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the Socialist

Issue 1372

18-24 June 2026

formerly **Militant**

Bosses raise prices and profits



WORKERS FIGHT BACK!

BEA GARDNER
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The world has its first trillionaire: Elon Musk. If his wealth was distributed to each of the million young people in Britain who can't find a job, they would get \$1 million each!

It's the same as the annual wages of 30 million workers on the median salary of £33,000 a year.

It is an amount that could build 4 million council homes: several times the number of those currently on housing waiting lists. It would fund the entire NHS budget for five years.

And to think, the world's billionaires have increased their combined wealth by over \$8 trillion - eight times Musk's total wealth - just since 2020!

At the same time, workers' wages have barely risen in real terms. In fact, wages are now 'growing' at the lowest rate since the pandemic. Unemployment has risen too.

No wonder we are feeling the pinch. Food, energy and fuel prices are all soaring. By the end of the year, food prices are estimated to be 50% higher than they were five years ago.

The energy price cap will rise by 13% on 1 July and is expected to rise again in October.

That's an extra £300 a year the average household will have to find on top of the extra £100 a year for council tax.

Unions must lead

We need the 6.6 million-strong trade union movement to fight for our rights and defend our living standards.

The political crisis confronting the Labour government is because they have failed to deal with any of the crises facing working-class and young people. Labour have not brought the change they promised but continue to try to act in the interests of the capitalist system that drives such obscene inequality.

The best message to send to any potential leadership challengers that also promise 'change' is we won't wait for it. Rather, we are

preparing an almighty fight: for real pay rises, full funding for our services and to nationalise industries, protecting jobs.

One lesson from the last strike wave is that striking works! The resident doctors' improved offer is more proof. But we can't rely on trade union leaders to act and carry through the fight unless they are pushed.

That means trade union reps and activists need to organise across our various unions to push for them to mobilise and act - to organise a national autumn demonstration against Labour austerity, to prepare ballots for strike action over pay, and also to come together and discuss the forming of a new trade union-led workers' party. Because we need a party of our own that fights in our interests, not those of the super-rich.

WE WON'T PAY FOR THE BOSSES' CRISIS:

**NSSN CONFERENCE 2026
IN LONDON ON 27 JUNE**

More info on page 5

theSocialist

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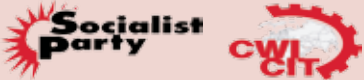
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Starmer's authoritarian clampdown on protests

In February 2026, embarrassingly for Keir Starmer's government, the High Court ruled that the ban on protest group Palestine Action and its proscription as a terrorist organisation was unlawful. On 15 June, a court of appeal - stacked with five of the capitalist establishment's most senior judges - reversed the ruling.

Expression of support for the group is now a criminal act, which brings a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison. Ahead of the ruling, on Friday, four Palestine Action activists were sentenced for causing damage at an Elbit Systems

weapons manufacturing facility near Bristol to between five to eight years in prison.

The Palestine Action ban is the latest in a series of increasingly repressive measures used by the increasingly weak Labour government, including for example the use of the police and courts to prevent picketing of bin depots through the Birmingham bin strikes.

The trade unions must lead the fight to defend the right to protest, linked to building a struggle against Starmer's Labour government and its war and austerity agenda.



Trade Unionists for a New Party

‘We did it before’, trade unions can build a new party of the working class

Matt Reid, Unite the Union convener in the Birmingham bin strike, addressed an online meeting of trade unionists on 8 June, discussing the campaigning taking place within the different trade unions, for steps towards a new party of the working class.

I'm not going to go into 18 months of bin strike.

I'm just going to tell you how the Labour Party affected our strike. It started off, Birmingham City Council went into effective redundancy and a Conservative government, at the time, sent commissioners into Birmingham.

The way things were going, we knew the election was coming and we were hoping it would be a Labour majority getting in to Parliament. At that point, our managers sped up the process of making the changes and making the cuts that would eventually affect our members with up to £8,000 a year reduced in their salary and a cut in grade.

We got a majority Labour

government and our managers were panicking, thinking: 'Oh they're going to change everything around, they're going to do it...' They were worse than the Conservatives.

They were more supportive of the Labour council that were doing this to us.

We had Angela Rayner visiting Birmingham and didn't visit one single picket line. She visited scab workers who were doing the clear up, patting them on the back on camera, on TV, telling them what a great job they were doing.

She didn't visit one single picket line, one striking worker.

We had Rachel Reeves come and visit and basically give the: 'Get back to work, you're a lazy so and so' argument, which I never thought I would hear from a Labour MP.

They're our party - they were our party - and I think we've given them so many second chances to prove that. Because we know that the quickest way to turn this around, the quickest way to stop Reform taking over is to have something in place, and that's the Labour Party.

It's just, how many second chances do we give them? Do we move to the Greens to be an established party



Starmer announces social media ban for young people

A social media ban for under-16s will come into force at the beginning of 2027, according to government plans. "Children will be given back their childhoods thanks to government action", according to the government press release.

Many young people will ask, 'What government action is coming to give us a decent future then?' With youth services still ravaged by austerity, a threat to roll back on the pledge to end the youth exemption from the National Living Wage, and over a million young unemployed.

In March, the socialist published an article 'For democratic control of social media - nationalise!' socialistparty.org.uk. Accompanying the article, two young Socialist Party expressed their opposing views on proposals for a ban.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Farage's offer to the unions

THE WORKING CLASS NEEDS ITS OWN PARTY, UNIONS MUST LEAD



WHAT WE THINK

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has invited trade unions to affiliate to his party in a video posted on X (formerly Twitter), and in an interview with the Times newspaper.

The video refers to a poll of around 1,000 trade union members for the Times, which showed support for Labour and Reform tied. 'If there were a general election tomorrow, Reform wins out over Labour in Unite, GMB and UCU.

"Damning but not surprising", is how Sharon Graham, leader of Labour-affiliated union Unite described the figures, correctly adding: "Labour has abandoned the working class, and now the working class has abandoned Labour."

Andrea Egan, leader of Labour-affiliated, public-sector union Unison, said: "It's a con to think Nigel Farage and his rich cronies are interested in unions for anything but cold hard cash." Hardly a convincing argument to the 25% of her membership who said they would vote for Reform tomorrow. Many of them and more would argue that Labour affiliation feels like a con too!

What does union affiliation to Labour achieve for members? For years, Unison and Unite members in Labour-run local authorities have faced brutal austerity and job losses. Despite the fact that national bodies in both unions have policies for councils to set no-cuts budgets.

Labour in power

The experience of Labour carrying out austerity locally, and now Keir Starmer's government's attacks on workers, is what has prepared the ground for Farage's Reform. Undoubtedly, workers in Reform-led councils will fear for a further ratcheting up of cutbacks and job losses.

After May's elections, Reform now has full control of 23 councils, and there are 11 others it leads with no overall control. Clearly there is the danger of those numbers increasing next May, when around 7,000 seats are up.

The trade unions need to prepare now for how to use their influence to cut across support for Reform. And, as the May 2026 elections showed, simply arguing to continue to back Labour or risk getting Reform won't work. That's why Socialist Party



members are raising the demand in the trade unions for a cross-union conference to discuss what kind of political representation the working class needs in those elections, which has the ability to cut across support for Reform. It could discuss the trade unions standing their own candidates.

A duplicitous offer

Of course, Farage's invite is not an offer for trade unions to have democratic control over its councils' policies. However, that is also not how Labour councils operate. Unfortunately, the same is also true of the Greens, to which some trade unionists will inevitably look to in search of political representation too.

Why then has Farage used one side of his mouth to launch a charm offensive towards trade union members? It is true that, as Farage says in his video, "Reform's voter base is working people". The same is true for any capitalist party which achieves electoral success - the working class is the overwhelming majority in society, and the trade unions have nearly 7 million members.

To speak to an audience with a broad section of workers, however, why would Farage choose an interview with the Times, behind an on-line payroll?

Farage's charm offensive is in fact also aimed at a section of the capitalist class who correctly fear that a future Reform government

would provoke huge struggles of workers and young people. "Unlike the snobbish Tories of old", Farage tells the Times, "we will never treat organised labour with contempt". Read: 'My intention is not to provoke the biggest wave of strikes in a generation like the Tories did! Let's see about that!'

For the capitalists, the biggest benefit of a Labour government is the fact that it has the trade union leaders using their authority to try to shield the government from workers' anger. There will be hopes from sections of the capitalist class that expectations on a new Labour leader - for example in the form of Andy Burnham, whose place in parliament will only be known after the Socialist goes to press - can shore up that shield for a bit longer.

