horror of war in Iran is continuing the suffering of working-class and poor people across the Middle East. So far, 1,114 people have been killed, which includes 183 children. There is no end in sight to the bloodshed, as US imperialism seeks to assert control under the leadership of the callous madman Donald Trump, within an increasingly multipolar capitalist world that offers little prospects for the lives of working-class and young people.

The effects of war are often immediate with lives senselessly lost and communities decimated. This of course is a different story for the belligerent capitalist classes who benefit from the plunder, ultimately in pursuit of profit. The same can be said for the ruling elite in Iran also, who live lives of luxury and rely on brutal repression to maintain their positions.

The often not so immediate effects of war on climate change will be especially felt further down the line, further inflicting misery on the masses.

The war in Iran, experts have warned, is causing an almost untrackable amount of destruction to our ecosystems. In particular, the Israeli military's bombing of oil fields, which causes them to burn, releases enormous quantities of CO_2 and methane which are potent greenhouse gases. According to researchers at Queen Mary University, the first two weeks of the conflict caused five million tonnes of CO_2 to be released, the equivalent to a year of Iceland's carbon output. This also included emissions generated from the destruction of infrastructure, fuel use by militaries and military equipment losses.

Pollution

Furthermore, the destruction of the oil fields is having an immediate impact on the health of Iranians. This includes the spreading of toxic chemicals that could lead to acid rain and damage to petroleum facilities in Iran, which risks contaminating food, water and the air. The black acrid smoke itself has caused headaches, irritation of the eyes and skin, and has made breathing difficult.

Trump has claimed this war is in aid of the Iranian people against their regime! But clearly, Trump does not care for the Iranian people, nor do ultimately any other leaders of capitalist nation states.

Climate change, increasing conflict, misery everywhere; it is understandable to draw fatalistic conclusions. But capitalism is in its death throws and can be replaced. The working class are its grave diggers and can lead the socialist transformation of society. Another world is possible if we fight for it: working-class cooperation across borders; democratically planned production on the basis of what we need and what protects the environment instead of what makes a profit for a few; and an end to repression that keeps the elite few secure in their place at the top. If you want to be part of this struggle, now is the time to join the Socialist Party and fight to leave this barbaric and archaic system behind!

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



Smoke billows above a Tehran neighbourhood struck by a missile AVASH MEDIA/CC

Labour attacks Reform's funding

But we need a party that represents the working class

ADAM GILLMAN
SOUTH EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

The Labour government has announced plans that would put a cap of £100,000 on donations to political parties from British people living overseas and ban cryptocurrency donations. While it was proposed using the justification that the political situation is being protected, the impact this has on Reform UK's funding streams will be a welcome bonus to Keir Starmer's embattled party.

Despite Farage claiming Reform UK is the "party of the workers", looking at their donations tells a different story. In the last year, for example they have received £12 million from a cryptocurrency entrepreneur Christopher Harborne, based in Thailand. Reform appeals to the anger in society against the rotten Labour government but defends the same capitalist system that exploits workers and leaves us all poorer.

These new measures won't stop the super-rich dominating politics and funding parties that will rule in their interests and attack the working class. And that includes Starmer's Labour!

Labour's big business funders

In the run up to the last general election the Labour Party received £2.5 million from Lord Sainsbury, former chairman of the retail giant Sainsbury's. In 2024, big business donated £12 million to the Labour Party in 2024 – the year of the general election. In the first year of Starmer's government, contracts worth £138 million were given to companies which donated to Labour, according to a report by the Autonomy Institute. Big business funding has slowed down but is still coming at the same time as the government attempts to cut our schools, NHS, libraries and other services.

Members of trade unions that also donate large amounts of money, on the basis that Labour is supposed to represents workers' interests, are increasingly asking questions of: is it worth it? In the last month, Unite the Union cut funding to Labour by 40%, after Birmingham Labour council attempts to break a strike of Birmingham bin workers fighting against a pay cut of £8,000 for many members! These attacks on Unite members sparked the emergency motion passed at its 2025 conference to reassess the union's relationship with the Labour Party.

Pro-capitalist parties are funded by the uber-rich to further their interests, so we need a party of our own through which we can fight for the interests of the working-class majority. We need a party that's run by the working class and its organisations, like the trade unions, able to run the party democratically. Funding should come from workers and the trade unions – not big business – so we can fight against austerity and attacks by representatives of capitalism. The Socialist Party is fighting for a new mass workers' party armed with a socialist programme including a programme of new good-quality and environmentally friendly council houses, good-quality free education and a health service with the resources needed for patients and staff. The resources are there for this and more, but is currently held by a super-rich few, who use anything at their disposal to maintain their position at the top. We need to break their power by taking that wealth into democratic public ownership with workers' control and management.



