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the Socialist

Issue 1364 | 23-29 April 2026 | formerly Militant

Jobs, homes and services

DON'T ACCEPT THE POLITICIANS' LIES

Make the super-rich pay

Of all the lies establishment politicians tell, that a decent standard of living for all and quality public services aren't 'affordable', is one of the biggest!

Keir Starmer's Labour government will say that in today's tumultuous, chaotic world, with Trump in the White House and wars spreading, we have to stick within our means. Meanwhile, military spending is on the up, and so are profits for big oil producers. MPs just had a 5% pay rise and the bosses of the biggest 100 UK companies had an average 18% pay rise this year.

Almost universally, local councillors representing the establishment parties either spread the lies themselves or swallow them.

We need councillors prepared to fight. Who tell the truth that councils do have the powers to build council homes, introduce rent controls, provide free school meals for all, reopen libraries and youth centres, and more. And who demand Keir Starmer's government coughs up.

We need councils to fund services to meet needs, and which point to the huge wealth and resources created by workers but hoarded by the super-rich – make them pay!

Read more about our socialist election stand:

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- Welsh Senedd candidate, disability campaigner speaks p5
- Youth demand services to tackle knife crime p13



VOTE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION on 7 May

TUSC AGAINST CUTS

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formerly Militant

Issue 1364
23-29 April 2026

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

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

Southampton Labour has failed us – vote for socialist Nadia in Bevois



Canvassing on 19 April
PHOTO: SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Nadia Ditta, Socialist Party member and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate, is the main challenge to Labour in Bevois ward in Southampton.

This time at the door, we could proudly tell people that we saved The Venny adventure playground from Labour's cuts. It has been restored and is being used by the community.

We can also tell people that our fight stopped the Labour council selling St Mary's Leisure Centre. It is now having its roof fixed.

The anger with Labour is very evident at the door, frustration at Labour's failings.

We came second in 2024. This was with determination and hard work.

And when we started canvassing this January, it felt easier than before. People now know who we are.

Rubbish litters our streets. Fly tipping is everywhere.

Labour have made things worse – hiking council tax, rents, and parking charges. Under Labour, the super-rich get richer. We get poorer. Why? Because when our communities need investment, Labour spends our money on wars.

We need investment, not cuts. Free bulk waste collections restored. CCTV and community policing under local democratic control. Safe spaces and youth facilities for Northam, Newtown, and Bevois.

All these fights have really connected me with my community. We all suffer with the mess our area has become.

I am asking the people I speak to: "Why is Bevois the most deprived ward in Southampton, but we have only ever had Labour councillors?" This has led to people to say they will vote for us.

Frustration is evident. People are fed up.

We have to knock on every single door. We have to speak to everyone.

We have to let people know that they can vote for an alternative, someone who will fight for them. These discussions are important.

The sense we have in the air is hope, that we can bring along real change. We can now somewhat visualise what a better Bevois would look like. Excitement is rising every day, that we can elect someone who will fight for us.

A win in Bevois could be a launch pad for what we can achieve across the country. I encourage everyone to come out and canvass with us. I don't intend on taking my gloves off.

If elected in May, my first act will be a motion to the next council meeting in July, demanding free bulk waste collections are restored. Even if we don't get elected, we'll be protesting outside.

Jobs, homes, fully funded services for everyone. Let's get it done!

TUSC AGAINST CUTS TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION tusc.org.uk

Labour government ladens West Surrey with debt mountain from day one

Working-class communities won't be made to pay!

HUW JAMES
ALDERSHOT AND NORTH HAMPSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

In Surrey the local elections on 7 May will be to elect councillors for two new 'unitary authorities': East Surrey and West Surrey. The key challenge facing West Surrey is that it will start life with debts exceeding £4.5 billion. The debt was created in boroughs under the control of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats and equates to around £7,000 per resident.

It is claimed that because of this debt, West Surrey will start life bankrupt. This is based on the fact that Woking Council, which accounts for most of the £4.5 billion, supposedly declared bankruptcy in 2023. But a local authority cannot go bankrupt as the financing for council services is implicitly underpinned by central government (only an act of parliament can dissolve a local authority).

Woking Council's debt is owed almost entirely to central government, and the same goes for the rest of the £4.5 billion debt that West Surrey will inherit. The entire debt could be written off at the press of a button or stroke of a pen. In fact the government has already agreed to write off £500 million, which raises the question of why it doesn't just write off the rest of it.

By refusing to write off the debt, central government is effectively demanding that West Surrey provides it with money. The sensible thing would be to use the consolidation as an opportunity to write off the debt and begin again with a clean slate.

The reason the government won't do this is to force West Surrey to pursue an austerity agenda. As depressing as that seems, there is a positive to take from this story. Woking Council has demonstrated that it is possible for a local authority to go into debt, and there is nothing to stop a local authority going into debt to properly fund public services or build affordable housing.

As long as that debt is denominated in pound sterling - as almost all local authority spending is - the government can write if off at any time. The idea that local authorities can go bankrupt provides justification for policies designed to discipline the working class. The only thing preventing government from properly funding council services is a lack of political will. The three Socialist Party members standing as part of TUSC in West Surrey do have the political will! We are fighting for councils to use all powers at their disposal to fund the services we need, and send the bill to Starmer.



PHOTO: RICHARD KELLY/CC

WHAT KIND OF PARTY DO WE NEED?

JOSH ASKER
EDITOR OF THE SOCIALIST

The results of the 7 May elections will be seismic. The Tories were smashed two years ago, punished for presiding over austerity and falling living standards. Now Keir Starmer's Labour will get a taste too, for the same reasons.

Britain's two-party system is crumbling. Most now expect their children to be worse off than they are. Meanwhile, the super-rich only get richer.

Millions will go to the polls on 7 May, in elections to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments and in thousands of council seats in England, with a desire to show their disgust with the status quo. Many will do so by voting for Nigel Farage's right-populist Reform UK. Those wanting to vote 'left' will be most likely to vote for the Greens, now led by Zack Polanski who correctly speaks about the unequal rigged system. Socialist Party branches are hosting public meetings in dozens of towns and cities, bringing together all those who want to fight for an alternative asking: 'What kind of party do we need?'

Come to a public meeting near you
socialistparty.org.uk/events

Councillors have power, if they choose to use it

In England, elections are taking place to over 100 local authorities. Despite the brutal cuts to central government funding for councils over the last decade and a half, council spending still makes up over 20% of public spending.

Rent controls and council house building, funding for schools and SEND education services, subsidies to introduce free public transport, reopened youth services, emergency cost-of-living relief... Councils can introduce all of these measures, with access to huge financial reserves and the ability to borrow money.

Of course, Starmer's Labour government will say it can't be afforded. At the same time as ratcheting up military spending to try to appease Donald Trump, and while big energy bosses rake in mega-profits as our bills keep going up.

But recent history shows that they can be forced to U-turn, and to cough up. Working-class anger at the cut to pensioners' universal winter fuel payments made them change course, so too on the decision to keep the cruel two-child benefit cap. And even the Tories had to give pay rises more than they were willing faced by workers taking collective strike action during the 2022-23 strike wave.



PHOTO: SENAN, PAUL MATTSSON, SOCIALIST PARTY

Working-class fightback

Faced with working-class anger, especially as it gets organised to fight back, what was once 'unaffordable' becomes possible. But the working class does not have a party of its own to act as an organiser and a political voice. That's why we call for the trade unions - with over 6 million members organised in tens of thousands of workplaces - to take the lead by forming a new mass party, one that represents the interests of our class against those of the capitalist bosses.

The Socialist Party's stand in these elections, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), is part of raising the banner for what kind of stand is needed. At the same time, our members are fighting hard in the democratic structures of the trade unions, arguing that to continue to (or be seen to) back Starmer's Labour is counterproductive. And that instead the unions should form their own party, starting by standing candidates of their own.

Socialist change

A mass party of the working class would be a huge draw for all those fed up with the 'rigged system' and angry with the establishment politicians. Its existence would cut across support for Reform UK too.

But to be able to improve the lives of the working class, it would have to present an alternative to the 'rigged system.' So far, for example, Green-led councils - or the 40-odd in which they take part in coalitions or agreements with others - have continued to increase council taxes, rents and charges, and cut funding for services. They have followed the logic of the 'rigged system' and what it says is 'affordable.' It's why the Socialist Party has backed the call from some leading trade unionists for Polanski to use his position to force them to change course.

We need a party that helps to organise mass working-class struggle for what is needed to transform our lives. And to be successful it has to fight for socialist change. That means transforming the way society is organised so that instead of energy, water, telecoms, supermarkets, banks... being owned by super-rich capitalists and run for profit, they are nationalised under the democratic control and management of the working-class majority.

On that basis, what is 'affordable' isn't determined by what crumbs the capitalist bosses are prepared to leave behind for our public services. Instead, the full fruits of all the wealth, resources and technology that exist can be put to use as part of a plan to meet the needs of all, while protecting the environment.

If you are fed up with the 'rigged system,' want to help us fight for the working class to have its own party, and to fight for a programme for the socialist transformation of society – join us!