Their dilemma of course, is that those expectations, and any concessions given to allow those expectations to get a bit more purchase, can also increase the appetite and confidence among workers to struggle for more.

Starmer's woes

The most recent resignation from Starmer's cabinet of John Healey from his position as defence secretary is evidence of the government's weakness and also of the pressures that will continue to exert themselves on the government, whoever heads it. Healey wanted more money for military spending and cuts

elsewhere to pay for it. A leak to the Sunday Times suggested slashing net-zero spending and a 1% capital spending cut across government departments was being considered. Starmer's government is too weak to get away with that, and his successor is likely to be too weak too.

Sections of the capitalists would prefer a figure like Farage to get the dirty work over with. The pensions triple lock and disability benefits are at the top of the chopping list. Executing those attacks on the working class is not a recipe for stability, or for maintaining the lie of being 'for working people'.

Maintaining a base of support amongst the working-class electorate while also carrying out the

austerity measures the capitalist system in crisis demands is an almost unmanageable and unending task, as recent experience of Tory and Labour governments proves. Political stability is a thing of the past.

New waves of workers' struggles are inevitable and, as always, will involve those who today are intending to vote for the likes of Reform tomorrow. A trade union-led struggle against Labour austerity, starting with a national demo in the autumn to coincide with a rash of pay ballots across the public sector unions - would be the start of what is needed to cut across support for Farage and the right in our movement and across the working class.

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Andy Burnham drops WASPI pledge

ADAM HARMSWORTH
COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Since 2015, Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) has campaigned for compensation for millions of women impacted by their increase in state pension age from 60 to 65. They have already won the legal argument, with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman recommending they be reimbursed at least £1,000 each.

In December last year, Starmer added 'justice for WASPI women' to his list of broken promises. Just three years before, he signed a pledge for "fast and fair compensation" and got himself in photos with WASPI campaigners. After the Ombudsman called for such compensation, he suddenly decided it wasn't affordable.

On 22 May, the WASPI campaign reported that Andy Burnham, Labour candidate in the Makerfield by-election which takes place after the Socialist goes to press and who could soon challenge Starmer for position as Labour leader, "made clear that his support remains as strong as ever".

But just three weeks later he dropped his 'strong as ever' support. A spokesperson for his campaign has instead hinted at other ways to reimburse them, such as concessionary rates on public transport. For

millions of WASPI women it will feel like a betrayal.

Labour MPs and capitalist commentators fretted when Burnham restated his support for the WASPI campaign at a by-election hustings, blurring the £10 billion compensation cost across the newspapers. One Labour MP even compared Burnham to Jeremy Corbyn for making the pledge!

The reality is that £10 billion is an extremely modest figure compared to what is actually needed to rescue millions of pensioners from poverty and ensure a decent standard of living for them in old age. In the fifth-biggest economy, WASPI compensation is affordable. But, the capitalist class won't be giving up any cash without a battle.

Burnham's flip-flop shows he is feeling the pressures of working-class people and the super-rich bosses and bond markets at the same time – that's why he has raised water nationalisation, he knows it's popular. But while Burnham is wedded to the capitalist system, he will be forced to do the bidding of the super-rich and attack workers' living standards, as Starmer has in power. WASPI women, all pensioners, all sections of the working class, can expect to be worse off unless we come together as a class to fight for the better future we need.



BBC Panorama review: West Ham chair and the sick sexist system

ISIS SMYTH
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

BBC Panorama recently detailed allegations of sexual exploitation made against former West Ham United football club chairperson David Sullivan. Sullivan's previous nickname was 'King Porn', after the industry that made him one of the richest men in the UK by the end of the 1990s. He also owned the Sunday Sport newspaper – a paper consisting of 'bizarre, salacious articles, and topless photos'. These 'lads mags' often included images of partially clothed schoolgirls, 'going topless' as soon as they turned 16.

While his past seems to have been forgotten until recently, his behaviour has left scars on multiple people's lives. In the Panorama documentary, at least eight women accused Sullivan of sexual exploitation, with multiple women being offered modelling jobs in his paper on the condition that they must sleep with him first. Saying 'no' meant getting worse jobs, they alleged. Although he has recently stepped down as co-chair of West Ham, Sullivan claims these accusations are untrue, and are 'fundamentally unfair'. He has some nerve!

What's really unfair is the impact this sleazy, exploitative behaviour of millionaires has on workers, particularly women. One woman alleged that, after meeting Sullivan for a job interview, she was raped by him,

after she said no multiple times. She said in the BBC Panorama documentary that she was left feeling suicidal for years but never reported it. She says the consensus within her industry was that nothing would be done: "Even if it wasn't at work, who would give a shit?"

These accusations come to light at a time when people are still reeling from the shocking revelations regarding Jeffrey Epstein, and his links to Prince Andrew and Peter Mandelson – people who have held immense power in society, and got rich off the backs of workers. This is another tale in the same story – millionaires and billionaires preying on vulnerable young women, and establishment institutions that cover for them – despite multiple women going to the police about him over the years. Talk about two-tier policing!

The capitalist system expects women to perform all kinds of sexual services for rich men, as if it's all we're made for. Nick Cracknell defends Sullivan, his former business partner, saying that women were attracted to Sullivan as he is a multi-billionaire, so it's up to him what he does, and different rules apply. He said he found it funny that throughout the whole of the #MeToo movement, they had never received any complaints. With these attitudes existing so strongly in society, it's no surprise victims often have a hard time coming forward, or only feel confident enough to do so years later. This is

still an issue, despite improvements being observed during and after the #MeToo movement.

For many, the terrifying thought of 'who else?' will be ringing in their minds. How many other children and young people are being exploited that we don't know about? How many other millionaires and billionaires are behaving as if their wealth buys them exemption from the law? How much longer are we going to have to share a society with wealthy men who think they can do whatever they want, and face no consequences?

On top of all of this, it has recently been revealed that Sullivan had restricted access to West Ham's women's and youth teams since 2023, due to a safeguarding investigation following yet another sexual misconduct allegation. This may come as a shock to many West Ham fans, but he won't be missed. The former owner of the club was already deeply unpopular due to the team's recent historic stadium change and relegation, and this news will only deepen that sentiment.

We need to build a socialist society, ran under democratic workers' control, where these ills will be a thing of the past. Under socialism, sexist ideas about women could be fought against and cease to exist in a society in which men and women would exist on an equal playing field. Join the Socialist Party to make that fight a reality!

Social housing waiting list will be cleared ... by 2135!

TILDE RESARE
SHEFFIELD SOUTH EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

Two years ago, Starmer's government promised a 'council housing revolution', however this is nowhere in sight yet. It is easy to see that more housing is needed, currently over 1.3 million households are on a waiting list for social housing, and more than 175,000 children are homeless.

Over a decade and a half of local government austerity has meant council tax rises, and massive service cuts. This has forced an entire generation to live the state of the current housing crisis. In 60 out of 89 council areas not a single social home was built.

If the ruling class's priority was to actually ensure that people had decent, secure housing then that money would be found. Last year councils spent more than £2 billion

on temporary accommodation – paradoxically, homelessness is not cheap. However our society is run by a capitalist class more concerned with growing their wealth and ensuring that their assets keep ever-increasing in value.

At the current pace of new social and council housing developments it will take 119 years to clear current waiting lists, according to a recent report by housing charity Shelter. This is assuming the problem won't continue to get worse, which it will. To actually ensure that the people in this country can live in dignity we need a new type of politics.

Living in inadequate housing makes it exponentially harder to maintain a steady income and poses a severe and persistent health risk. It is foolish to assume that the people who are unhoused are meant to carry the burden of this crisis while

83 sitting MPs are landlords and actively profiting from the housing market.

The Socialist Party fights for:

- A mass programme of good-quality, environmentally friendly council house building
- Councils should reject the cuts, build the infrastructure we need and send the bill to Starmer's government. A mass, working-class campaign can win the resources our communities need
- Take the wealth off the super-rich! Nationalise the construction companies, alongside big businesses and the banks so we can use the resources of society to provide for need, not greed!



BT boss's bumper pay

HANNAH PONTING
LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Allison Kirkby, chief executive of BT, has recently seen her pay and bonus package more than double, reaching a total of £5.6 million. This includes £1.1 million in salary, pension contributions, and benefits alongside a £1 million cash bonus. BT's share price has risen by almost 80% since Kirkby was made chief executive in February 2024.

So, despite the company finding enough funds to award millions of pounds of rewards to its boss, the company plans to cut up to 55,000 jobs from its global workforce of 130,000 by 2030. The decision was justified on the grounds of improving 'efficiency' of operations through the increased use of AI.