Farage at Bitcoin 2025
GAGE SKIDMORE/CC

Local government unions must launch serious pay fight

ANGIE WALLER
KIRKLEES LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNISON, PERSONAL CAPACITY

In what can only be described as derisory and an insult, public sector workers have once again been offered the crumbs off the table from the Local Government Association, in the form of a one-year offer of a 3.3% pay increase. Nothing was offered on the non-pay elements of the unions' claim, or on the demand for £15-an-hour minimum.

This year's pay claim for local government workers is for an increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is the greater) on every pay point. A minimum pay rate of £15 an hour for all staff, a two-hour reduction in the working week, and an increase of one day annual leave. This claim is based on a one-year settlement.

Workers are understandably angry over the failure of their pay to keep up with the cost of living, year after year.

And year after year Unison, the biggest local government union, has failed to mount a serious pay campaign since the pay freeze of 2009. There has been a lack of lead to raise the consciousness of members that collective action could win on pay.

Last year the union's lack of fight was down to the newly elected right-wing National Executive Council (NEC) and previous general secretary Christina McAnea being too willing to appease the Labour government.

The NJC (the body through which the local government unions negotiate with the employer) meets again in early April, and proposals on how to respond to the offer will be put forward.

Unison leadership

In the past, Unison has run a consultative ballot to gauge the mood on pay. However, previously, consultative ballots have returned votes to reject the pay offer but with less than a 50% turnout, which has meant with the current anti-trade union laws - still kept in place by Keir Starmer's anti-worker government - no further action has been taken by the union, despite some stronger branches achieving the threshold.

But now members have rejected the leadership's Starmer-supporting approach and elected a new general secretary, Angela Egan. Members will now expect a full campaign and positive call for action from the leadership of Unison, to inspire thousands of council workers to strike for an above-inflation pay rise.

As well as addressing the cost-of-living crisis and the energy and fuel crisis, this will expose where the real wealth lies in society. With the failure of the Labour government to address the low pay of the public sector as a whole it will also boost the debate about Unison using its political funds to support candidates from other parties.

Unison's NJC committee reps should be meeting with the other local government unions to reject the 3.3% offer and discuss plans for a coordinated national disaggregated strike ballot, supported by a serious campaign for a 'Yes to strike' vote, and showing a real determination to fight.

Vote for fighting service group leaderships in Unison

From 1 April, Unison members will be voting in the elections to Service Group Executives (SGEs). These are the bodies that decide on action in the relevant sectors, so are very important.
The following Socialist Party members are standing for election:

- Mathew John, Local Government, Wales seat
- Adrian O'Malley, Health, Yorkshire seat
- Manny Dominguez, Community, Yorkshire seat

They would join three Socialist Party members already elected unopposed: Balaka Fell-Holden on the Local Government SGE, Paul Tovey on the Health SGE, and Amy Sage on the Police, Probation and Cafcass SGE

A lot at stake in the Unite executive elections

Members of Unite are currently voting in elections for the Executive Committee, in an election that is critical for the future industrial and political approach of the union. Socialist Party members are standing to maintain and extend Sharon Graham's manifesto, as part of the wider 'Workers Unite - Back to the Workplace' slate of candidates.

Five of those are already elected unopposed, including Socialist Party member Suzanne Muna in the South West seat. More on the issues and the full list of Workers Unite candidates can be found here: 'Unite's status as a militant union on the line in upcoming elections' at socialistparty.org.uk



A team of striking Birmingham bin workers leafleting workers at Jaguar Land Rover in support of the 'Workers Unite - Back to the Workplace' candidates. They know what is at stake in the Executive election. We need to maintain and extend a Unite leadership that is prepared to take on brutal Labour councils, not look the other way PHOTO: A UNITE MEMBER

A tide of university staff around the country fighting horrendous cuts

'Hell no!' to ripping up pay and conditions at Northumbria

ELAINE BRUNSKILL
NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST PARTY

Striking Northumbria University UCU members, alongside students and other supporters, took part in a march and rally in Newcastle – which was described by protesters as a "fighting city". As they marched through the city centre to the rally at Grey's Monument, shoppers and other bystanders were clearly supportive.

Speakers reported that their picket line was "amazing", including doing the 'Hokey Cokey'! But the best thing about the picket lines had been the support from students.

The dispute is over Northumbria management's decision to attack pensions. Strikers pointed out that this is pension theft, and that if Northumbria get away with this other universities will attempt to follow.