If you want to be part of the fight, during the elections and beyond, then get involved

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit **socialistparty.org.uk/join**
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to find out more today!

Enfield: Build council homes and save green spaces!



10,000 homes have been built at Meridian Water- council-owned land but no council houses PHOTO: THE FROGGOD1/CC

MIRA GLAVARDANOV
ENFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Green belt land around Enfield, north London, has been approved for a new town of up to 21,000 homes. There is strong local opposition that rests on many real problems about this project. On Saturday 18 April, there was a 'letter to the PM signing' event in which candidates for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) participated.

It is true that Enfield has a huge housing crisis. Around 6,000 households are on the council house waiting list, living in temporary accommodation that costs Enfield Council around £60 million a year. But the answer to that is not to build unaffordable houses on precious greenfield land, or anywhere else for that matter. The answer is to build council homes, especially on public land. But that is not the plan for the new town.

Enfield Council has already been involved in a huge project of promised 10,000 homes, at Meridian Water, a brownfield site and council-owned land. Socialist Party members have been active in a campaign that demands 100% council homes at social rent there, that would more than house those on the waiting list.

In the council plans there are no social-rent homes available at Meridian Water. It is the same for the new town. Yet the council's argument for the necessity of both projects is 'the housing crisis.' It looks like it's a perpetual excuse for the council in order to reward private developers with opportunities to make massive profits while never actually solving the problem.

The green belt area called Crews Hill is home to several garden centres, open green spaces, food-growing land, all part of the local economy and leisure. With the new town, many jobs will be lost, together with access to green spaces, biodiversity and food.

Enfield Council is Labour-led and eagerly signed up to the project. Completely opportunistically, local Tories campaign against the project and to "save the nature" for local people. As if Tories are known for care about ordinary people or nature and their opposition to privatisation and private profits! But it is the Labour council that provides them with ample opportunity for opportunism. It is a big issue in this year's local elections.

We are opposed to the project as an excuse for developers' profits. We say, build council housing on many available brownfield sites in the borough (there are about 700 sites which could accommodate 40,000 homes, according to Better Homes Enfield, a housing campaign group), stop privatisation of land, keep green spaces open for all!

Standing up to profit-first developers and fighting for decent services

Why I'm standing for TUSC

KATHRYN ALLMAN
TUSC CANDIDATE FOR SPENCERS WOOD & SWALLOWFIELD, WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Private developers are allowed to build endlessly in my area of Spencers Wood and its surroundings, just outside Reading, without the infrastructure to support it. Why? Because infrastructure costs money, and all the developers are interested in is profit.

It took two years for my family to access a local NHS dentist. There is a severe lack of nursery and school places, forcing families into impossible routines with multiple drop-offs, pushing children out of their own communities, and in some cases driving families to move away altogether due to a lack of confidence in local secondary provision.

I have raised concerns about unsafe roads and access to children's SEND and mental health support, only to be met with silence or excuses. Meanwhile, council tax keeps rising. People are paying more and getting less and we're expected to accept it!

Like many people, when the Tories were kicked out in 2024 I hoped things would change. Instead, we have seen continued cuts, rising council tax, and decisions that prioritise profit over people.

I'm standing to challenge this broken way of doing politics and to reject the idea that nothing can be done. Our community is being failed, we need to fighting for fully funded public services to meet the needs of all.



Thousands march in London against the housing crisis

PAUL KERSHAW
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

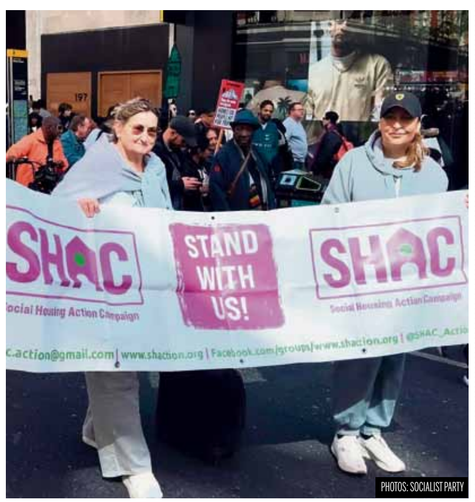
Thousands marched through London on 18 April calling for rent control and protesting against the housing crisis. There were banners and placards from unions, estate-based campaigns, and renters' unions.

Many demonstrators were delighted to be part of pushing these issues up the political agenda. Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and problems of disrepair and unresponsive landlords were raised by protesters.

Socialist Party members raised the cost-of-living crisis which is set to deepen as the effects of war hit Britain and the call to freeze all rents as an emergency step - a measure which has already been announced in Spain and got a good response.

Our leaflet also raised the local elections in May; despite huge support for rent control none of the parties of the capitalist establishment from Reform to Labour support it. Far from freezing rents, local authorities have committed to increase rent by more than inflation for years to come. Socialist councillors such as those standing under the TUSC umbrella could freeze these rents as a start.

The gulf between the pressing problems of workers and mainstream politicians was clear; housing campaigns will be central in building a new party of the working class.



PHOTOS: SOCIALIST PARTY

Councils can start rent controls now!

'The rental market won't survive Zack Polanski's lunatic housing policy,' the headline of the Tory-leaning Daily Telegraph's coverage of the Green Party leader's support for rent control.

More 'mind-blowing' is the stat that costs for those renting privately have risen by 27% over the last five years. What worries the Telegraph editors isn't our ability to meet rent payments or risk being forced into homelessness, but the bottom line for big landlords.

Much of the press coverage of the Green Party's local election campaign launch was about Polanski's support for universal rent control. Beneath the headlines though: "Polanski acknowledged that Green councils would not be able to introduce rent controls if they win councils on 7 May" (BBC website 16 April).

In fact, councils have existing powers to introduce compulsory registers of private landlords. Many councils already have landlord registers more stringent than the minimal mandated by central government for houses of multiple occupancy.

Green councillors are already part of the administration in over 40 local authorities, have the largest group on Bristol council and lead West Suffolk council. They will almost certainty win more local authority clout in May.

Rather than 'acknowledging what can't be done,' Green councillors should be fighting to do everything possible to ease the burden of the cost-of-living crisis on the working class. That includes introducing compulsory landlord registers, with stringent conditions over quality, safety, and cost – determined democratically by workers and the trade unions.

Rent controls are possible now, if there are councillors prepared to fight!

My experience of Labour and Tory disability benefit cuts



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

FARHANA MANZOOR
CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

I receive disability benefits. Doing so has become an extremely stressful, degrading experience.

When applying for these benefits, every aspect of life is scrutinised. Even if you have a profound illness, we have to jump through hoops of 'proving' how ill we are.

Under the Conservative government, benefits weren't enough, particularly considering the high cost of living. Many disability charities stated this. As the Tories made the application criteria more stringent, many people died waiting to receive their benefits.

Privatisation in the government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) means that taxpayers' money isn't used to help. Instead, the system is further fragmented.

Now it's the Labour government that is vilifying disabled people, treating us like a burden on society. This is a shameful approach from the government of the sixth-richest country in the world.

Initially, Keir Starmer's government tried to save £4.8 billion by cutting disability benefits. This would have come from tighter regulations around Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

But PIP is actually a lifeline for many disabled people. It's money to offset the high cost of being disabled, a necessary payment for disabled people to meet their needs.

My experience has been that clerical errors and the unaccountability of faceless agents, in benefits centres many miles away, have left me scrambling for money which, by right, is mine. I was made to attend sessions where I was supposed to be actively searching for work, despite having a long-term illness.

I spent hours on the phone to countless agents. Despite the underfunded, understaffed system, some were helpful and knowledgeable.

I entered this quagmire in the move to Universal Credit, through no fault of my own. Only to be told six months later of the human error that had been made with my claim.

Fortunately, I was able to challenge the initial decision. But only after hours of excruciating research into what the mistake was, and sheer luck in getting a few competent agents who put it right.

The benefits system is extremely fragmented, so different departments don't know what is happening to a claim, and if an error is made, as in my case, no one picks it up.

How many other people will actually figure out what mistake has been made, like I did? People who are also dealing with decapacitating illness. It was tough on me.

Now, the Labour government claims it has U-turned on its benefit cuts. But I don't see this at all.

Last September, inflation was low compared to the rest of the year. Benefit rates are set in September. This time based on this lower-than-average figure. So all disabled people lost out unfairly.

Living costs are extremely high. We should not have to fight for our right to a decent income, alongside being seriously ill.

The PIP reforms, as they stand, still penalise new claimants. Many people who need PIP will be put off from applying, as the process is so stringent and dehumanising.

All this while billionaires are evading their taxes, and enjoying financial gains that they will never be able to spend in their entire lifetimes. Gained often through deceit, and an unfair, unethical, corrupt system.

I want to see a fair welfare system that meets the needs of disabled people, and also gives them access to join employment, to the extent that they can, if they can, without being penalised. The system we are currently in is broken, ineffective, and highly unfair.