Across many industries, executives receive multi-million pound pay packages while working-class people face job losses, precarious

employment circumstances, and a growing sense of uncertainty as to their futures.

Increasingly, AI is being framed as a way to justify job cuts in the name of efficiency, yet technological progress by no means necessitates job losses. In principle, expanding technology could be used to reduce working hours and allow workers to focus on skilled, fulfilling work. Instead, under capitalism, technological improvements are often used as an opportunity to cut jobs and reduce labour costs in order to increase profits while keeping pay and conditions poor. AI is a tool, and how it is used is determined by who controls it.

Under capitalism, the pursuit of profit is prioritised over the needs of workers and consumers. As long as this system remains in place, the widening gap between the rewards enjoyed by corporate executives and the insecurity faced by

working-class people will not be resolved.

Instead, the major companies and industries should be nationalised and controlled democratically by the workers. This would allow for tools like AI to be used for socially useful purposes, allow for proper protections of jobs, and put an end to the vast amounts of inequality which we see under capitalism.

Come to a Socialist Party meeting near you

The Socialist Party has regular meetings in towns and cities across the country.
If you would like to participate:
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David Sullivan has given over £100,000 to the Tory party HILTON TEPPER/CC

Unison national local government conference

JIM MCFARLANE
UNISON NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Delegates from across the country attended Unison's conference for local government workers in Brighton 14-15 June. A number of motions highlighted the crisis in the sector after years of chronic underfunding and outsourcing. Socialist Party members spoke to put forward the fighting approach needed.

In a debate on the funding crisis in schools, Catherine Clarke from Southampton highlighted the need for a campaign to win the funding needed, involving all trade unions building joint strike action. She pointed out that Labour has failed to adequately support schools. Without a struggle from the unions, a change of Labour leadership from Starmer to Andy Burnham would change very little.

Local government reorganisation

In the 'Young Workers in Local Government Reorganisation' debate, Ellie Waple from Surrey County described the threat local government reorganisation poses for young workers in particular. Delegates shouldn't accept the employers' arguments that there is no money. Young workers and service users did not create council debts, but joint struggles could prevent the loss of jobs and services. "If Labour and other councillors won't fight for us then they should move aside for those who will."

David Ellis from Birmingham - scene of the historic bin strike against a Labour council threatening fire and rehire and wage cuts - rightly asked

the question why Unison conferences have been blocked from discussing our relationship with the Labour Party.

The challenge of defending members in councils controlled by Reform UK was posed a number of times. Angela Waller from Kirklees branch outlined the threat Reform posed not just to jobs and services but also council workers' pensions.

She said it is easy to point out the incompetence of so many Reform councillors, but we need working-class unity against attacks on the working class, and for unions to adopt fighting strategies and build an activist base amongst the growing number of workers who have joined the union since Reform have taken control.

School support staff

The only contentious debate over the two days was over Unison's relationship with the National Education Union (NEU) in organising school support staff. A motion was passed condemning the NEU for recruiting and organising school staff. But a sizeable number of delegates - around a third of the conference - opposed this, pointing to the need for unity against the government and employers.

Saffy Hill-Chambers from Surrey outlined why Unison should be working alongside the 65,000 NEU support staff members, and that driving a wedge between workers benefits only the employers. "Do we not have a duty to think of the interests of the trade union movement as a whole, of the working class as a whole... We need solidarity and unity in schools to fight for all school staff".

Trade Unionists for a New Party fringe meeting

CATHERINE CLARKE
SOUTHAMPTON UNISON, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The 'Trade Unionists for a New Party' fringe meeting at Unison local government conference was convened to enable an open discussion about political representation. Socialist Party member Saffy Hill-Chambers from Surrey local government Unison chaired the meeting, highlighting that similar discussions are occurring throughout the country.

Unison NEC member Jim McFarlane, a member of Socialist Party Scotland, introduced the discussion, speaking in a personal capacity. He outlined collapse of support for Starmer's Labour in May's elections, after continuing Tory austerity

measures, including in the NHS and local government. He warned of the rise of electoral support for Reform, including among Unison members, which is exploiting the political vacuum created by the failures of Labour, and of the SNP in Scotland.

Although only 13.7% of Unison members pay into the 'Labour Link' fund, this minority dictates union political policy. Motions to debate the union's relationship with Labour had been ruled off the conference agenda. He called on Unison general secretary Andrea Egan to deliver on her pledge to review this relationship. Pointing to Unite the Union's decision to cut its contribution to Labour by £600,000, he asked why Unison continues to give £3 million annually to a political party that does not represent trade union interests.

In a wide-ranging discussion, one Unison activist said members who had supported Andrea Egan would start to have doubts if there is not action on achieving her manifesto

aims. A member of the Broxtowe Alliance, a Unison member, reported that they won seats after 20 councillors left Labour.

Socialist Party members outlined how, if unions were to use their funds flexibly, they could back candidates who genuinely support working-class policies. Whereas current Unison rules mean the union cannot even back its own members if they run as independent or socialist candidates.

The case was made for a debate within the union, and for a trade union conference to debate political representation. Socialist Party members put forward the case for a new workers' party based on organised workers in the unions, with an alternative that puts public ownership, workers' rights, an end to council cuts, and socialist policies at the centre of its platform.

The 'Trade Unionists for a New Party in Unison' petition was relaunched at the conference



Gloucestershire local government workers on strike in 2023 ROBERT THOMAS

Wolverhampton schools support staff strike

WOLVERHAMPTON AND BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

"Have our responsibilities changed? No! Are we being asked to do less work? No! Are we having to come in one day less? No!"

Support staff at Codsall Multi-Academy Trust in Wolverhampton, members of the National Education Union, took their first day of strike action against fire-and-rehire plans which could see them lose up to 22% from their pay.

Meanwhile the group of schools, with less than 1,000 students, is having to fund the budget of both a CEO and deputy CEO!

The fact that this Labour government has allowed both fire-and-rehire tactics and the chronic underfunding of schools to continue should be enough alone to make the argument for unions to launch a party that stands for working-class communities, not the bond traders!



WOLVERHAMPTON AND BLACK COUNTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Save courses at Birmingham City Uni!

ARYAMAN MOHAN
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

On 9 June, Socialist Party members joined University and College Union members and supporters at Birmingham City University (BCU) to oppose the recent redundancy consultations affecting staff in architecture and the built environment, Black studies, and biomedical engineering.

Staff, students and supporters spoke about the importance of defending courses, jobs and educational opportunities from cuts. BCU's senior management has stated that these proposals are driven by financial pressures and a lack of demand.

Among the concerns raised was that no equality impact assessment was carried out before decisions affecting Black studies were proposed, despite the potential impact on both staff and students. Speakers also highlighted the lack of response to the collective grievance relating to discrimination concerns.



BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

The message from the protest was clear: BCU is more than its senior management and that the university belongs to its staff, students and the wider community it serves. No redundancy is necessary. The wealth exists to fund high-quality, free education for all!

Statement from the majority of PCS National Executive Committee

Following events at the PCS civil service union National Executive Committee (NEC) on 11 June 2026, the President and Deputy President have issued the following statement. Against a background of continued pay restraint and cuts to jobs and conditions, the letter appeals to the General Secretary, Fran Heathcote, to prioritise the national campaign agreed at national conference, and urgently meet with the President and Deputy President in order "to discuss and agree a way in which we can work together in the interests of members".

If you are a PCS member and you agree, please let Fran Heathcote know.



Cabinet Office PCS strike 2025 ROB WILLIAMS

An appeal to our General Secretary, Fran Heathcote, to join the fight in defence of PCS members' pay, jobs and conditions

We were elected by you to be the PCS National President and Deputy President. That means we're here to defend the democracy of our union and to make sure that the union delivers for you.

The new NEC has hit the ground running, and has already put in place plans:

- To build a serious national campaign on pay, jobs and hybrid working
- To put a claim to the Cabinet Office including for a 10% pay rise, an £18 per hour minimum wage, progression and a job security guarantee that protects our civil service members in the context of planned 15% staffing cuts
- To coordinate ongoing strike action between those areas already in dispute - and to seek routes for private sector and devolved sector members to join in the fight
- To defend trans rights in the face of the new EHRC guidance

This is the first step towards a radical overhaul of the union.

Unfortunately, the General Secretary of PCS, Fran Heathcote, is content with the status quo and opposes real change in our union.

The General Secretary believes that the 3.5% pay remit published by the Cabinet Office last month is evidence of progress in talks. She agrees with the Cabinet Office that the minimum wage will be rate for the job of AAs (Administrative Assistants).