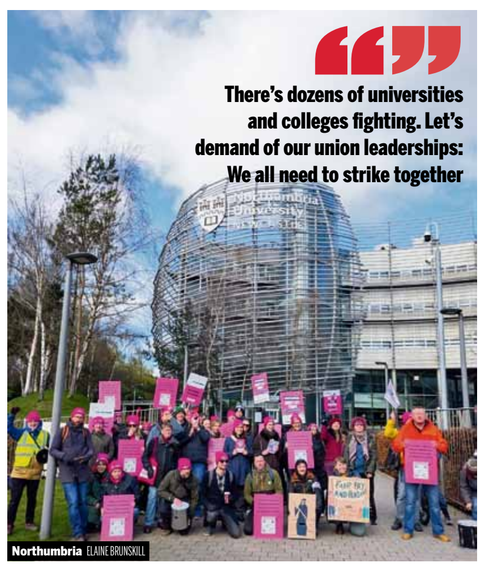
University bosses have said they must cut expenditure by £25 million by the end of the year, yet there has been an eightfold increase in spending on buildings. The UCU points out that the university gambled on forking out on capital spending, based on projected tuition fee income that hasn't materialised. And the union says "senior managers continue to waste millions on shiny new buildings."

The chant "Hell no!" to the ripping up of pay and conditions was loud and clear.

King's College London 'staff just can't afford' the 1.4% pay rise

UNISON BRANCH CHAIR RUTH TOLD NICK AUVACHE:

"We're out here today because King's has offered all of our workers a 1.4% pay rise this year. That's obviously below inflation, a real-terms pay cut for our staff, coming on the back of years of real-terms pay cuts. Our staff just can't afford it. We're working just as hard as ever, keeping the university running, doing all the behind-the-scenes jobs which enable students to come here and learn. So we're calling on King's to re-open the national negotiations and put some local solutions on the table, to get our staff the pay rise they deserve."



Northumbria ELAINE BRUNSKILL

One in five academics could go at London Met

Following a 90% yes vote, members of the University and College Union (UCU) at London Metropolitan University in north London plan to take eight days of strike action over three weeks, starting on 15 April.

The university plans to delete 295 jobs, including compulsory redundancy of up to 120 staff. Over a fifth of academic staff could go.

At a protest rally on 25 March, Socialist Party member **Marco Tesei,** UCU National Executive Committee member, said: "You're not alone, there's dozens of universities and colleges fighting at the moment. Let's think cooperatively and nationally, we need to all strike together. Let's also demand our union leadership presses Starmer to scrap the Tory 50% turnout threshold so we can really come out in force together. And also press the TUC (Trades Union Congress) to name the date for an anti-austerity demo - austerity is the reason why we're all in same boat across post-16 education."

Get all the latest union news
nationalshop stewardsnetwork
NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net

Support the resident doctors
'The government wants to divide and conquer rather than work with us to improve the NHS'

Resident doctors in England, members of the British Medical Association (BMA), are set to strike from 7-13 April, following a massive 93% 'yes' vote.

The BMA says that in negotiations with the Labour government, it became clear that the money proposed for pay increases was intended to be spread over three years. The pay review body has recommended a below-inflation rise of 3.5%.

Once again, a barrage of hostile propaganda is raining down on them, from the right-wing press and Labour health secretary Wes Streeting. That makes it all the more significant that polls show that there is still 50% support for the doctors among the public.

Disgracefully, Starmer is even threatening not to open up new training jobs – he's prepared to sacrifice the NHS in his fight against the doctors!

A Sheffield resident doctor comments

"The pay deal means that resident doctors wouldn't get full pay restoration for 12 years.

"The deal is also very vague on an increase in training jobs. Wes Streeting has sent out a letter to all the resident doctors alongside the deal that was offered. It mentions that there will be 4,500 new training posts and that an 'advisory group' will be set up to distribute these. But the issue is that the lack of jobs exists at every level, from consultant down to FY1 (first year foundation), so this will just make bottlenecks at the top worse.

"The deal is also filled with odd talk about 'productivity' and lots of talk about asking first and second year resident doctors expanding their job role. From my reading of it, this makes the pay offer seem linked to performance in non-medical or clinical roles.

"Many of us are increasingly frustrated with the government, which never seems to put the interests of the NHS and the public at the heart of the conversation. We also want the BMA to campaign more strongly on jobs and funding.

"The government just wants to divide and conquer resident doctors rather than work with us to help improve the NHS."



November strike day in Sheffield ALISTAIR TICE

NEU conference begins with members in the mood to fight back

SHEILA CAFFREY
NEU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER AND BRISTOL DELEGATE, PERSONAL CAPACITY

As we go to press, the National Education Union (NEU) is meeting in Brighton at its annual national conference, to discuss what the priorities for the next year need to be for education workers to win the funding, pay, workload, pensions, curriculum and working conditions that we need.

The background to the conference is a crisis in funding in education under Starmer's Labour government, real-terms pay cuts for education workers, and increasing workload. The union is running an indicative ballot for national action and Socialist Party members are arguing strenuously for the need for serious national action.

We need national action

Teachers and support staff have shared what they're experiencing on the front line - with many horror stories, but also many successful struggles, such as Little Ilford in Newham and Cathedral Schools Trust in Bristol, where Socialist Party officers play a leading role.

There is a real feeling of pride at our wins and the desire to fight, but the approach of the union nationally has been to restrict these battles to small, local disputes against attacks, rather than a proactive, national fight to substantially improve national pay, conditions and funding.