We need to kick out private companies. We need a system where knowledgeable staff are encouraged to be caring and to empathise with our needs. As it stands the welfare system is underfunded, understaffed, and under-resourced. Diabolical.

The Socialist Party, where I live in Haringey, is supporting Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates, who will fight for local councils to support residents in getting the right benefits, funding them if needed, and campaigning to get reimbursed from central government.

> **"I want to see a fair welfare system that meets the needs of disabled people, and also gives them access to join employment, to the extent that they can, if they can, without being penalised**

Swansea disability campaigner – why I'm standing

Socialist Party member **Ben Golightly** is an elected coordinator for Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) Cymru. He is the lead Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in Gwyr Abertawe (Swansea and Gower) for the Welsh Senedd elections.

£200 a month has been cut from new Universal Credit claims for those unable to work. This is biting now. And it was voted for by 25 out of 26 Welsh Labour MPs.

My driving force in standing for election is fighting the UK Labour government disability cuts. We need a Welsh Government that stands up for us. Not a Labour First Minister of Wales who says: "It's up to MPs".

Welfare cuts will increase demand for services, while simultaneously reducing the council's ability to charge for them, as residents' incomes are slashed.

And there's a black hole in local planning. Swansea Council documents reveal it has made "no provision for any increased costs or reductions in income arising from changes to welfare reform". I challenged the councillors on this.

Some of the councillors that either voted in favour of the cuts budget, or merely abstained, are now Senedd candidates – Labour, Green, and Lib-Dem. I am standing to hold their feet to the fire.

And I'm not just a disabled activist. I'm fighting for the whole working class.

We're providing a positive alternative to Reform. 'Lesser evilism' isn't enough.

People are right to complain about the lack of affordable housing, healthcare, services, and the cost of living. Reform argues about who should be first in the queue.

But the problem is the queue itself – rationing services. While we squabble over our place in the line, big business gets away with looting our public services.

Without a socialist alternative, things will only get worse, and working-class people could grow more divided, and pay the price for the bosses' crisis. We need trade unions to boldly confront these issues, and build a new mass workers' party to cut across racism and division.

Socialist Party member and Swansea Trades Union Council secretary Mark Evans is also standing for TUSC in Gwyr Abertawe. Mark played an important role in winning TUC Cymru (Wales Trades Union Congress) – which represents 400,000 workers – to call on councils to adopt needs-led budgets to defend council workers, service users, and residents, from cuts and council tax rises.

Welsh Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates are the only option on the ballot paper supporting policies like this, and the only candidates with the track record to back it up.

All Welsh TUSC candidates have pledged that, if elected, they will forgo the full £76,380 Senedd member salary, and take home only a worker's wage. Welsh TUSC is also standing three candidates in Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf. See 'Cardiff workers' Senedd election stand' at socialistparty.org.uk



Ben Golightly PHOTO: WELSH TUSC



Starmer and Mandelson embrace PHOTO: NUMBER 10/CC

Starmer on the ropes again over Mandelson

MARK BEST
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Another month, another potentially career-ending scandal for Keir Starmer. New Labour apparatchik Peter Mandelson's appointment as US ambassador, an attempt to cosy up to Donald Trump by posting one of his pals, keeps coming back to bite Starmer. Questions swirl about who knew of and how much did they know about Mandelson's close personal friendship and business dealings with deceased sexual predator and financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Now Starmer has had to stand up in Parliament and fight for his political life, that he did not mislead Parliament, and that the normal procedures to appoint Mandelson were followed. The Guardian reported that, despite Starmer's previous statements, Mandelson failed security vetting – normally required for a sensitive position like US ambassador – but it was overruled to get him in post as fast as possible. Olly Robbins, the senior civil servant who has taken the fall for this, gave evidence to Parliament about the pressure from the government to get Mandelson his security clearances.

Starmer's defence is that he didn't know. So we either have a prime minister that lies to Parliament if he can get away with it (a graver offence for an MP than attacking working-class people's living standards, or supporting war and destruction), or a prime minister that for whom things happen around him without his knowledge - what else hasn't passed Starmer's desk?

Dodgy political appointments, attacks on disabled people and pensioners, and still dragging their feet on all their promised improvements to workers' rights. Starmer's government is there to serve the interests of the rich and big business. We need to clear out the bosses' New Labour Mark II, but to do that we need a party that will represent working-class interests.

Middle East war impacts will last

STEVE SCORE
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The death and destruction in the Middle East resulting from the US and Israeli war on Iran has caused a tidal wave of impact around the world. The rise in oil prices along with other products of the industry, such as fertilisers and chemicals, is having and will have devastating consequences for the world economy.

Despite the huge military power of the US and the horror unleashed on the Iranian population, Trump perversely claiming it's to help them liberate themselves, the weakness of US imperialism has been exposed. Trump has weakened the US's past alliances such as with Europe, and strengthened its rivals, particularly China.

The Iranian regime did not collapse; assassination of leaders was ineffective. The Iranians have used their control over the Strait of Hormuz to apply a chokehold on the world economy. Their Houthi allies have threatened to do the same with Red Sea shipping. At the time of writing, uncertainty over negotiations and the ceasefire, or resumption of war, makes prediction of immediate events impossible.

But whatever happens next there are already permanent consequences. Economic instability, mass struggle to resist the consequent attempt by ruling classes to make the working class and poor pay for the crisis, and even more political volatility are inevitable.

Inflation and recession, or 'stagflation', is a real threat. In Britain there have already been big increases in the costs of fuel and heating oil, and more energy price rises are in the pipeline. Food and other inflation will be another twist in the cost-of-living crisis. Economic crisis will be used as further justification for government cuts and austerity.

Not everyone is feeling the pinch though. FTSE100 company chief executives have had a pay rise of 18% last year, 64% over the last three years. A new round of workers' struggle to defend living standards will be needed. Trade union leaders should be preparing for coordinated action to fight back.

In the US, opinion polls show support for the war has dropped even further, 67% disapprove of Trump's handling of it. We have already seen the vast multi-million 'No Kings' protests against Trump, and the resistance to the actions of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). There have been calls in some trade unions for a 'general strike' on 1 May which, while it will not have the character of a full general strike organised by the unions, can be a day of action that raises the idea of workers' power to force change.

The fact that capitalism means imperialism and war, poverty and economic insecurity, will increasingly affect the consciousness of millions of people worldwide. We need to build a socialist alternative internationally.

- Read what we think: 'US-Israel war on Iran fails to achieve victory' at socialistparty.org.uk (15.04.2026)
- Visit socialistparty.org.uk and socialistworld.net for more analysis

Labour ramps up anti-migrant rhetoric

● To fight division we need workers' control and jobs, homes and services

SCOTT HUNTER
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

A recent BBC report claims to have found evidence of law firms coaching migrants to 'pretend to be gay' to claim asylum in the UK. This has been followed by predictable responses from all the establishment politicians, with Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood vowing to come down hard on 'sham lawyers.'

It cannot escape notice that the BBC has published these findings – which its editors surely knew would have an incendiary effect – at a time of escalating war and a looming cost-of-living crisis for many people in Britain. The report has no data on how widespread these practices may be. It hearkens back to the 2000s, when the press carried lurid headlines about supposed 'benefit fraudsters,' amplifying as much as possible the few confirmed cases.

Where there is demand, there is supply, and these exploitative law firms – who charge migrants thousands of pounds – exist in the gaps created by decades of anti-migrant policy by governments of all colours. The BBC report appears to show that their main clientele is people who have been living in the UK legally for years – as workers or students – whose visas have expired and are desperate to continue their established lives in the UK.

In 2012, then-Home Secretary Theresa May spearheaded the 'hostile environment' policy, which famously culminated years later in the wrongful deportation of at least 83 members of the Windrush generation. Starmer's Labour has continued these Tory policies without the hostile environment branding, proudly touting the number of deportations in its first six months in government, not to mention Starmer's 'island of strangers' rhetoric. All the establishment political parties have used immigration as an issue to divide the working class, which has only contributed to the rise of Reform and the far-right. Given all these obstacles to living and working legally in the UK, is it any surprise that a grey market has emerged?

How can the immigration system be reformed in favour of working-class people? While the bosses and their politicians hold power, we don't have a say in so many aspects of our lives, including immigration laws. It is impossible for migrants to get a fair hearing under our current racist immigration laws, which are created and enforced in the interests of big business and not the working class and poor. The trade unions – which have more than 6.5 million members in Britain and organise workers of all nationalities – should fight for genuine democratic workers' control over the whole legal system, including migration and borders. We demand that elected committees of workers, including representatives from trade unions and migrants' organisations, should be able to oversee asylum and immigration policy.

The 'immigration crisis' is a crisis of capitalism: a system built on division and exploitation which breeds poverty and war. There's more than enough wealth in society to make sure that no one – regardless of national origin – goes cold, hungry or homeless. Fighting for migrants' rights and against racist and divisive immigration laws has to be part of a fight against the cost-of-living crisis: for decent pay, council homes, fully funded services and more.