We disagree, and the union's National Executive Committee disagrees. The union's Annual Delegate Conference gave us clear instructions as to pay, terms and conditions, defending trans rights, and on many other matters. Your NEC intends to follow those instructions.

In contrast, the General Secretary seeks to ignore these demands and instructions. She believes she knows best.

The NEC and we do not accept this.

We are fighting to build a national campaign in the UK civil service over the pay remit. Your NEC wants to sort out the decades-long problems faced by you, including real-terms pay cuts over the last 16 years, threats to tens of thousands of jobs, major office closures, escalating workloads and increasing restrictions to hybrid working, where it exists at all.

If the General Secretary was content to disagree, but otherwise to carry out the democratic decisions of the NEC, then this would be just a debate at the NEC as to how we progress union business.

Instead, the General Secretary is obstructing and delaying any action that might build towards a national campaign.

- The General Secretary has failed to pass along contact details for our key representatives in areas the NEC has instructed the President to contact
- The General Secretary has failed to pass along correspondence from Group Executive Committees that have written to the NEC about the national campaign
- The General Secretary has persistently issued major papers the night before NEC and National Disputes Committee (NDC) meetings, meaning that elected members are always under pressure of time to respond to her latest delaying tactics, instead of getting out to build and organise amongst members. NEC members do not have 100% facility time, nor a large staff of paid officials to write up our proposals. We have to do this ourselves, in non-work time
- The General Secretary has provided no update on progress towards giving representatives access to members' data in line with A226 carried at ADC 2025, despite repeated requests
- The General Secretary has failed to comply with the instruction to issue communications to members explaining the decisions and actions taken by the NEC so far, including writing to the Cabinet Office to submit a pay claim and demand national talks

Instead of doing these things, the General Secretary claims her contract gives her powers that it does not. Her contract of employment is clear - she must follow the instructions of the NEC.

NEC meeting of 11 June 2026

On 11 June 2026 the General Secretary and a minority of NEC members 'walked out' of an online NEC meeting, that had been convened and proper notice given to all.

The General Secretary or one of her staff then closed the Zoom meeting, attempting to derail a scheduled NEC meeting which was still quorate.

To be clear that there is nothing in the rules that allows her to end NEC meetings. Nor is walking out an adult thing to do.

Before the Zoom meeting was shut down, the General Secretary cited rules that she believed were being broken. These were related to the NEC's democratic decision to agree standing orders which would facilitate the ability of the NEC to implement conference decisions. The paper to

move the standing orders is always in the name of the President.

Extraordinarily, the General Secretary did not issue the paper put by the President but replaced it with her own, that ignored the ruling by the President. When the President permitted the moving of an amendment to that paper, the General Secretary and 12 out of 35 NEC members walked out.

It is not the role of the General Secretary to interpret the rules. This power under Supplementary Rule 11.6 is reserved to the President (on matters of interpretation) and to the NEC (in cases where the rules are silent). Instead, when the General Secretary could not get majority support for her approach, she sabotaged the NEC meeting, and had it closed when she did not have authority to do this.

As President, Bev Laidlaw instructed that the NEC reconvene in a different Zoom meeting room to continue with business. The majority of the NEC did so and at that meeting, we agreed important actions, including a national cost-of-living campaign and a response, in line with Conference policy to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations, and the danger in which it puts some of our members.

We and the elected majority on the National Executive Committee now call on the General Secretary to cease acting against the democratically elected leadership and to work with us to action the policies agreed by our Conference.

We want every single member to know that this NEC answers to Conference and it answers to members, as per the rule book. We are fighting hard to do the work of members and call on the General Secretary to do the same.

We want Fran Heathcote to urgently meet with us to discuss and agree a way in which we can work together in the interests of members and for the elected NEC to retain the "management and control of the union, and the handling of its whole affairs," as provided for Principal Rule 8 of the union's rules.

This is your union and you deserve better than the General Secretary's power plays. We have serious work to do, and we hope that the General Secretary can act in a serious manner and that together we work to achieve what you deserve and need.

Bev Laidlaw, PCS President
Dave Semple, PCS Deputy President

BELFAST AND DERRY WORKERS MOBILISE AGAINST RACIST VIOLENCE

NIALL MULHOLLAND
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS INTERNATIONAL

The city of Belfast has been rocked by racist violence against ethnic minorities. The vast majority of working-class people in the north are appalled by these events. Many older people in Northern Ireland will have shuddered at the scenes which are reminiscent of the widespread sectarian violence of the past.

Yet there has been a courageous and significant pushback last week by community organisations and anti-racist groups and, most importantly, by the organised working-class movement through the trade unions.

A workers' anti-racist lunchtime rally was held on Friday 12 June outside the Royal Victoria Hospital, west Belfast, initiated by the largest union in the north, the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA), involving workers from several unions. The health service in Northern Ireland is dependent on immigrant workers. Last week, unions reported nurses having to run from gangs outside hospitals. And other workers were targeted. A bus driver, a union member, was ordered off his bus by racist assailants.

Anti-racist demonstration

On Saturday 13 June, thousands gathered outside Belfast City Hall to condemn the racist street violence and targeting of ethnic minorities over the previous few days. Another anti-racist demonstration was held in Derry city, initiated by the local trade union council. NIPSA general secretary, Carmel Gates, speaking from the Belfast podium on behalf of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, warned the far right that the organised labour movement will come down hard on attempts to cause division in society. As Carmel pointed out, Northern Ireland has gone through decades of bitter sectarian divisions and killings and will not allow itself to be dragged back into wider conflict by the actions of far-right organisations, and by racist mobs and their billionaire backers.

Another platform speaker at City Hall, Padraig Mulholland, Deputy General Secretary of NIPSA, and a Militant Left supporter, recalled how the organised workers' movement had acted against sectarian outrages in the past. He asked for a show of support from the crowds to support NIPSA's approach to ICTU that should the racist attacks against union members continue, "we will shut down this place". Clenched fists and raised hands went up from the thousands of protesters.

Earlier in the week, a brutal knife attack in North Belfast was filmed and shown widely. The alleged assailant comes from a Sudanese background, and the victim was a local

man, Stephen Ogilvie. He was probably saved by the actions of passers-by who tackled the attacker, including Maitiu Mág Tighearnán who fought off the attacker with a hurl. Despite Stephen Ogilvie's family and Maitiu Mág Tighearnán calling for calm and not to allow the horrendous attack to be used to incite violent disturbances, the video was quickly seized upon by racists, and far-right and populist-right politicians. Some local politicians and sectarian pundits and so-called community leaders also whipped up anti-immigrant sentiments. Newly minted trillionaire Elon Musk also fanned the flames of racist violence in Belfast through his social media posts.

Far-right social media calls were made for people to go to the streets. For two days, gangs of youths, clad in black clothing and masks, roamed the streets of parts of Belfast, bringing terror to working-class and immigrant communities. Houses of immigrants were stormed and set alight. Immigrant families had to flee for their lives. Children of immigrants were too fearful to go to school. Road 'checkpoints' were set up by racist gangs to try and identify ethnic minorities. Local people born in Northern Ireland were also caught up in this indiscriminate carnage and some lost their homes.

At the same time, many people in working-class communities contacted terrorised immigrants living in their areas, offering to give them refuge and to bring them food. Workers

offered to bring immigrant fellow workers to work in their cars to try and minimise the danger of attacks.

Although the numbers involved in the racist rioting were relatively small, especially compared to the riots of the past during the height of the conflict in the north (euphemistically known as 'the Troubles'), the terrorising led to Belfast's commercial city centre shutting down early during workdays. Many people commuted from work early, and many other people did not leave their homes at all. This is reminiscent of the worst years of the Troubles, when sectarian tensions, state repression, and the grisly actions of sectarian death gangs led to Belfast city centre becoming a ghost town.

Many people are questioning the role of the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), given that a monitoring group called The Accountability Project Northern Ireland warned the police over several months that far-right networks were circulating lists of addresses of migrant homes. The group even sent a copy of the so called 'hit list' to police in January 2026.

These only underline, once again, that immigrants and refugees, and working-class people in general, cannot rely on the state forces to protect them against racists and the far right, let alone sectarian attacks. Only working-class solidarity and action can defend working-class communities and cut across the actions of the far right.

As Carmel Gates stated from the podium at the Belfast city centre

The thousands-strong protest on 13 June PHOTO: MILITANT LEFT

rally on Saturday 13 June, successive government policies have starved working-class communities of essential funding and resources and helped to create the conditions for the emergence of the far right. People in Northern Ireland have had enough of decades of sectarian divisions, she added, and do not want racism and racist divisions layered on top.