End academisation

An emergency motion was brought to fightback against the Labour government's White Paper which, amongst other horrendous attacks, aims to put all schools into academy trusts - pure privatisation with no transparency and no accountability.

Socialist Party member Louise Cuffaro, a member of the union's National Executive and a delegate from Newham where academisation has been successfully fought, submitted an amendment, not just opposing new academies, but fighting for a legal mechanism to bring academies back under local authority control, as part of the fight to increase funding and democracy in local authorities.

Unfortunately, the amendment wasn't heard. But when I raised the same demand in a speech about working across unions to build a strong fightback, it received a cheer. NEU members definitely want a fight against privatisation!

The conference continues, so a fuller report will be shared next week - with hopefully a plan for action!

- Zack Polanski addressed NEU conference on Monday – see page 4

Enfield schools on strike
90 disputes in London schools this academic year



PHOTO: BEA GARDNER

BEA GARDNER
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

National Education Union (NEU) members across 18 schools in Enfield took strike action on 27 March, after the Labour local authority and other school trusts in the borough imposed a punitive sickness policy. Under the new policy, the number of 'acceptable' absence days has been slashed by a third.

Socialist Party members joined the picket lines to offer our support and solidarity.

Alex, NEU rep at Carterhatch Junior School, reported: "I'm really proud of the grassroots work we've done to build the dispute over an unfair sickness policy; showing members in Enfield we are prepared to take a stand".

Other striking workers explained why they were taking action: "We don't plan to get sick, so it's not fair to get penalised for it. If we are not 100%, how do we give 100% to the children?"

Another said: "It's important to not only stand up individually but as a team, united together, showing strength in numbers. It is also important to set that example to the children, of standing up against things that are wrong, unfair and unjust".

The mood on all the pickets was boosted by the support of those passing by, including bus and delivery drivers. The constant beeping would have no doubt been heard by management and NEU members alike in the Carterhatch Infant School next door. We were told that members in the Infants had not come out due to management intimidation – strikers hoped their buoyant picket line would boost their colleagues.

Chanting strikers at Walker Primary shared that there were a whole number of issues they could have gone on strike over.

At Capel Manor, the head waited to see how strong the strike action was before deciding which children could come in – but the parents on the picket line were in unanimous support of the strike.

The underfunding of schools and local authorities is manifesting in a series of attacks, including measures such as those imposed at Enfield. One of the organisers for the NEU said that the dispute was one of 90 in London this academic year, a trend echoed across the country.

ELECTIONS 2026 – REGISTER YOUR OPPOSITION TO STARMER'S AUSTERITY AND WAR AGENDA!

Seize your opportunity to register your opposition to Starmer's Labour government and its austerity and war agenda. Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates will be standing in hundreds of seats in the local elections. In many cases, those candidates will be members of the Socialist Party.

Engaging alongside workers and young people in struggle, a key demand the Socialist Party advances is for the building of a new mass party of the working class – and for the trade unions to lead in that process. A TUSC stand in May's elections, is raising a signpost pointing in that direction to a broad audience – every elector in the seats where TUSC stands.

Build the Socialist Party

On top of that, every Socialist Party member campaigning in this election will raise the banner for socialist change high. Join us in campaigning to convince as many people as possible to fight for socialist ideas.

Come along to a local branch to discuss and help us build the fightback. In the next few weeks, every weekly Socialist Party branch meeting will be holding meetings on how we can build the struggle and campaign on local issues.

Discuss with us how we can formulate our slogans and demands to chime with the huge anger that exists? How can we use the election campaign to meet and discuss with the hundreds and thousands of workers and young people looking for a socialist alternative?

As part of the election campaign every branch will be setting campaign targets. Can you help us to reach these targets.

Through the campaign, every branch should aim to:

- Organise at least one public meeting, which can be advertised online at socialistparty.org.uk/events
- Aim to recruit at least two new Socialist Party members
- Raise at least half of the branch fighting fund target
- Sell a minimum of 15 copies of the Socialist newspaper every week
- Organise at least two campaign stalls per week, and other activities – prioritising talking to as many people as possible

25 April – Socialist Saturday mega campaign day!

A focus of our campaigning will be centred around Saturday 25 April. Every member, supporter, and reader of the Socialist, should be invited to come and help us campaign on the day.

Help us get our socialist message out as loud and clear as possible, and strengthen the socialist forces for the continuing battles against Starmer's war and austerity agenda beyond election day too.

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



Socialist Party members campaigning in Bevois ward, Southampton NICK CHAFFEY

Labour under pressure to stop cuts to East Mids cancer care

JON DALE
UNITE THE UNION NOTTS HEALTH SECRETARY

A high-performing service for cancer patients in the East Midlands is being cut. Clinical psychologists, supported by Derby and Notts trade unionists, held a protest outside the Integrated Care Board (ICB) meeting.