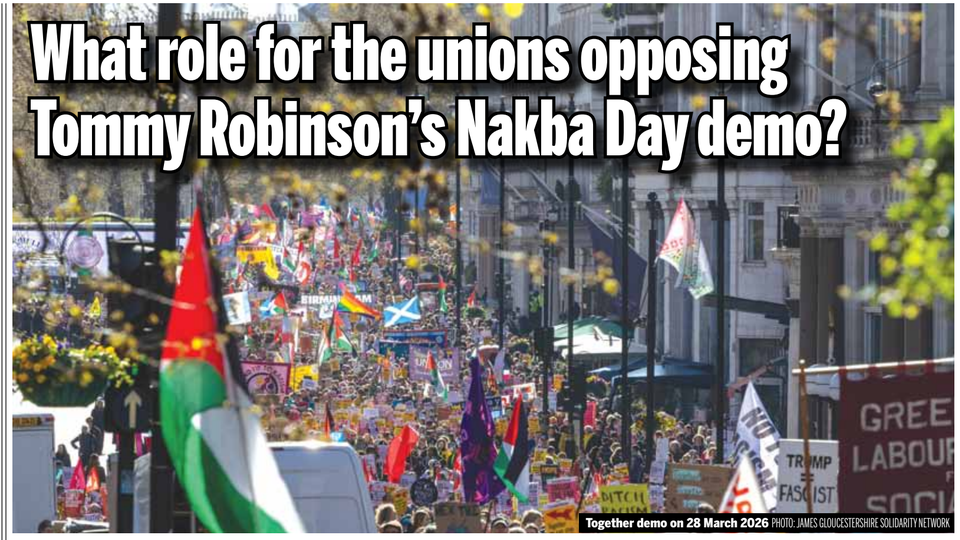
To win these demands, we need a united fightback which embraces the working class in all its diversity. And the trade unions must take the lead! Huge numbers demonstrated in March against racist division. The TUC (Trades Union Congress) passed a motion last September committing to organising a national demonstration against austerity. The TUC should name the date and link the struggles against Labour's austerity, racism and war.

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Refugee rights campaigners PHOTO: SENAN

What role for the unions opposing Tommy Robinson's Nakba Day demo?



Together demo on 28 March 2026 PHOTO: JAMES GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOLIDARITY NETWORK

Socialist Party

WHAT WE THINK

The trade union leaders, along with anti-racist, anti-war, Palestinian solidarity campaigns, need to say clearly now: we are all marching together to oppose racism, war and austerity

Far-right thug Tommy Robinson has called a Unite the Kingdom (UtK) march and rally on 16 May, aiming to exceed the 100,000 he reportedly mobilised in September last year.

This is purposefully provocative, in opposition to a demonstration marking Nakba Day, the annual day which commemorates the displacement of millions of Palestinians in 1948 when the state of Israel was formed.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign had already called a demonstration on Saturday 16 May – a yearly event, but this year with increased significance given Trump and Netanyahu's war on the Middle East, following the over-two-year-long onslaught on Gaza by the Israeli government and ongoing attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank.

The UtK rally is set to march from Waterloo to the southern end of Whitehall. The police have granted the centre of London to Robinson, but refused the chosen route of the Palestine demonstration. As far as we are aware, an alternative route is still under negotiation.

The organisers of the UtK march clearly intend to exploit the idea propagated by all the capitalist parties - Tory and Labour - that pro-Palestinian protesters are 'hate marchers' - anti-democratic, antisemitic, and enablers of terrorism.

Many driven-down, angry working-class people, with lives ruined by austerity, privatisation and the cost of living, feel they have lost control of their lives. Some will be misled and attracted to this march. They will find themselves marching alongside violent racist thugs.

In Muslim communities around London, community leaders are advising people not to travel into central London on that day, a fear that could be particularly felt in areas near central London. The fact that Robinson himself is calling on his marchers not to get drunk and be violent illustrates the risk that many people fear.

From the end of March, it was announced that Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) is calling a counter-demonstration to Unite the Kingdon – the planned route reported in the press was from Russell Square to the northern end of Whitehall. The advertising of SUTR is to "fill the streets" against the far right.

Three weeks ago on 28 March, the centre of London's streets really were filled with hundreds of thousands of people on the Together Alliance demonstration, marching under the banner of 'Love, Hope and Unity,' against Reform and the far right.

The Together Alliance is made up of the trade unions alongside celebrities and charities, with prominent politicians linked to it, including pro-austerity Starmerite Labour politicians such as London Mayor Sadiq Khan and Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy. The demonstration was very big, following months of mobilising and a large amount of expenditure by the trade unions, especially the National Education Union. That is a small reflection of the real balance of forces in society, and the overwhelming opposition to racist ideas.

The Socialist Party argued that instead of the trade union leaders putting their union demands to one side in the name of 'unity', the demonstration should have been called under the banner of fighting Labour austerity and racist division. That could have mobilised many thousands more trade unionists and their families.

And crucially it would have had a greater impact in starting to undercut potential support for right-populist Reform and the far right among people suffering austerity and facing another cost-of-living crisis. That would especially have been the case if it had been a launchpad for a widespread national stand of anti-austerity trade union and socialist candidates in the May elections.

Even despite those limitations, however, the Together demonstration was big. As things stand though, the counter-demonstration on 16 May is not called by Together, or by the trade unions.

Lessons from 2024

Two years ago, when Tommy Robinson called his first London demonstration, it was on the same day as a trans-rights demonstration. SUTR organised a separate counter-demonstration to Robinson's march. The Socialist Party argued at the time that the trade unions and all of the counter-demonstrators should have marched together on the trans-rights march, and the trade unions should have offered stewarding.

15,000 marched with Robinson, but 50,000 marched for trans rights. That was by far the biggest display against the divisive ideas of the far right on that day, and would have been made stronger by being joined by trade unions and anti-racist campaigners, with defensive stewarding. Instead, SUTR led a smaller protest towards the UtK march with inadequate stewarding, risking confrontation with far-right thugs and relying on the police for protection. The experience of anti-racist demonstrators in Bristol recently, where protesters have been beaten by the police, has shown that the police cannot be relied on.

Socialist Party members are arguing strenuously that the idea of opposing Tommy Robinson on 16 May should combine with the Palestine demonstration. But that still leaves open where the demonstration should assemble and march to, and what its goals are in relation to the UtK demo.

The trade union leaders, along with anti-racist, anti-war, Palestinian solidarity campaigns, need to say clearly now: we are all marching together to oppose racism, war and austerity: to oppose war on the Palestinians, to stand alongside Muslim and all other communities that feel vulnerable on that day, and to fight for a decent future for all of us – for jobs, homes and services.

Socialist Party trade union members will be arguing that the trade unions should take a lead on ensuring that happens – and, crucially, organise defensive trade union stewarding.

That must involve a proper discussion, with trade union and community involvement, about the route. Will young people in Muslim communities around the edges of central London - such as around the Regents Park mosque or around Somers Town in Camden - be feeling the need to defend their communities against potential attack?

Instead of shadowing the Tommy Robinson demonstration, potentially in confrontation with the reported 1,600 police being mobilised on the day, who may well be looking for their own confrontation, a demonstration would be more effective in uniting and defending working-class communities if it were to march by and with those areas.

Taking that approach would give confidence to many more people to march together. It would be a concrete display of working-class people standing together, undermining attempts by the right - including the right-wing press and capitalist parties - to try to divide us, to present pro-Palestine demonstrators, Muslims and other communities as the problem.

NEU indicative ballot - education workers are willing to fight

NEU MEMBER REES MELVILLE RESPONDS TO THE BALLOT RESULTS

The results of the National Education Union (NEU)'s indicative ballot on pay and funding show a clear and growing mood for action across education.

Notably, support staff turnout was well over 50%, following the recent decision by the NEU to ballot their support staff members as well. This further reflects the willingness of our lowest paid members, who are most exposed to the further cuts to education, to fight for a better deal.

An overwhelming 96% of teachers rejected the Labour government's unfunded pay proposal of 6.5% over three years, with over 90% willing to take strike action. Among support staff, 86% backed action, with near-unanimous agreement that defending jobs is essential.

Turnout - 48.6% for teachers and 55.5% for support staff - represents hundreds of thousands engaging with the union. While not quite hitting the 50% turnout threshold that would be needed in a strike ballot of teachers, this is a clear mandate for the union leadership to mount a serious campaign.

The results, however, also reflect a growing frustration. From contacting members directly and discussions in workplaces, many members feel that repeated annual indicative ballots have not been followed by decisive national action. With a union policy of 'lighting fires' and focusing on local or trust-wide disputes, the risk now is that hesitation from leadership over a national campaign could demoralise activists and weaken confidence.

Prepare now

Our union must announce now that it will move to a formal ballot, and prepare a campaign. If, as expected, the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) does as Starmer asks and delivers another unfunded or below-inflation pay recommendation, there must be no delay in launching action and outlining to workers why our education system cannot afford to take another hit from real-terms pay and funding cuts and the recent attacks on the limit to teachers' directed time.

Further, a major obstacle remains: the anti-union 50% turnout threshold imposed under Tory trade union laws that Labour has left in place. This means even overwhelming support for strike action can be blocked if turnout falls just short. It is a deeply undemocratic barrier. We must demand Labour scraps the thresholds.