Racist street violence can also quickly morph into sectarian clashes, engulfing wider parts of society. As the north enters the summer 'marching season', sectarian tensions will grow.

Unite the working class

The way to effectively fight racism and the far right is to unite the working class and impoverished communities around common demands for decent and affordable social housing available for all, for a living wage, for jobs for young people and real opportunities in education and training with full trade union rights and decent pay. The National Health Service in the north needs massive investment - it is creaking and has the highest queues across the whole of the NHS. Wages are lower in Northern Ireland than Britain. Poverty is endemic in many areas.

The boast of the establishment parties and capitalist governments that oversaw the Good Friday Agreement, that it would bring peace and stability, and prosperity, has proven to be a fraud. The Stormont power-sharing

assembly is based on sectarian headcounts and is regularly paralysed by sectarian-based parties' manoeuvring. The Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin have passed on Westminster cuts to local working-class communities for years.

The right-wing billionaire-owned mass media also is culpable for the racist violence we have seen in the streets of Belfast. Along with right-wing politicians, they have whipped up anti-immigrant rhetoric, attempting to lay the blame for the ills of society at the feet of a small minority.

What is desperately needed in Northern Ireland and other parts of these islands facing the rise of the far right and racism is a political vehicle for the working class and impoverished that can successfully counter their appeal, and against local right-wing parties. The Northern Ireland political landscape is dominated by sectarian-based parties that thrive on divisions in society. The working class needs a socialist voice rooted in the communities that can bring together people based on their common struggle and common misery under capitalism and put forward policies to cut across the racists and the populist right and the sectarian-based parties.

● This is an extract of the article published online at socialistworld.net

Far right driven out of Brighton by thousands-strong counter-protest

KATIE TULLOCH
BRIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

The far right were vastly outnumbered in Brighton on 13 June, with their planned march failing to take place. An estimated 300 far-right protesters were met with at least 4,000 people as part of an organised counter-protest.

The far-right group had planned to march through the city and had announced several speakers including UKIP leader Nick Tenconi and co-founder of Raise the Colours, Ryan Bridge. These speeches were prevented from taking place. While police attempted to let the far-right group

march, they were met each time by thousands of protesters blocking every possible route from the main station.

The small group was blocked under the railway bridge on Trafalgar Street, only a few metres from the station's entrance, for over an hour. They were refused entry into numerous pubs, before being escorted back to the train station by Sussex Police.

A number of participants in the counter-protest, referred to as a 'Carnival Against Fascism', gathered along Queens Road dancing and listening to music, including a free set from local DJ Fat Boy Slim.

Socialist Party members took part

in the counter-protest, initiating discussions with young people about the importance of working-class unity in the fight against austerity and racist division.

We spoke about how the anti-racist, working-class majority in society can combat the rise of cynical racism and anti-migrant rhetoric as establishment parties continue to collapse. We put forward that trade unions should use their strength of over 6.5 million members to launch a mass struggle against Labour austerity and fight for 'jobs, homes and public services not racism'.

Other counter-protesters agreed that trade union leaders should not use fighting Reform as an excuse to continue to back Labour. The working class has abandoned Labour because Labour has abandoned them. To successfully defeat racist and anti-migrant politics, we must build a workers' party committed to fighting in the interests of the working-class majority.



Sheffield anti-racists outnumber far-right protesters

MADDIE ROONEY
SHEFFIELD NORTH AND WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

On 13 June, far-right group Raise the Colours (RTC) Sheffield organised a demonstration to march through the city centre to a Holiday Inn housing migrants. RTC are usually seen in Sheffield putting flags on lamp posts.

This demonstration had been advertised on social media for at least a month and about 50-100 turned up, although a large portion of those were streamers who were live streaming the day as so-called 'independent media/auditors' wrapped in union jacks. One streamer who joined the counter-protest reported that he makes a fair amount of money posting clips from videos showing people getting frustrated.

Sheffield Communities Against Racism and Fascism (SCARF) organised a counter-demonstration together with Stand Up to Racism. The counter-demo and blocking of roads involved 500-600 anti-racists. Although the RTC march had to re-route numerous times due to roads being blocked by counter-demos, they ultimately had a police escort through Sheffield and ended near the hotel.

Heavy police presence

There was a heavy police presence, raising tensions across both sides with six arrested, at least three from the counter-demo. Socialist Party members took part at the SCARF meeting point to assist blocking the RTC protest. Half of us were swiftly forced into a kettle by some particularly handy

cops, whilst the other half were free to continue blocking the path.

A few hours later we were all re-acquainted. Once our comrade with a megaphone had rejoined us we added to the chants of "Nazis out" with the chants pointing towards how that can be achieved - for example "Keir Starmer what an ass, we need a party of the working class!"

Reform UK made big gains electorally in Sheffield in May, but the lack of presence on Saturday proves that the vast majority of these voters are not hardened or organised far-right activists but a layer who are disillusioned and fed up. A trade union led fight-back against Labour austerity, with the demand for 'jobs, homes and services for all' can help cut across support for Reform and the right.



Delegates at Prospect conference prepared to challenge leaders



CAA strike in 2025 PHOTO: DIANA WAZOVSKAYA

BEN GOLIGHTLY

I was privileged to attend the Prospect union's biennial conference in Brighton, as a first-time delegate. Members of Prospect include tech workers, scientists, engineers and other specialist workers, in both the public and private sectors.

Many people think politics isn't for them; that nothing makes a difference. But the conference of even a traditionally conservative union offers the opportunity for members to elect delegates to debate the issues, rub shoulders, set policy and put pressure on the leaders. I found attending the conference a genuinely fantastic experience.

The Prospect leadership prides itself on being the 'grown-up in the room.' In reality, this means taking an approach of 'partnership' between workers and bosses, attempting to avoid conflict.

But this conference showed that the reality of austerity and the cost-of-living crisis means Prospect's leaders are increasingly under pressure from the members, who find that approach is becoming harder to swallow.

Consequently, the general secretary, Mike Clancy, a self-described Blairite, has increasingly made statements challenging the Labour Party. This follows internal polling showing dissatisfaction with Labour.

Austerity was highlighted in the debates on issues like racism, trans rights, and protection of migrant workers, as well as cuts to services and job losses. The discussion on the impact of AI on workers demonstrated the need to fight for more workers' control of its use.

The general secretary has paid great attention to detail in spelling out exactly how Reform's manifesto would negatively impact Prospect members in individual workplaces, particularly in devolved nations. But if the trade unions do not mount a fight against Labour's austerity then a Reform government is more likely.

It is unfortunate that the warnings about Reform have not been matched with preparatory action. A motion for Prospect to establish a strike fund was decisively defeated after a polarised debate. Many delegates felt that to strike without pay shows you really mean it, and that would have more effect on a 'reasonable' employer. That the issue keeps returning, however, shows that many members are drawing the conclusion that more action is needed.

Prospect's leadership enjoyed a 70% majority on many motions. But on a whole host of questions it was much closer, and just a 5% swing would have changed the result. 2028 conference will be one to watch.

Generally, it was social issues

where conference delegates challenged the leadership. Votes were extremely close on fighting disability cuts and opposing the sham Timms Review, and on student debt forgiveness. While expressing sympathy, the National Executive Committee did not want the union to provide a lead.

The leadership was defeated outright in favour of clear support for trans rights, and on boycotting companies that profit from genocide.

An embryonic broad left has begun around an initiative called 'Democratic Prospect'.

In another indication of the pressure they are feeling, Prospect's leaders spent time attacking 'factionalism' during the conference.

Prospect delegates were not in the mood for theatrics, but did want serious debate around the arguments. For example, the union represents defence workers, and many members are wary of ham-fisted 'left' calls to close workplaces without a positive alternative. But a serious debate around a programme for democratic nationalisation and a transition to socially useful production that protects jobs, pay and skills would be different.

A serious left in Prospect, that wins delegates to the best way forward, is what Socialist Party members stand for.

GMB conference delegates debate relationship with Labour

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN THE GMB

General union GMB, the UK's third-biggest union, held its annual congress 7-11 June. As Starmer's Labour government crisis raged, from the president's opening speech onwards, the justifications for GMB continuing to support Labour were drummed into the 600+ delegates. General Secretary Gary Smith said: "After 14 years of Tory chaos, we have a Labour government with a huge majority but struggling in power. They have made mistakes. The polls aren't good, and the party leadership is subject to daily debate. We have an enduring relationship with Labour. It's not a sentimental thing. It's because workers need a political voice."