The East Midlands Cancer Alliance (Centre for Psychosocial Health) provides invaluable mental health support to cancer patients. The award-winning service also trains other health workers treating cancer patients, and is doing important research – all for the tiny cost, in NHS terms, of £950,000 a year.

The ICB claims the service is not being closed, but just moved to other providers. These are already overloaded and underfunded existing mental health services, and in Leicestershire a charity. The specialist psychologists are threatened with redundancy.

The protest was organised by Unite the Union Nottinghamshire health branch. Pressure is building on the region's MPs to demand Labour health secretary Wes Streeting, who claims to prioritise cancer and mental health services, to instruct the ICB to reverse this decision.



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Jay (left) campaigning against the housing crisis LONDON SP

Why I'm standing for Lewisham mayor

JAY COWARD
PROSPECTIVE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION (TUSC) CANDIDATE FOR LEWISHAM MAYOR

Lewisham Labour council is closing the local shopping centre, replacing it with unaffordable housing. It is also planning £33 million of cuts, including: £9 million from children's services, including £800,000 exclusively from disabled children; £850,000 cuts to adult social care; raising council tax by the maximum 5%; and reducing council tax support from 75% to 50%.

It's a bleak slate of cuts. However, Lewisham Green Party mayoral candidate, Liam Shirastava, spoke before the council budget-setting meeting, voicing opposition to the cuts, saying he will fight them, if elected mayor.

We thought this was a prime opportunity to ask him to sign the trade unionist petition calling on Zack Polanski to instruct any Greens standing for May's elections to take a no-cuts approach. A number of Greens at the protest outside the council were receptive to this. But Liam still hasn't responded.

Liam proposed a £17,000 pay cut to the mayor and council cabinet salaries. However, that would still leave Liam with a £70,000 salary, if elected.

That's hardly representative of people in Lewisham. And it's a far cry from the pledge to take an average workers' wage, which Socialist Party member Andy Beadle made when he stood as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate for Lewisham mayor in 2022.

Liam proposed using £2 million of reserves to avoid cuts. But how will this stop £33 million cuts? Even Lewisham Labour used £21 million of reserves to balance the budget last year.

We need no cuts. And to mobilise workers and young people to campaign for the funding our services need.

Without a commitment from Liam, that a Green mayor would do what is required to stand up to Starmer's austerity, we have decided that we need to put forward a candidate campaigning to oppose, end, and reverse all cuts. I will be standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Lewisham Shopping Centre should be renovated, not knocked down. Austerity and poverty must be combated, by the council using every possible tool - including borrowing and reserves – to reverse cuts and build a mass campaign to twist the government's arm into paying up, instead of forcing workers to pick up the bill.

We need better, higher paid, and safer jobs and more of them, securing a £15-an-hour minimum wage. No more widespread unemployment, with only subpar pay being the alternative.

We need affordable, high-quality council housing for the thousands of people and families on the waiting list, and those who will be on it in future.

A council budget framed around the needs of its people will mean better pay, better and more housing, better and more jobs, accessible services and healthcare. Youth centres paid for by the council to keep kids off the street. And measures such as free school meals for all students.

We need a democratic, mass workers' party, and a voice that fights for us, the working class. Jobs, homes, and services for all!

Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

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

If you would like to participate:

- **socialistparty.org.uk/events**
- **Or text 07958 032071 with your name and postcode.**

RMT union activist: Why I'm standing

'Railworkers beat back the Tories with strikes – that fighting working-class approach is missing from politics'

Labour has been running Birmingham since 2012 and has presided over years of brutal cuts. The Labour council has attacked its own workers, like the bin workers and homecare staff. They have even sued Unite the Union for protesting cuts outside bin depots.

At the same time, our roads are literally crumbling, and local services have been cut to the bone.

As an active member of the RMT transport union myself, I think it is important that trade unionists take a stand and, if there's nobody willing to fight for working-class people, then we need to do it ourselves.

RMT members on the railways fought back against the previous Tory government as they tried to use the pandemic as an excuse to attack our jobs, pay and conditions. But we stopped them.

I feel that fighting approach, based on unity of the working class, is what is missing from politics in general today. Corbyn's 'Your Party' still has not got out of the starting blocks for the upcoming council elections. So far, even the Greens have shown they are not willing to lead a struggle against austerity wherever they run councils around the country. We are pushing for Polanski to change course.