With increased strike action and militancy, educators across the country have already demonstrated their willingness for strike action. Socialist Party members will argue that the national union must act on its mandate.



MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

Oxford Fire Brigades Union victory!



OXFORDSHIRE FBU X

Oxfordshire County Council planned to close three fire stations. But a determined campaign by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), including a 94% vote for potential strike action in an indicative ballot, backed up by public support, has defeated these plans and saved the stations.

Mark Chapman, FBU southern Regional Secretary, told the Socialist:

This campaign showed what can be achieved through straightforward but determined community and political engagement at every level of the union. From station meetings to public campaigning, from local councillors to wider political pressure, members took responsibility for winning the argument beyond the workplace.

It demonstrates that cuts-driven agendas can be resisted when workers are organised, confident, and rooted in their communities.

This result should give confidence to firefighters and trade unionists everywhere.

The task now is to build on this win. We will continue to push for genuine investment in fire and rescue services, based on what communities actually need.

This experience underlines the importance of strong local organisation, political confidence, and member-led campaigning. Those are the lessons we will take forward, in Oxfordshire and beyond.

Ultimately, firefighters know their communities, and the public trusts them when they speak out in defence of frontline provision.

UCU Further Education Committee meets amid huge funding crisis – national fightback needed!

DUNCAN MOORE
UCU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, FURTHER EDUCATION, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The University and College Union (UCU) national Further Education Committee (FEC) met on 16 April to discuss the financial situation in further education, following the Labour government's failure to deliver any solution to the massive funding crisis.

Last year Keir Starmer pledged that improving further education would be the "defining mission" of his government and promised to "inject hundreds of millions more into the sector." The post-16 education white paper promised "significant investment in per-pupil funding".

Last month, the Department for Education confirmed that the national funding rate for 16 and 17-year-old learners will only rise by 0.5% in the academic year 2026-27, from £5,105 to £5,133. Per-student funding remains 8% lower than before 2010-11 in real terms.

Student numbers have gone up. There are around 32,000 current students in colleges who will now be unfunded. This comes on top of Labour's 6% cut to the Adult Skills Fund.

College principals will certainly try to pass the costs on to staff, through real-terms cuts to pay and increased workloads.

The FEC also discussed the Ministry of Justice's recent restrictions to prison education funding. Over 300 prison teachers have been made redundant, around 10% of the workforce, jeopardising rehabilitation and risking increasing the rate of reoffending.

The FEC considered motions submitted by branches to this year's Further Education Sector Conference. Some are calling for a pause on industrial action, to focus on building branches, and to defer decisions about a national aggregate ballot to a special sector conference in 2027. This follows this year's disaggregated (branch-by-branch) strike ballots that did not bring significant numbers of branches into dispute. However, the overall vote for action was overwhelming, and had those branches been balloted on an aggregate basis, the turnout would have been over 50%, and 80 colleges could have participated in the strike.

Other motions are calling for the union to begin making preparations now for an aggregate ballot in 2026-27. Socialist Party members have argued on the FEC for action in the next academic year, although the FEC majority opposed it. We will be supporting motions for UCU to begin an aggregate ballot in the next academic year. The crisis in workloads, staff retention and low pay is not waiting, and our union shouldn't wait either.



BOB WILLIAMS

Solidarity with London Met strike

MARCO TESEI
UCU NEC MEMBER

I went to support the lively University and College Union (UCU) picket line at London Metropolitan University (aka London Met). There were impassioned speeches from teachers and one student defending what should be London Met's fundamental role of giving working-class students opportunities.

I spoke in solidarity, and encouraged the UCU branch to keep on demanding a bold lead and national action from our union leadership. That's what we need to really stand a chance of defeating the broken funding system for good - for all of higher and further education. And not have to constantly fight back against the employer sharks locally and on our own.

We must also press UCU general secretary Jo Grady to confront Keir Starmer on the anti-union laws and the Tory 50% turnout threshold which disgracefully is still in place.

That way we could really come out in force collectively and the bosses wouldn't stand a chance!

nationalshop stewardsnetwork conference 2026
Saturday 27 June 11am-4.30pm
Workers fight back - 20th anniversary conference: 'We won't pay for the crisis!'
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, £10 attendance fee
shopstewards.net - email us: info@shopstewards.net



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PCS group elections: The chance to vote for a fightback against Starmer's attacks

The election for the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), which organises workers in the civil service and privatised government services, opened on 16 April.

Voting for Group Executive Committees (GECs) – such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Home Office, Department for Education etc – begins on 23 April with an email ballot.

Socialist Party members are standing as part of the PCS Broad Left Network (BLN), alongside other lefts in the union, to put forward a fighting 'coalition for change'.

The BLN in DWP says:

In DWP our pay is not keeping up with rising prices. We are under constant pressure at work due to lack of staff and micromanagement. Our conditions are under attack - for example the recent imposed changes to hybrid.

The current PCS DWP group leaders (in the misnamed Left Unity grouping – the same group that has a majority on the national executive) have shown year after year that they are not prepared to stand up to management.

It's time for a change. BLN candidates are standing to rebuild a strong union in DWP so we can mobilise members to tackle the employer and fight to win.

We will fight for:

- Pay restoration
- No job cuts - 30,000 extra staff
- No office closures
- Flexible and hybrid working, and the end of rigid office attendance targets
- An end to compulsory late and Saturday working
- An end to outsourcing: bring outsourced staff back in-house

We oppose further attacks on claimants and benefits by the Labour government.

- **BLN-supported candidates for the DWP GEC can be found at bln.org.uk**



BLN supporting victimised reps in HMRC ELAINE BRUNSKILL

The BLN in HMRC says:

HMRC plans to create 7,900 new roles by 2030.

Yet new HMRC CEO JP Marks told the Treasury Select Committee that he expects HMRC to be "broadly the same size in 2030 as we are today". It's clear that HMRC will cut some 7,000 jobs over the next four years to balance the books. These cuts include privatisation - the transfer of telephony work to a private sector 'managed service provider.'

BLN members in HMRC are part of an 'Alliance for Change' which won a majority on the group executive last year.

The Alliance for Change-led GEC:

- Supports reps against victimisation
- Fights to improve pay so that no HMRC workers are on minimum wage and all grades improve
- Argues against the use of our members in Surge for strike-breaking
- Fights to stop the job cuts and reverse privatisation

The GEC has now launched the 'Better HMRC' campaign to fight for meaningful change for members' working lives and conditions. The government expects HMRC to collect more tax. This gives PCS significant political leverage backed by industrial strength to shift HMRC.

- **BLN-supported candidates for the HMRC can be found at bln.org.uk**

Doncaster First Bus drivers: 'We want parity'

MICK SUTER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Doncaster First Bus drivers, in Unite, have taken three days of strike action with another one planned on Friday 18 April. This dispute is about seeking parity of wages and conditions with their Sheffield co-workers in First Buses, as Unite senior steward Daz outlined.

Doncaster drivers are paid at least £1.55 less per hour than in Sheffield, and get only five weeks holiday compared to six weeks in Sheffield. When drivers are short in Sheffield, Doncaster drivers cover their routes, but not on Sheffield wages - on the lower rates of pay in Doncaster!

Members told us a bad deal was agreed by the previous Unite branch leadership a few years ago. The local leaders were voted out and more militant leaders elected.

The branch has demanded parity of wages and conditions but First Bus management has refused to make that offer. Consequently, the local branch has voted by over 90% for strike action.

The Unite branch is very solid – we were told only one driver has refused to support the strike and is now working in Sheffield. No one is crossing the picket line.

The strikers are planning to up the ante with further strike days planned the following week. Daz said: "We are determined to win parity".

Bow bus strike against driver fatigue

CHRIS NEWBY
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

Bus drivers at Bow garage in east London were on strike on Friday 17 April. This followed four strike days in March, and one-day strikes on 24 April and 15 May are planned.

The strike is over driver fatigue. They drive long distances without adequate breaks, have had increased weekend working, and are not given sufficient time between shifts to recuperate.

Since the first strike, management have not made any concessions, except to offer an insulting £50 payment if they called off the strike. Drivers are still very determined to fight on.

The big impact the strike has had shows the vital role that bus drivers play in transport in London. Members of the Socialist Party visiting the picket line were warmly received.



LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

RMT tube drivers strike against 'fake four-day week'

Tube trains ground to a halt as London Underground drivers in transport union RMT started strike action at midday on Tuesday 21 April.

Tube bosses want to compress a five-day week into four days. Despite claiming that the changes will be 'voluntary,' RMT reports that Transport for London (TfL) are now saying they will impose the changes, and cannot answer any of the union's questions about what 'voluntary' actually means.

RMT reps report that TfL bosses reneged on promises of serious negotiations over a 14-page document of proposed changes.

RMT represents about half of all tube drivers. The Aslef trade union also represents half. It has accepted the compressed-working proposal, although a majority of drivers are opposed.