But despite the argument that affiliation gives the union "a seat at the table" and that the union "challenges Labour when it falls short", the reality is that there is no longer any real voice for the trade union movement in determining Labour's policy. Just before congress, GMB members in local government, alongside members of Unison and Unite, rejected the

pay offer in local government, opening up the possibility of industrial action. This is alongside continued austerity across public services and the retention of the Tory 50% strike ballot turnout thresholds.

Moving the Central Executive Council (CEC) statement on 'Politics and the Labour Party', vice president Sonya Davis was forced to recognise that Labour's continued attacks on working-class people were fuelling the rise of Reform. "Too many working-class people feel unheard... That is dangerous ground. Because when people lose faith in mainstream politics others move in."

Southern region delegate and Socialist Party member Ali Haydor spoke against the CEC statement. Motion 231 from Southampton called on congress to "launch a union-wide consultation about the best use of our union's political fund, including the question of funding candidates outside the Labour Party who will fight to implement GMB policies."

It also encouraged "regional councils/committees to organise members' meetings at which members of the GMG parliamentary group ... are invited to speak. This should include to what extent an MP's voting record has been in line with GMB policy". The GMB leadership boasts the largest parliamentary group of Labour MPs - then why no campaign by this

group to force Starmer to repeal the anti-trade union laws?

Motion 235 from Reading and Berkshire called on the CEC "to undertake a consultation of the membership regarding whether to continue affiliation to the Labour Party".

One argument put forward was that only Labour can hold back Reform. Ali said: "Many of our members voted differently, desperately looking for change." Ali argued that Labour and Starmer are copying Reform's policies, just a lighter version: "What's not acceptable from the Tories and Reform should never be acceptable from the Labour Party."

The CEC sought withdrawal of the motions in favour of the CEC statement. Southern region delegates and a sprinkling of others voted against, but the CEC's statement was carried and the motions fell. However, this issue inevitably will be revisited as Labour presses ahead with vicious attacks against working-class people.

The failure of the leadership's approach was revealed time and again in the discussions which followed. Motions and contributions on public services told tales of understaffed hospitals, care homes, and departments. Delegates blamed cuts and austerity. The CEC called for an increase in funding for local government and a council house-building programme - yet it won't allow debate in the union on how to build a political voice to fight for those demands!

Motion 222, moved by the North West Gas L34 branch, called on the GMB to continue its fight for full nationalisation of the energy industry, but added that "until the political climate is ready to move towards full public ownership, GMB should be ready to adopt an interim position". Isn't this exactly an admission that the GMB does not have its own political voice?

Motion 293, moved by Socialist Party member Chris Baugh, was

passed, calling on the CEC to establish a network for reps interested in campaigning on climate change to supplement the work of GMB structures in the energy and manufacturing sectors. Chris said: "There is no fundamental conflict between defending the pay, jobs, conditions and livelihoods of all workers in the gas and energy industry, and the GMB using its technical expertise, collective industrial power and political influence to develop its own agenda; not the Labour Party's that offers no new jobs - a just transition to guarantee the pay, jobs and conditions of every worker".

The same approach should be taken to defending GMB members in the defence industry, which was another feature of the congress, with then Labour defence secretary Jon Healy speaking. GMB should demand nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management, in order to enable a workers' transition to socially useful production that defends jobs, pay, conditions and skills.

"Many working people no longer feel they have a political voice... More and more workers are looking elsewhere... That is why this motion matters. It does not call on GMB to support a new party today. It does not call on GMB to break its political links tomorrow. What it does call for is discussion, democracy and consultation. A discussion about our relationship with Labour, a consultation on how our political fund is used, and a serious debate about whether working people need a new political voice rooted in the trade union movement. Other unions are already having these discussions. GMB members should not be excluded from this debate. If we believe in democracy, we should trust our members to have this conversation and decide what political path best advances the interests of working people."

ALI HAYDOR, MOVING MOTION 231



PHOTO: MATT CAREY

AGM 2026: RMT can take a political lead



PHOTO: PAUL MATTHEWSON

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN RMT

The AGM of transport union RMT takes place as the crisis in Starmer's Labour escalates and workers face continued austerity and a new cost-of-living crisis.

The transport union RMT is a combative industrial trade union that has regularly won above-inflation pay increases and defended terms and conditions and pensions. Even so, for many rail, transport and especially maritime workers, and those in the subcontracted sector, low pay and insecure employment continue to blight our members.

Those ongoing battles under this government of crisis will be an important part of the AGM agenda, including on London Underground and around the government's 'Great British Railways' plan - for which we must continue to demand socialist nationalisation.

But political strategy is also vital. Our 'social wage' - our NHS, state pension, and public services - have been hit by successive governments that have ruled in the interests of the capitalist elite.

Infrastructure is crumbling, food banks have increased, and people sleep rough on the streets of all our major cities and towns. Rents have increased, as have mortgage rates. Food and energy costs have massively increased.

At the same time the richest in society have got richer from super-exploitation of the workforce. Most of our members will know of a young family member out of work. One million young people are currently unemployed.

The combined wealth of the 350 richest individuals in Britain is £784

billion. Even 50% of this amount would solve the funding gap in education, health, social services and local services. Our union has always stood for socialism, "to work for the supersession of the capitalist system by a socialistic order of society."

That means taking control of the wealth from the hands of the capitalist elite, by nationalising the major companies under working-class control and ownership and instituting a planned socialist economy. But what is the political vehicle our union members have to fight for this?

Support the Emergency Motion from London Engineering:

The Labour Party was given a hammering by voters in the May 2026 elections.

Of major concern is the increase in voters who expressed their anger with Labour by voting for Reform, and the danger of growing racism and division in the working class as a result.

Reform, if elected, would accelerate the attacks on workers' rights and conditions.

The growth in the vote of the

Greens represents an expression of the desire to oppose Labour from the left.

In 2022 our previous general secretary, Mick Lynch, helped to launch the 'Enough is Enough' campaign, which had 500,000 members, showing the clear potential for a new workers' party had its leadership supported such a step. The initial enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn's announcement of a new party, Your Party, also showed the same potential.

It is urgent for the trade union movement to discuss how to resolve the crisis of working-class political representation. We agree that doing so is vital to cutting across racism and division. And to put in place a party that will represent working-class interests.

We urge our union to:

- Produce leaflets and other campaigning material using the TUC-agreed slogan of 'jobs, homes and services not racism' against the divide-and-rule tactics of racism
- To adopt the approach of Bob Crow and urgently call a trade union conference to discuss the crisis of working-class political representation
- To approach other unions to co-organise the conference if they wish to do so

Come to the Socialist Party public meeting
Tuesday 23 June, 7:30pm

Liverpool: A city that dared to fight
The role of fighting trade unionists in Liverpool's socialist council, 1983-87, and lessons for today

Liverpool Arts Bar (downstairs room), 22 Hope Street, L1 9BY



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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Cardiff Pride 2026



JOHN WILLIAMS

UNITE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTING LGBTQ+ MEMBERS, AND CARDIFF SOCIALIST PARTY

There were huge numbers this year at Cardiff Pride – of all ages and backgrounds. The divide-and-rule tactic used by the capitalist class and their politicians can only get them so far! Class solidarity was clear to see.

Like many previous years, there's been a debate around trade union participation in commercialised Prides like this one. It's a disgrace that people have to pay to officially take part in the march and the big social event afterwards. As different trade unions in Wales approach this question differently, the TUC Cymru always pays Pride Cymru to ensure trade unions can 'officially' take part. Even if they didn't, we'd still take part.

There was a really good response to

our petition, calling to stop the EHRC guidance, and to defend trans rights and the right to self-ID. We explained that it's Labour austerity and pro-big business politics that's rolling out the red carpet for Reform and creating the conditions for LGBT+phobia to spread.

The march was so big we had to set up a second stall at the other end of the march, just so everyone had the opportunity to see us. Unfortunately, we were told we couldn't have the second stall where we wanted it. There was also a council ban on stalls along the route. But two Socialist Party members held up our red wrap with the posters and slogans on, which was just as effective. We managed to speak to loads of people as we caught people's eyes. Everyone played a role - selling the Socialist and getting people to sign our petition and discuss our ideas with us.