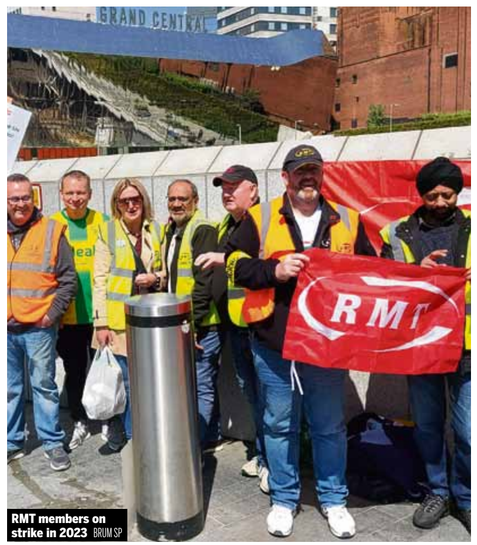
Standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition I give my word that, if elected, I will fight cuts in deeds as well as words. I will seek to work with any genuine campaigners who are trying to keep their local library open, or fighting no-fault evictions in our community. But our councils need sufficient funding from central government to be restored in order to provide the services we need.

It's no good just criticising morally and politically bankrupt parties for what they do. Without a positive alternative on offer, right-wing forces are picking up support due to growing despair.

It is a disgrace that Labour, a party which was set up by and remains funded by trade unions, prosecutes striking workers for trying to effectively picket their workplaces.

We should not let them get away with it. Support your local TUSC candidates on 7 May!

TED WOODLEY



RMT members on strike in 2023 BRUM SP

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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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France: municipal elections confirm increasing polarisation

A STATEMENT BY GAUCHE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE ('REVOLUTIONARY LEFT' – THE CWI IN FRANCE)



CWI member Leïla Messaoudi (centre) was re-elected as a councillor in Rouen

The second round of the municipal elections confirms and amplifies the trends observed in the first round ('France: After the first round of the municipal elections' at socialistworld.net): deep social anger, a massive rejection of austerity policies, and a political polarisation that is taking root in working-class neighbourhoods as well as in former working-class towns. Disgust with the politics of the traditional capitalist parties is expressed in a record abstention rate (excluding the Covid period) at 43% – 10 points more than in 2001.

Despite the manoeuvres of the Socialist Party (PS), the Macronists and the right, the lists of La France Insoumise (LFI) and the left combative lists have progressed since the first round, sometimes spectacularly. In several cities where the LFI lists have been maintained in the second round, they have gained votes, showing that popular support exists and can be strengthened when a clear alternative is present.

In the southern city of Marseille, LFI maintained its lists in the second round in four of the eight sectors and obtained nearly 2,200 more votes in those areas. LFI lists won hundreds of municipal councillors and eight towns: St-Denis/Pierrefitte, La Courneuve, Roubaix, Vénissieux, Saint-Fons and Vaulx-en-Velin, Creil, as well as Le Tampon (Réunion).

This progress shows that social anger is looking for a clear political outlet, independent of the PS and the 'left' that accepts or defends capitalism.

The PS: a party evermore openly aligned with the interests of the capitalists

The second round highlighted a significant phenomenon: electoral support for the PS by the capitalists in several large cities, notably in Lille. The capitalists supported voting for the PS because they felt the threat from LFI in this big city.

The PS has confirmed that it is no longer in reality perceived as a bulwark against the far-right National Rally party (RN), nor is it much different to the right, even locally. In Marseille, the PS's power move to prevent the presence of LFI in the city council is the most brutal illustration of this. The PS preferred to weaken the popular and anti-austerity opposition rather than build a real front against the far right.

Of the 850 lists presented by the PS in the 2008 municipal elections, it presented only 85 this year, having had to hide in pseudo-union lists of the left in many cities. These elections confirm that for the majority of young people and workers, the PS is no longer a party for workers, but a loyal manager of the interests of the ruling classes, ready to do anything to maintain its positions. It and its allies are paying the price at the ballot box. Between 2008 and today, PS, the Communist Party (PCF) and the Greens have lost 15,000 seats.

The RN: a real danger, which can only be defeated by mobilisation

The RN is making progress in several cities, but its support base remains fragile in the major cities. The RN has also widely schemed, with parts of conservative Les Republicains (LR) or other right-wing groups, to position itself to get into power. In fact, its own lists had 108,000 fewer votes than in 2014. Where they were re-elected, it was because their elected representatives have become local barons – in the same way as the right. Not a single one of them represents opposition to Macron's policies.

Where the RN has really threatened to take cities, as in Marseille, only the mobilisation of workers and youth, of the organisations of the workers' movement, can put an end to that threat, not the electoral arrangements of the PS. While technical list mergers can be a tool to prevent the RN winning elections, they are in no way a political response.

The RN will only be really defeated by a mobilisation of residents, workers and young people, focused on concrete social demands.

LFI: breakthroughs, anchoring and responsibilities

The results of the second round confirm that LFI is becoming the central political force in many working-class cities, including in the cities of the former 'red belt'. The conquest of municipalities such as Saint-Denis, the progress in Marseille in the sectors where the list was maintained; the 593 seats won in the municipal councils, show a deep dynamic.

This dynamic raises a strategic question: what political force can really take forward the social aspirations that are being expressed?