Interviewed by the BBC, RMT London Transport regional organiser Jared Wood said: "We would like to see a four-day week, but not at any cost. We cannot accept longer shifts, longer driving time between breaks when you're tired, earlier starts, later finishes, not knowing what duty you'll be doing from one day to the next."

Socialist Party members visited picket lines across London.







Top to bottom: Acton Town, Hainault, Golders Green SOCIALIST PARTY

Strikers at **Acton Town** complained to **Helen Pattison** that they would expect to be able to drive trains and have a family life, but these changes would mean that at 3am you could be told when your shift would start. "How are you meant to know if you can drop off and pick up your kids from school?"

Rob Williams reports that at **Seven Sisters**, Aslef drivers were friendly to the pickets. One said that a number of their members disagreed with the plans, and understand that they are really about cost-saving, meaning more work for drivers.

Ricky at **Golders Green** spoke to **Amnon Cohen**. "Strikes are a sacrifice for all involved, public and worker alike, but no victory ever came without sacrifice." Nick Gray, RMT rep, added: "We went into these negotiations in good faith, and TFL have forced us into the position that we are in. Working people, striking for working people's needs, not against other working people."

At **Barking**, RMT rep Peter told **James Ivens**: "They want to make this mate against mate, worker against worker. If you started on the tube tomorrow you'd be on different conditions to me. We have to fight for everyone."



Usdaw ADM: Leadership under pressure

IAIN DALTON
SOCIALIST MEMBER IN USDAW, SECRETARY OF USDAW BROAD LEFT



Tetrosyl workers on strike in January PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

When general secretary Joanne Thomas, the union's first female leader, took office last summer with the blessing of outgoing general secretary Paddy Lillis, there was an expectation by the union leadership that Usdaw's close relationship with Starmer's Labour and partnership approach to the big retailers would continue.

But both these relationships have come under strain as employers have sought to boost their profits at the expense of workers, as another economic crisis looms.

Usdaw members have taken six days of strike against fire and rehire at Tetrosyl, a car care products manufacturer in Rochdale. Joanne Thomas was on the picket line talking about the union exercising its industrial muscle.

Morrisons bosses' refusal to offer a pay rise saw 97% of Usdaw members vote to reject and, facing the possibility of strike action, the company has now made an offer members are balloting on (see box). Eddie Stobart drivers on a Morrisons contract were also balloted earlier this year for strike action, whilst 200 job losses at Morrisons head office have been announced.

Usdaw members want a fight, not partnership. The £55-a-week strike pay is utterly inadequate and there are no facilities to establish a hardship fund. As well as campaigning strongly for successful strike ballots, Usdaw must demand the repeal of the 50% turnout threshold.

After the Gorton and Denton by-election, an Usdaw press release quoted Joanne Thomas saying: "A majority of voters there do not feel that the Labour government is providing the change they need."

In March, she criticised the suggestion that the government may not enact a guaranteed right to a contract that reflects the hours a worker normally works. She said in a published letter to Keir Starmer: "You spoke at our conference in 2024, and told our members that there would be no watering down of the New Deal for Workers. Our members listened to that message and they believed it. They campaigned for you, they voted for you, and they expect you to keep your promise. As things currently stand, I cannot in good faith tell those members that you will do so."

But in an interview in Network, Usdaw's magazine for reps, she said: "I think you've got to be very careful about grandstanding and criticism of the Labour Party when we're also trying to tackle the far right and Reform. If you're telling people how bad Labour are, they're going to start thinking that Reform might be the better option."

That's why the Socialist Party advocates that Usdaw backs candidates that back union policies, rather than putting forward no alternative.

Usdaw maintains a parliamentary group of 58 Labour MPs, but only eight put their names to an amendment against Labour's disability benefit cuts, and only three actually voted against the cuts. Not a single member of Usdaw's parliamentary group voted to abolish the two-child benefit cap, despite a mandate from the union's ADM that year.

A parliamentary group would make the most impact for members if it was made up of MPs prepared to fight for Usdaw's policies on every crucial issue. Socialist Party members argue to reconstitute our parliamentary group on that basis, as well as campaigning for a conference of trade unions to discuss the crisis of political representation the working class faces.

Vote 'No' to Morrisons pay offer

After 97% of Usdaw members rejected Morrisons' 'non-offer' last year, the company has offered just over 7% spread over two years: 10p above minimum wage straight away, 29p in July, and finally 40p, as well as a one-off payment of up to £175.

Members will feel that their vote has forced the company to move. But with predictions of food and energy prices soaring, this will be below inflation, and is less than other supermarkets. Tesco and Sainsbury's both offered more than 10% over two years.

Morrisons' pay is subject to binding arbitration and Usdaw's negotiators are recommending acceptance. We say vote 'No' - even a minority 'no' vote would send a message to management for next year.

Mass meeting says: 'Save Torbay heart services!'


PHOTO: HEART CAMPAIGN

DUNCAN MOORE
SECRETARY OF TORBAY AND SOUTH DEVON TRADE UNION COUNCIL, DEVON SOCIALIST PARTY

Hundreds of Torbay residents joined the latest meeting of the Heart Campaign on 13 April. The Heart Campaign was set up in June 2025, in response to a proposed 'case for change' from the NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB). At present, Torbay hospital has the capacity to perform Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention on patients experiencing acute heart attacks.

In the ICB's original 'case for change', PPI would no longer be carried out at Torbay Hospital, but would instead see patients suffering acute heart failure taken by ambulance to the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, some 30 miles away.

Local NHS campaigners raised the alarm that this move endangered patients' lives, and furthermore was the thin end of the wedge that would eventually see all acute cardiac services moved out of Torbay. The heart department at the Royal Devon is known to already be overstretched, while cardiac care at Torbay is rated the fourth best in the country for emergency angioplasty outcomes.

Huge amounts of campaigning with regular public meetings and a human cordon around Torbay hospital have been organised, drawing attention from local press and MPs.

In March, the ICB withdrew the case for change, in an apparent victory for local campaigners. However, having moved away from a standalone, rapid relocation of heart attack services from Torbay Hospital to Exeter, the ICB has chosen to repackage this proposal and include it as part of a wider, five-year 'strategic review' of health and adult social care services in Torbay.

The five-year plan includes the relocation of several essential services; reduced A&E operating times to 9-5, Monday to Friday (currently 24 hours a day 7 days a week); a reduction in the number of doctors at Torbay hospital along with fewer in nursing and other support staff over time; and patients being forced to travel long distances for emergency and often life-saving treatment.

Torbay is a large acute district general hospital serving 300,000 patients in South Devon year round, and up to half a million during the holiday season. There are fears amongst health service staff and campaigners that the remaining two major acute hospitals would be overwhelmed by the additional work and unable to cope, affecting services and damaging patient outcomes across the county.

Torbay and South Devon Trades Council along with affiliated branches of Unison Health and GMB representing workers at the hospital, are working alongside the Heart Campaign, with plans for a May Day event and a demonstration through the town centre and along the seafront.

On 20 April the hospital trust opened a voluntary redundancy scheme. The trades council is contacting Unison and GMB reps at the hospital to offer our solidarity and will support any action they take in response to this escalation.

But critically, the health union branches at the hospital must discuss and plan how they will combat the threat posed to their jobs and the life-saving services they provide.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit **socialistparty.org.uk/join**
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07958 032 071**

to find out more today!



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Senedd election: What happens when Nigel Farage comes to your workplace



HOSPITALITY WORKER IN MERTHYR TYDFIL

On 16 April, Nigel Farage and his team, including the Welsh Reform leader and Senedd candidate Dan Thomas, came to Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales on the election campaign trail.

Unfortunately my workplace was one of the hospitality venues they used to publicise their campaign of division and hate, and the senior management equally capitalised on the chance to increase their popularity on social media and promote that Farage was in town. That attempt to do so has since made the national press and meant that the staff of our site, some from immigrant and LGBT+ backgrounds, including myself, were affected by this stunt.

Public backlash

The managing director specifically used Instagram to publicise the fact that Farage and his team were "interested in our pancakes". The mistake here is that he and my other manager came from a position of not wanting to discriminate against Farage politically, yet they also ignored an important layer of people in their decision making - the working class and their own staff who have come to Wales to find a better future.

After he published his reel on Instagram, the people of Merthyr commented on how the town is rich in socialist history and it was a disgrace that Farage was allowed to come into my workplace, yet supporters of Farage commented that 'it was a dismissible offence not to serve the politician,' clearly showing their lack of knowledge on how workers' rights actually work!

Unionising our workplaces

Since his apology to staff, my managing director has contradicted himself, saying the workplace is not about politics, but also agrees that not having a political opinion is the reason that he performed such a damaging stunt that affected staff.

It is time to strike whilst the iron is hot and have these exact conversations about politics with people who may feel divided by Reform's policies, and highlight that the Senedd elections in May are an ideal chance for workers' voices to be heard. We also need serious conversations about unionising our workplace!