Fund the fightback DONATE TODAY

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- or make cheques payable to Socialist Party.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q2: APRIL-JUNE 2026	DEADLINE: 30 JUNE 2026
South West	2,024	2,100		96%
Wales	2,281	2,400		95%
London	4,339	5,000		87%
Eastern	1,073	1,300		83%
North West	950	1,200		
Southern and SE	1,863	2,400		78%
East Midlands	1,513	2,050		74%
Yorkshire	1,861	2,650		70%
Northern	339	800	42%	
West Midlands	1,083	2,700	40%	
Other	7,304	2,400		304%
TOTAL	24,630	25,000		99%

London: building for a youth day of action

SOPIA PANDOLFI

SOUTH EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

This Saturday, 20 June, young socialists in London are organising a day of action across the city. Amidst the growing crisis faced by young people, the need to take action is clear. Growing up under austerity and seeing our governments invest in wars rather than our public services, has fuelled our anger at the politicians and parties which offer us no hope for the future.

Whether you are a student faced with increased tuition fees for an underfunded education, a young worker in an underpaid job, or one of the over 1 million experiencing unemployment, we face the bleak reality of living under this capitalist system. Having recently finished college, I understand the fear amongst young people at the lack of good jobs and opportunities that awaits us.

By getting organised, we can take this fear and anger to fight for our futures, uniting the struggles of young workers and students for opportunities, education, and services that are not sacrificed for profit.

Joining our youth day of action is a first step to discuss how we can fight for this change. In building for the youth day of action over the past weeks, it's been clear that there is a mood for young people desperate for

YOUTH FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST FUTURE!

an alternative. But none of the main parties offer us any real alternative, including Reform, whose anti-migrant rhetoric does not address the real reasons why young people cannot find a job or decent housing.

Many young people feel frustrated. Many will also feel hopeful that where Greens have taken control of councils in London they will mount a fight against austerity. We are pushing for Green councillors to use all the powers they have to begin implementing rent controls, expand youth services and more.

Until now, Green councillors haven't done that, and argued that councils have to live within their means. We say, set needs-based budgets and make the super-rich pay. Don't accept the rules of the system. We need to fight for socialist change. Join our day of action to campaign for the funded education and services we need and to discuss how we can take action for socialist change.



Wales: demand decent jobs and decent pay!

RHYS CASTLEY

SWANSEA AND WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY

Young people are constantly under attack – sky-high rents, tens of thousands of pounds in tuition fees, no job opportunities, criminally low wages and horrendous working conditions. And now young people are increasingly fed up and angry at the lack of a future and the total lack of concern for our generation from capitalist parties. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is no future for us under capitalism - a system which creates the world's first trillionaire while nearly a third of children in Wales face poverty.

We set up in Swansea city centre to push the need to organise and fightback against these horrendous conditions. We gave out over a hundred leaflets to young people and parents alike. We heard nothing but

frustration and anger at the conditions we face today. One young person we spoke to left uni with upwards of £40,000 debt and no hope of finding any job, let alone one in their field. A Burger King worker suffered through that heat in the kitchen! There was also a college student who is paid only just over £8 an hour to clean up disgusting pub toilets late at night.

Everyone we spoke to was eager for a way to fight back for a future and to demand the government – Westminster and the Senedd alike – commit to providing more jobs, apprenticeships, education opportunities and an end to tuition fees, as well as a minimum wage of at least £15 an hour and the abolition of youth rates. Plaid Cymru and Greens are claiming to be acting in the interests of workers and young people but now it is time for them to prove it and commit to these demands.

Essex: Building Socialist Students at Harlow College

ALFIE LIDDLE

ESSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

Harlow College has one Socialist Students member, but that might not be the case for long! Four Socialist Party members helped me to campaign outside college on 8 June.

We started 45 minutes before classes officially ended, and a good number of the students trickling out of the gate early were taking our leaflets.

Things were going well until a member of staff came out to tell us to move on, despite us being on public property. We remained where we were, as we had the right, however they returned ten minutes later threatening to contact their 'police liaison officer'.

After a few minutes of a calm back and forth with the staff member about where we had the right to set up, we ultimately agreed to move to the other side of the dual carriageway, opposite the controlled crossing. The majority of students would be heading that way to go into Harlow town centre anyway.

This stall was set up at the beginning of the last week of the academic year, so the college didn't have the full number of students it usually had, various courses finished early. However, we managed to attract a decent number of students to our stall. We even managed to sell a few copies of the Socialist too. One student bought the Socialist for the £2 solidarity price and gave us a £3 donation.

During the two hours of leafletting and campaigning over a span of two weeks, we managed to meet 11 students who have expressed an interest in helping to set up a Socialist Students group. This level of success, considering the poor weather, us being moved, and the low amount of students at college this time, gives us great confidence and optimism going forward!

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



Unison fair visa campaign: we need a nationalised care sector



PHOTO: ODUN

ODUN
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Hundreds of workers in social care under the aegis of Unison, predominantly migrants, gathered in Westminster on 10 June to protest against the Labour government's new immigration rules.

The new rules, amongst others, seek to introduce an increase in the length of time to settlement (ILR) from 5 years to 10 or 15 years, including a plan to apply this retrospectively. Other demands of the protest were for the introduction of a sector-wide mode of visa sponsorship as opposed to the current scheme that ties workers to their employers by placing certificates of sponsorship in the hands of employers, including private employers who have continued to use this as a weapon of exploitation.

Workers at the demo shared experiences of how rogue employers have continued to use the certificate of sponsorship (COS) as a whip to exploit workers through low pay, bullying and working in very precarious conditions. A delegation held a vigil at the Home Office and displayed names and photos of care workers who have lost their lives as a result of

these rogue private profiteer employers putting them in harm's way.

In order to end this exploitation, we need to include the demand to renationalise social care and health services under the democratic control of workers and service users.

The demo ended with a rally where workers aired their anger on the unfairness of the immigration policies and the scapegoating of migrant workers.

Angela Rayner was one of the speakers, ostensibly jumping on the bandwagon to echo the demands of the protest. But what was her position in May last year as Deputy Prime Minister when Starmer introduced the immigration white paper after his infamous 'island of strangers' speech?

Opposite the road at Downing Street where the protest was taking place, there was a very small number of counterprotesters holding up flags and chanting "Starmer Out". The big question is: Who and which party would replace Starmer? This raises the need for a party that stands for workers. Come to the NSSN conference in London on 27 June to discuss this with other trade unionists, socialists and workers (see page 5).

Stop Oxfordshire Council cuts and charges hikes to adult social care

ROSIE DOUGLAS-BROWN
OXFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

Oxfordshire County Council, Lib Dem-run, has proposed changes to charges for recipients of adult social care services. They especially effect those receiving support at home, those using the council telecare service, and those who may be paying a contribution to their care. This includes a reduction in the Disability Related Expenditure, working out the amount someone should pay towards their care, with consideration of the extra costs incurred by age or disability.

The other proposed change is a £10 charge for transport arranged by Adult Social Care. Young people using local authority transport to attend an educational setting will be exempt, but when used for other purposes, such as attending a day service, the charge will apply.

Finally, the council plans to charge everybody who uses telecare services the full cost of £9.87 per week, subject to change.

These proposals affect benefit claimants, who are expected to have their benefits cover transport costs. The consultation for these proposals is open until 21 June.

The council states this is in line with national guidance, and that

most councils charge for transport, with no requirement to deliver free transport or telecare. This is the issue!

Austerity policies force the books to be balanced on the backs of the poor; we oppose this. We need an end to cuts and austerity, and make an appeal to the council trade unions to back our call. Let's organise service users and workers to demand no increased charges, no service cuts and an expansion of services, fully funded and staffed with trade union-agreed pay, terms and conditions.

We support the policies of the main local government trade unions for councils to set no-cuts budgets. Council budgets should be designed to meet local needs!

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Fighting Caerphilly Council in the High Court to save our libraries!

MARIAM KAMISH
SECRETARY CAERPHILLY TRADES COUNCIL

Caerphilly Council, forced onto the defensive in the High Court in Cardiff on 11 June, showed contempt for our small Valleys communities, fighting to hold onto libraries you can walk to.

"If you choose to live 12 miles down a farm track", their barrister told the court, "that's your choice!" Such is the council's scorn for the working-class people who live not down farm tracks, but in densely populated streets around what used to be collieries.

Labour runs Caerphilly Council, but Plaid Cymru councillors have put in bids for Community Asset Transfers (CATs) of our libraries and their councillors have told people not to bother fighting.

Where Plaid leads councils in Carmarthenshire and Gwynedd, they've offloaded libraries and other public buildings for years. In court on Thursday, our case was that the council would be failing in their legal Public Sector Equality and Socio-Economic duties if they concentrated libraries in town centres.

Bus fares are expensive. Young children can't travel on their own, older and disabled people may not be able to. The council claimed that, unless there was a very serious breach, it would be wrong for the court to intervene. Lots of councils have closed libraries.