Having electoral programmes is good, especially when they pose as an alternative to the false left that makes social cuts in the cities and serves soup to president Macron and prime minister Sébastien Lecornu in the National Assembly. Now, to stop the policies of the government and the bosses, we need a political party of our own - workers and youth. A party in which we can discuss: how to build the response to Macron, what are we putting forward in our trade unions so that they engage in battle, and what type of society are we fighting for in place of capitalism and its dictatorship of profit?

LFI will have to demonstrate, in the cities it governs and where it is strongly established, that it can carry out anti-austerity policies, breaking with the logic of management for the capitalists. The first municipal budget will be a key test!

With Gauche Révolutionnaire: building a force of struggle against Macron and capitalism

Everywhere, workers, young people and trade unionists have followed these elections closely and want to discuss what to do next. 'Décidons Petit-Quevilly', the 'popular and unbowed' list in Rouen headed by Leïla Messaoudi of Gauche Révolutionnaire, more than doubled its votes and won three combative elected officials.

Run by a collective that has been campaigning since 2020 in the city as a clear, social, combative campaign - independent of the PS - it has been able to win support among residents and workers. And the campaign has shown that, to a significant extent, it is drawing people together to fight for and win measures that are in their interests.

The Décidons Petit-Quevilly collective has therefore established certain roots, a must for all militant forces that want to put an end to policies that create austerity and crisis for us, and profits for the capitalists.

What is needed now: organisation and mobilisation!

Social tensions, anger in the neighbourhoods, and the risk of social explosions show that the situation is unstable and can change quickly. The last year of Macron's mandate must be a year of struggles.

We call for:

- To organise in neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools
- To organise a network of elected officials who are combative against budget cuts
- To support the combative municipalities and put pressure on those who hesitate, with residents, all the combative forces of the workers' movement and youth mobilised
- To strengthen Gauche Révolutionnaire, be active with us to build a revolutionary, internationalist political organisation that fights for socialism against capitalism

CWI CIT
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.
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TV Review: Louis Theroux - Inside the Manosphere

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LOIS THEROUX: INSIDE THE MANOSPHERE IS AVAILABLE TO STREAM ON NETFLIX

Louis Theroux's latest documentary, 'Inside the Manosphere,' provides an eye-opening insight into an online subculture – the 'Manosphere' – where men and boys subscribe to an ideal of manhood premised on the personal domination of women, and individual accumulation of wealth and status.

Even for those familiar with the category of hyper-reactionary, hyper-individualistic 'content creators,' the roughly 90-minute episode makes for shocking viewing. The figures make all kinds of extreme misogynistic remarks and reality-warping allegations about women and gender relations.

Most shocking are the clips of predominantly young male fans who stop in the street to call these online figures their 'role models' and 'inspirations.' Viewers are left to conclude that these influencers and their seemingly 'fringe' views do in fact have some real base in society, which is undoubtedly true to a degree.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that the Manosphere figures, and the misogynistic views they espouse, only have support from a small section of boys and young men overall. This reflects the big positive shifts in social attitudes around gender and relationships which have been made over past decades, driven in large part by movements of women, as well as the wider working class.

For example, according to a YouGov poll from October 2025, only 7% of 13 to 17-year-olds, and 13% of Gen-Z men, in Britain had a favourable opinion of Andrew Tate - the most prominent to have emerged from the Manosphere. The same poll found that young men were most likely to agree with the statement: "Gains made by women in society in recent decades have been good for men", with a clear majority of all men saying those gains had either been 'good' or 'neutral' for men.

> **The Manosphere, far from being an aberration, is a logical outgrowth of the capitalist system**

Nonetheless, the documentary does well in showing how a minority of young men can be pulled into the Manosphere's orbit. Through his trademark style, combining a kind of feigned naivety with frequent pauses in conversation (silence which, for many of the big-mouth influencers featured in this documentary, is all too inviting), Theroux is especially successful in laying bare the predatory relationship cultivated between content creator and fan.

All these influencers are, to a greater or lesser extent, selling fans an unrealisable dream. They promise that as long as you just change your perspective on life and make the right personal and financial choices – gaining the "cheat codes" to "level your life up" – you can achieve true freedom and break out of the exploitative arrangement of "a boss" and the "nine-to-five". Invariably this means fans paying money to access various subscription-only services and content, which form the main income stream for most of the influencers. In return, paying fans are promised the reward of vast sums of money, a nice body, and women who are submissive to them as a result of their wealth and status.

The theme of 'breaking out of the system' is central to the documentary. It shows that, in reality, influencers are preying on the alienation and genuine insecurities of a layer of men and boys who see no stable future on the basis of capitalism, and are desperate for a way out.

In reality, the influencers in this documentary offer 'answers' that only reinforce the fears and prejudices of their fans. We hear that one fan was briefly made homeless while following the advice of his Manosphere lifecoach. More generally, the toxic ideas about women and gender relations that are encouraged by these influencers reinforce alienation and insecurity, because they pull a section of men away from the potential for united working-class action, not just with women but also other men. Instead, the Manosphere advocates a polar opposite approach, telling men that women are something to be overcome in an individualised struggle for the life they want.