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2026 — DEADLINE 30 JUNE

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	
Wales	629	2,400	26%
North West	297	1,200	25%
London	815	5,000	16%
Southern & SE	346	2,400	14%
Yorkshire	306	2,650	12%
South West	237	2,100	11%
Northern	71	800	9%
West Midlands	145	2,700	5%
Eastern	70	1,300	5%
East Midlands	5	2,050	1%
Other	995	2,400	41%
TOTAL	3,916	25,000	16%

Fighting for services to tackle knife-crime crisis

BEN GOLDSTONE
TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION (TUSC) CANDIDATE FOR CROYDON MAYOR

Council spending on youth services fell by 73% between 2010 and 2023. More than 1,000 youth centres closed, and more than 4,500 youth worker jobs cut nationwide.

Croydon was not protected from this. In 2025, the Tory council closed the Youth Engagement Team.

It's gone

This service provided support and education to young people and their families. It acted as a bridge between the council, voluntary organisations, and young people. What remains of non-statutory youth services in Croydon has been outsourced.

Croydon is the worst place for violent crime, according to the Office for National Statistics. There were 3,214 violent incidents in the year 2024-25.

There have been several tragic knife crime incidents in recent years, including, but not limited to, the stabbings of 15-year-old Elianne Andam in 2023 and, more recently, 22-year-old Lorik Abazi.

Invasive permanent facial recognition cameras, rolled out by the Metropolitan Police in Croydon, haven't changed anything, as they are prone to false positives.

In Croydon, the Socialist Party has been campaigning for youth services to combat knife crime. We have held successful campaign stalls, calling on the council to fully fund our youth services, schools, and libraries.

We call for a right to a socially useful job for all, as well as ending racist policing. The council should set a needs-based, no-cuts budget, using its reserves and borrowing powers, as part of a campaign to win the funding we need from the Labour government.

I introduced a motion to the Croydon Trade Union Council calling for it to hold a public meeting to discuss the solutions to knife crime in the area, and how to fight cuts.

Labour and Greens

At a recent Croydon mayoral hustings, Khamisi Green, a young Socialist Party member, raised the cuts to youth services, and asked the Green and Labour candidates what they would do about this. Neither was able to provide an acceptable answer. Neither was able to confirm they won't make cuts or raise council tax for the already-stretched working class.

So, because of this, we are standing Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates in the upcoming mayoral and council elections, providing Croydon residents with a genuine socialist vote against austerity.



Croydon socialists campaigning against Labour and Tory cuts, and for services to tackle knife crime

College students say: 'No to Trump's wars'

As soon as students at Enfield College heard what we were campaigning about – "We won't pay for Trump's wars, no to Trump's wars" – people would snap up to sign our petition. "F**k Trump" was the most common response.

Five students all came up to sign our petition together. They didn't all agree.

One of them didn't think his friends should sign the petition. He didn't think the Middle East wars affected us, because Trump isn't invading Britain.

But his friends explained to him that it does affect us, with the price of everything going up.

IAN PATTISON
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Give us back our student bursary

The University of York cut bursaries at the beginning of this year. £1,000 was cut from first-year students, while other students lost £100.

For many students, living away from home for the first time, this money has been life changing. It represented the difference between focusing on studies and getting a part-time job.

The university claims that the cut to first-year students is going towards our accommodation, alleviating high prices. But at 160 halls-of-residence places, rents are up by 50% next year. York has the most expensive accommodation after London and Bristol, the highest in the north.

University needs to be open and available to everyone. But the refugee student bursary has been cut by £1,000 too. And medical students have had their bursary cut by £1,400.

Most universities are currently running to the point of bankruptcy. So private profit should have no role in our education.

This bursary cut is no surprise considering the broken funding model of all universities. So students, staff, and the whole education system is being attacked.

Labour is doing nothing to help universities. The government is increasing tuition fees, making university even more unaffordable, and it will still do nothing to solve the funding crisis.

Some vice-chancellors are calling for tuition fees to increase to £13,000 a year! A fully funded, free, public education model is the best way to solve this crisis of privatisation and capitalism.

We need to fight against university bosses scrambling to take any cash they can from us. They should not be taking money from poor students. This £1,000 belongs to us!

Socialist Students proposes that York uni reimburse our bursary money. Many students do not even know about the bursary cut yet. The university has yet to release a public message or email.

The university also needs to open its books, so that students and staff trade unions can see where the money is going, and democratically hold university bosses accountable. Let's test these cuts in open democratic debate from students and workers.

LOUIE NARDINI
YORK SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Lewisham election campaign steps up

JAY COWARD
SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

On 18 April we took our canvassing work at Lewisham Shopping Centre. We coincided with local Save Lewisham Shopping Centre campaigners on the day and handed out some of their leaflets.

Early into the campaign stall, we spoke to a Green Party supporter and pointed out that, unless the Greens are prepared to stand up against all cuts and big business pressure, they will end up no different from previous ruling parties. He thought about it and replied that the only party that had stayed really true were the Militant (now Socialist Party) councillors in Liverpool in the 1980s. We said that was us and showed him the words 'formerly Militant' at the top of our paper!

The day only got better, with interest from locals coming the second posters were taped up and they could see our demands on the need for fighting councils and an end to cuts.

All of us on the campaign stall are standing in the May elections. Many were excited that average working people are daring to put themselves forward and fight. Someone even making sure it was actually me on the leaflet and not an identical twin just to make sure!

A nearby stall giving out free food for people happily took our election leaflet and even stuck it onto their stall for all service users to see, as well as offering us snacks to get us through the day.

This day, and days like it, remind me of what we have. We're consistently in touch with the working class, local people and the downtrodden. We fight for a mass working-class party, a party of and for those it represents.

That's why myself and many others are standing under the banner of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in the May elections.

- **Jay is standing as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate for Lewisham mayor and in New Cross Gate ward on 7 May**



Jay (left) and the socialists campaigning in Lewisham this election ANDY BEADLE

YOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP VOTES TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF SOCIALIST ORGANISATIONS

At the meeting of the Your Party Central Executive Committee that took place on 12 April 2026 a decision was taken to exclude members of a list of organisations, including the Socialist Party, on the grounds that their "internal organisational models and strategic objectives are distinct from and incompatible with the values and constitutional framework of Your Party". In response the Socialist Party has written to the Your Party officers. We publish the letter below:



PHOTO: MADDIE ROONEY

Dear comrades,

I am writing on behalf of the Socialist Party to you to ask for an urgent discussion on the participation of our party and its members in Your Party, and other related issues. I, along with other Socialist Party members, received the 12 April 2026 email to Your Party members from Jenn Forbes which reported the Central Executive Committee (CEC) had that day taken a decision that "members of other national political parties that do not align" with Your Party "are ineligible for membership of Your Party", which, we understand includes the Socialist Party. You will not be surprised to know that we think this decision is a serious mistake. It does not reflect, we believe, the views of the majority of Your Party members, who voted for dual membership at the founding conference last November.

Unfortunately, it is also not a surprise, as this decision is a continuation of the approach to establishing a new party taken up until now. I previously wrote on behalf of the Socialist Party to the then interim leadership of Your Party on 7 January 2026 to ask for a discussion to clarify your approach to dual membership weeks before the CEC elections got under way. We received no reply. Given the lack of response, Socialist Party members, including Dave Nellist and April Ashley, went ahead and put their names forward for the CEC. Dave Nellist is a former Labour MP and chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). April Ashley had been re-elected in 2025 as the female black members' rep of Unison's National Executive Council, topping the poll with 28,792 votes, more than the numbers who voted in the whole CEC elections. And yet both were ruled out of order on the grounds of their Socialist Party membership. This most recent CEC decision is a continuation of that mistaken approach.

However, as unlike then there is now an elected CEC, which Jenn Forbes's letter states wants Your Party "to stand alongside" other left forces on "the many issues on which we agree", I hope that you will take the time to meet and discuss the question of how the Socialist Party and its members could participate in Your Party, as well as to explore how we can develop future collaboration if you are unwilling to reverse your decision.

Some arguments against the decision

We have seen copies of a CEC Governance Paper on 'Dual Party Membership Eligibility', which we assume is a broadly accurate representation of what was agreed at the CEC meeting. It states that "formal membership of another national political party or political organisation operating with its own ideology, programme and system of internal discipline is incompatible with membership of Your Party". But why? Obviously, we agree that pro-capitalist parties should not be eligible for dual membership. But why exclude those, such as ourselves, which wholeheartedly agree with Your Party's aspiration, summarised in the founding statement, to build a "democratic, member-led socialist party" with the "working class at its heart"? The Socialist Party has a sizeable base in the trade union movement, and also plays a leading role on the university campuses. Collectively we have more than six decades experience in class struggle, first as Militant and now as the Socialist Party, including in leading two mass struggles which successfully defeated the Thatcher government, in Liverpool City Council and the poll tax. For decades we been campaigning for a new workers' party, and we wholeheartedly welcomed Your Party as a possible step towards such a party. How on earth could it aid the struggle to build a mass party based on the working class to exclude us?

True, Jenn Forbes's letter appeals to individuals to leave their existing parties and join Your Party. But we would never insult the intelligence of Your Party members by claiming experienced fighters for the working class had suddenly 'renounced' their history and ideas to join Your Party only as individuals. Dave Nellist did not do so in 1991, when it was a matter of remaining as a Labour MP, a stand supported by Jeremy Corbyn at the time. Nor did many other Militant supporters with positions in the Labour and trade union movement.

The Governance Paper argues that any party or organisation which operates on the basis of democratic centralism, "maintains its own national political membership structure" and "requires political discipline and accountability to an external leadership and programme", would "automatically fall within the scope of the ineligibility rule." But what is the problem of the existence of socialist organisations within Your Party that argue for their point of view? The Socialist Party currently has around 2,000 members. There is no question of us, or any of the other organisations on the proscribed list, being able to dominate Your Party via weight of numbers, even with Your Party's current size, which is far below its original potential. Nor can it be argued that Socialist Party members don't abide by the democratic decisions of broader workers' organisations of which we are part. On the contrary, we have demonstrated that we do so consistently in our long history in the trade union and labour movement, working alongside other forces to further the interests of the working class.

For example, in a trade union strike ballot where our members argue to accept or reject a deal, they clearly abide by the decision of the majority if they lose the vote. To give another example, in the past the Socialist Party, then the Militant tendency, was part of the Labour Party. Of course, we argued and voted for constituency parties to select council and parliamentary candidates who agreed with our programme, but our supporters still went and canvassed for whichever candidate the membership selected, even if we disagreed with them on many issues.

Jenn Forbes's letter argues that "transparent democratic decision making" is "only possible where every member is able to trust that whatever differences of opinion arise, all members put Your Party's interests first" and that this trust cannot be built when some members "vote according to a line set elsewhere". But what does this mean? In any left party members, and leaders, are subject to huge outside pressures which - unlike membership of a socialist organisation - are aimed at wrecking the left party. Remember the battles that took place in the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, and the gigantic pressures that were exerted by the capitalist press and right-wing media, as well as the Blairite wing of the party, to ditch Corbyn for someone more 'moderate', that is safe for capitalism? There are many lessons to be learnt from that period, but a key one is that it is impossible to have a party sealed off from 'outside' influences. Instead, a mass membership organised in a democratic structure, and based on the working class, is the only effective way to counter the pressures of the capitalist class. In our view, Marxist organisations also have a crucial role to play. It is not an accident that expelling Militant from the Labour Party was a prerequisite step on the long road to its transformation into 'New Labour.'

When Socialist Party members have argued for Your Party to oppose cuts in local services, or for the party to be built on a federal basis, with the trade unions playing a central role, we have been putting 'Your Party's interests' first, as we see them. Others clearly have different ideas for what is in the best interests of Your Party, but that is inevitable. It is not possible to create a new mass workers' party without different views and trends within it.

Of course, we understand the urge to unity, and sometimes the frustration with different left organisations who appear incapable of seeing their own individual priorities in proportion to the interests of the movement as a whole. Such problems will never, however, be successfully overcome by top-down or bureaucratic measures that try to 'impose unity' from above. Instead, as we warned in our letter on 7 January 2026, despite the enthusiasm of the 800,000 who initially responded to the call for a new party, such an approach would fail as was the case with Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, The same fate is unfortunately clearly posed for Your Party.

Affiliates, federalism and the trade unions

In addition to agreeing dual membership, the constitution agreed at the founding conference also proposed to look at a proposal on affiliations, including from trade unions, over the following year. As far as we are aware, no further progress has been made on that issue. Nonetheless, we would like to discuss how you see this crucial question, including how you envisage affiliates having a democratic say in Your Party.

Achieving that would require looking at some kind of federal aspect to Your Party's structure. Our experience in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an example of how different forces have, despite many differences, been able to successfully collaborate together over fifteen years in order to help provide an inclusive electoral banner under which workers' candidates, from different organisations and from none, can contest elections on an anti-austerity programme without in any way being 'dominated' by other organisations within the TUSC umbrella. TUSC's federal approach, on a bigger scale, is how the Labour Party was first formed. The first conference of the Labour Representation Committee had delegates from 41 trade unions, plus various socialist and Marxist organisations.

In our view such a federal approach, recognising the existence of different left organisations, and involving all those who were willing in a structured way to collaborate to develop a new party, would have been the best starting point to get Your Party off the ground. However, we have never seen the development of a new party as being primarily about cooperation between different left forces. For us the pressing need is for the working class to develop a new party, and therefore the battle in the trade unions is key. Nor can that battle just be about which party trade unions give money to; rather it should be about the working class creating its own party. Had Your Party given unions a central place in its structure from the start, and begun with an energetic campaign aimed at the base of the trade unions, it could already have won some union affiliates which would have transformed its character.

As things stand, however, Your Party is not about to win trade union affiliates. Nonetheless, anger at the Labour government is creating political ferment in the trade unions, and discussions are heating up on how the workers' movement can create a political voice. As you know, Socialist Party members are playing key roles in these debates. Our members helped to instigate the 'trade unionists for a new party' campaigns in different unions after the thousand-plus launch meeting last summer organised by Dave Nellist, and addressed by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana. At the moment the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition steering committee, in which we participate, is helping to coordinate this campaign but its aim is not to win trade union affiliates to TUSC, but rather to push the debate forward in the trade unions. We hope you share this aim. To give one example last year Unite, a union of 1.2million, voted to reassess its relationship with Labour. If the union was to vote for the next steps – above all starting to stand candidates itself – it would represent a huge step forward. We would like to discuss with you how we could take forward this vital work.

Yours in Solidarity,

HANNAH SELL
SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY, ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY



Socialist Party members at Your Party conference PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

"Like all Your Party members I received the email from Your Party officer Jenn Forbes on dual membership, banning socialist parties from membership of Your Party.

It was disappointing to say the least, especially as the Your Party conference last November clearly voted in favour of dual membership.

But mainly I felt it was a ridiculous decision which made no sense at all! It is just so exasperating when we are all trying to build a mass new workers' party as an alternative to New Labour's betrayal and attacks on working people.

How can Your Party invite all socialists and socialist parties to join and then ban them? How are socialist parties "incompatible with transparency and accountability within Your Party?"

Jenn Forbes states: "We are at the start of building a broad, socialist movement rooted in our communities - one that brings together people from different backgrounds, traditions and campaigns around shared principles."

And this is very much like how the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition operates, welcoming all parties and trade unions on the shared basic principles of fighting against austerity.

It is unclear how the values of socialist parties are incompatible with Your Party values of being a mass democratic member-led party where every member's voice counts.

Why should we leave the socialist parties which we are members of? As it is vital for a healthy democracy - the life blood of a member-led party - that there is a wide range of political views to discuss and debate so we can decide on the most effective actions against capitalist attacks and the fight for socialism.

Your Party should welcome all socialist parties and members' experience of campaigning and working in working-class organisations like trade unions where we work collaboratively together.

Banning socialist parties is like the worst aspect of some right-wing trade unions which seek to limit democratic debate to ensure members only hear and continue to align with Labour and its support for capitalism.

APRIL ASHLEY, RECENTLY RETIRED UNISON NEC MEMBER REPRESENTING BLACK MEMBERS WHO WAS BARRED FROM STANDING FOR YOUR PARTY CEC IN JANUARY

£1/£2 solidarity price
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the Socialist
Issue 1364 23-29 April 2026 formerly Militant

BIG OIL PROFITS UP

$30 million per hour



PENELOPE DAWBER
LANCASHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Energy company profits are soaring. So are prices at the petrol pumps. As the prices of everyday items start to creep up – unlike our wages – the working class is paying for it. Since the war on Iran began almost 2 months ago, the price of oil has regularly exceeded $100 a barrel. In this time, the 100 biggest oil and gas companies have earned $30 million in profits per hour.

Should this trend continue, their profits will reach a whopping $234 billion by the end of the year, with Saudi Aramco alone set to rake in 10% of this.

Similarly, six of America's largest banks made profits of almost $50 billion in the first quarter of the year, most of which coming due to the war, as trading volumes increased 15-20%. The big banks have made money as the prices of oil yo-yoed from the impact of Trump's pronouncements the war was ending, followed by new rounds of missile strikes on Iran.

The oil and gas industry globally already made annual profits of $1 trillion over the past 50 years. Some have gotten very rich, while workers and poor people across the world have to struggle to get by.

And what's on the horizon? According to the International Monetary Fund, we have a global recession to look forward to. At the same time, wages have still have not recovered from the 2007-09 Great Recession, and energy, housing, and food prices continue to skyrocket.

To avoid catastrophe and provide a decent standard of living for us all, we need to nationalise the big energy companies and the banks under democratic workers' control and management. A socialist plan of production would end imperialist war profiteering and means those billions of pounds of profits would be put to use funding our essential services in dire straits after decades of brutal austerity, instead of further enriching a tiny few.

Using those resources to plan to produce what we need, and move away from polluting fossil fuels, we could provide a decent standard of living for all. Join the socialists in fighting for a world free from wars over resources, and build a world based on genuine cooperation instead of the brutal reality of the capitalist system.

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

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