The influencers have an interest in maintaining a parasitic relationship with their fans because it makes them money. One explains that he is at base a "salesman" and "businessman". In this sense, the documentary confirms that eradicating misogyny and all reactionary ideas means fighting to eliminate the private profit interests that can make money from appealing to, and reinforcing, people's existing prejudices. The Manosphere, far from being an aberration, is a logical outgrowth of a capitalist system that is in an especially deep state of crisis.

If this documentary can play a role in exposing the dead end of the Manosphere to a layer of boys and men who could otherwise be attracted to its false ideas, that would be positive. But the documentary also shows the difficulty of breaking into the algorithmic prison of social media, which constantly bombards young people of all genders with unrealistic expectations about their bodies, relationships, gender roles, and what it means to be successful. These are ideas driven into young people from an early age, not just on social media but across all areas of capitalist society.

The best way to cut across the prejudices, alienation and desperation bred by dead-end capitalism – which the Manosphere is part of – is to build the fight for an alternative vision of society: a socialist way out, based on mutual solidarity and cooperation, which could guarantee the needs of all are met.

Read more:

- 'For democratic control of social media – nationalise!' at socialistparty.org.uk
- Boy Troubles - Christine Thomas looks at changing gender norms and an alleged 'crisis of masculinity': socialismtoday.org/boy-troubles

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THE SOCIALIST INBOX

Football ticket prices – working class priced out

Liverpool Football Club has announced proposals to increase ticket prices for the next three years, a second price rise since 2024. The proposals include an increase in prices in line with inflation that would eventually take tickets to £70, amidst the backdrop of an increase in season ticket prices by 7% since 2021. After achieving record revenues in the past few seasons, Fenway Sports Group, the club's Boston-based consortium owner, is now threatening loyal fans with a season ticket of almost £1,000 and rising. Working-class matchgoers are being priced out.

This is not the first time eye-watering increases have been mentioned since John Henry bought the club in 2010. A 2016 fan walkout, the first in the club's history, took place against a price rise.

After years of price freezes as a compromise, the owners are attempting to exploit fan loyalty all while claiming that matchday costs are increasing, in order to generate an extra £1.2 million in revenue.

Supporters' groups have voiced their concerns, highlighting the issues that fans face with the rising cost of living, and the further disconnect between owners and supporters. Football typically prides itself on its working-class origins, but developments in recent years price out those same fans who build the community and generate the atmosphere.

With growing frustration among working-class supporters against corporate greed worldwide, not just at Liverpool, it is clear that more has to be done to develop meaningful dialogue between supporters and the board.

In 2019, German giants Bayern Munich unveiled a, 'Twenty is Plenty' banner at Anfield, calling for a cap on ticket prices. There is also the ongoing 'Stop Exploiting Loyalty' campaign. This decision at Liverpool only continues a trend of out-of-touch owners taking fans for granted.

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WAR BRINGS ‘TRUMPFLATION’ AND FUEL SHORTAGES

NATIONALISE ENERGY NOW!



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As another week of volatility in world oil and gas prices ended, Asda chief executive Allan Leighton warned of the potential for fuel shortages at his company’s petrol stations.

Since Trump’s bombing of Iran began, petrol is up by an average of 17p per litre and diesel is up a whopping 35p.

Hapless Prime Minister Keir Starmer has threatened to ‘step in’ if fuel companies are “ripping people off”. Is he oblivious to the super-profits energy companies have been making over recent years, while ordinary people’s living standards suffer?

A Unite report published last October highlighted UK energy companies making £30 billion in profit in 2024 - that’s the equivalent of every household in the UK handing over £500 each to subsidise their profits!

By leaving those companies in private hands, Starmer is letting the super-rich energy bosses off the hook. And now Nigel Farage’s Reform has joined him. Reform has dropped its general election policy to nationalise the energy companies. Farage’s own Thatcherite inclinations have likely been reinforced by all the recent refugees from the Tories!

Starmer and Farage both defend capitalism – a system based on workers being ‘ripped off’ by employers who do not pay us the full value of our labour. Capitalism ‘works’ by extracting the biggest profits from the goods and services that ordinary workers in those sectors produce, including energy.

We can’t control what we don’t own – that’s why it’s mistaken for the Green Party, at its online conference on 28 March, to row back on its policy for nationalising the energy suppliers and retail.

Not only should every facet of the major energy companies be brought into public ownership, but it should also be placed under the democratic control and management of the working class, including elected representatives of workers and their trade unions, both within the energy industry and more broadly. Then the key decisions, including the price of energy, as well as a plan for investment in renewables, can be made in our interests, not those of the super-rich!

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY’S MAIN DEMANDS ▶▶▶ see column on p8

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