Protesting outside the court

But where campaigns have fought back, local authorities have lost in court. In Northamptonshire in 2018, the High Court stopped the closure of 21 libraries. The same happened in Gloucestershire and Somerset in 2011. In the Wirral in 2009, the council withdrew plans to close 11 libraries.

Still, we'll need more than a court win to secure our libraries long term. Last month, TUC Cymru passed our motion from Caerphilly Trades Council demanding Welsh government provide ring-fenced funding for libraries and leisure centres – so that councils can't close or offload them – and calling on any council

that claims to be against austerity to pass legal no-cuts budgets.

We should use that policy to put pressure on the new Plaid Senedd. Our libraries aren't safe in the council's hands. Next spring, we could stand our own no-cuts candidates in council elections.

The Judicial Review has been a chess move to prevent immediate closures. Our wonderful solicitor took our case because of the strength of our campaign. Even the council barrister referred in court to how strong our campaign is.

As we've always said, if you fight, you can win!

Ebola epidemic exposes global health inequality

JON DALE

The latest outbreak of Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) threatens poor miners, their families and health workers. Its consequences could spread far beyond DRC borders.

There have been 40 outbreaks since the virus was first identified 50 years ago, 17 of them in DRC. The most devastating started in West Africa. Between 2014 and 2016, 28,600 people were infected in ten countries and 11,325 died.

Yet DRC, Africa and the rest of the world remain woefully unprepared to prevent and treat Ebola. Instead, conditions are ripe for this outbreak to spread, causing more deaths and suffering.

The virus did not suddenly appear in 1976. It had long lived in bats, deep in the jungle where few people were exposed. For each 1% increase in deforestation in central Africa, malaria and Ebola cases rose by 20%-40% as mosquitoes, bats and humans came closer together.

A record 1.5 million acres of Congo basin rainforest were destroyed in 2024. Mineral mining is the major cause, to meet rising global demand for electronic components in tech products. DRC has an estimated \$25 trillion of minerals underground, with China leading the race to corner the market and the US trying to catch up.

This outbreak emerged in Mongbwalu, a gold-mining town, which doubled in population in twenty

years. Many unregulated mines are sunk in the surrounding forest. Sanitation and health facilities are desperately undeveloped.

Ongoing war is aggravating the situation, with its roots stretching back to colonial exploitation. Rival elites are challenging for control of trade and smuggling routes, as the precious minerals move from mines into the global market. Fighting escalated in early 2025. A quarter of a million people in the region have been forced from their homes, fleeing across borders into neighbouring countries. Some health workers have been killed by local militias.

Controlling Ebola outbreaks needs rapid identification of those infected, contact tracing and isolation with proper medical and nursing support. Despite fifty years' experience, none of this was ready for a new outbreak. Preparations made in the past have been cut.

Stocks of gloves, masks and hospital gowns to protect health workers should have been held for just such an emergency. Health centres with electricity, clean water, sanitation and laboratory facilities should have been built and maintained. The nearest laboratory able to identify the virus is 1,000 miles away in Kinshasa.

"Weakened disease surveillance systems following severe health funding cuts in eastern DRC are contributing to the rapid escalation of the latest Ebola outbreak," the International Rescue Committee said. "Years of underinvestment and recent funding cuts have left many

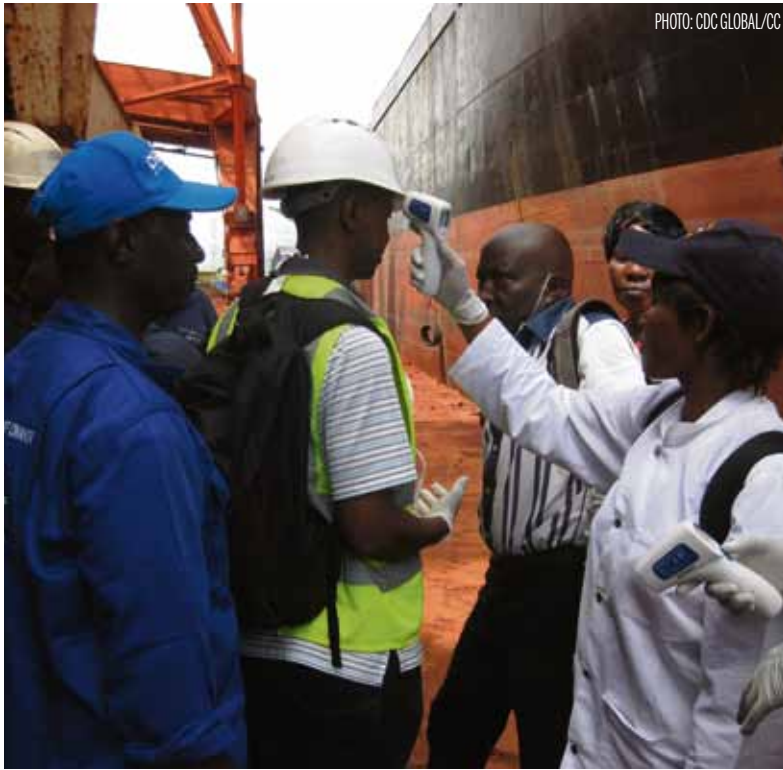


PHOTO: CDC GLOBAL CC

health facilities without adequate protective equipment, surveillance capacity, or front-line support needed to respond quickly and safely."

When Trump became US president in January 2025, he appointed Elon Musk to the 'Department of Government Efficiency'. Wielding his chainsaw, Musk shut down US-AID while Trump stopped paying

into the World Health Organisation, a combined US aid cut of 57%.

Ebola-preparation funding in DRC ended in March 2025.

US government funds were also cut from health programmes tackling malaria, tuberculosis, maternal and child health, nutrition, global health security, HIV/AIDS and more.

The US is not alone. Keir Starmer's Labour cut overseas aid from 0.5% to 0.3% of GDP. Germany, France, Japan and other wealthy economies also made big cuts amounting to 23%

in real terms of the world's 2025 aid budget.

While much overseas aid is aimed at boosting big business in donor countries with profitable contracts, the current Ebola outbreak could have been prevented with investment in local facilities and staff, under democratic control of local communities.

The money is instead going into increased 'defence' spending as the US attempts to maintain its position as the global military superpower, while its economic dominance is threatened by China. Other major economies, including the UK, are also boosting their military spending, seeking to defend their own big business interests in an increasingly fractured world.

Viruses can't be contained by national borders and they can't be destroyed with missiles and drones. Defending people across the planet from disease, hunger and climate breakdown can't be done by profit-hungry capitalism and governments that serve it.

Socialist governments that nationalised arms manufacturers could use the workers' skills and machinery to supply clinics and laboratories, transport planes instead of fighter jets, air strips in remote areas instead of landmines. Democratically planning the world's resources to meet everyone's needs would end the threat of future mass Ebola outbreaks.

Infections would still occur, but publicly owned pharmaceutical industries could research and develop drugs to treat them. Pharmaceutical companies prioritising profits will never invest in treatments for tropical diseases whose victims are too poor to buy them.

Protests express shock at repression in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir



PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

London

"Stop killing Kashmiris", "Freedom for Kashmir", "Revolution will come", and "Action Committee, Action Committee" were some of the chants as around 3,000 people demonstrated on Sunday 14 June in central London against the ongoing repression in Kashmir.

Three coaches came from Bradford, two from Sheffield, five from Luton and many other places around the country, after a week that had seen local protests in many areas with a Kashmiri population. This followed the banning of the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) under terror legislation on 5 June, the organisation which has led mass protests in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir over recent years against the soaring cost of living for basic necessities such as flour and electricity.

Without a central platform at the demo, groups gathered in Parliament Square around various megaphones and PA systems which protesters had brought with them, leading different chants. Seemingly spontaneously, the demonstration marched past Downing Street to Trafalgar Square, with several tourists stopping to ask about what is taking place, given

the almost non-existent coverage of the situation in the mainstream UK media.

Demands that could be seen on placards and banners included the restoration of internet and mobile phone services, release of political prisoners, and withdrawal of the additional military and police forces sent to Kashmir in recent weeks.

Other placards highlighted the cases of particular individuals, such as JAAC executive member, Shahzaib Habibi, in Rawalakot. Here there were clashes with the police as supporters tried to recover his body from the hospital for his funeral, which led to deaths at the hands of state forces, the first of several incidents since.

A convoy demonstration was due to start on 9 June marching to Muzaffarabad. Reports from Kashmir suggest this is over 10,000 strong, but the regime has declared it will not be allowed past Rawalakot, with the potential for the thousands of additional police and armed forces deployed in Kashmir to drown the demonstration in blood.

The protests are beginning to shine a spotlight on what is taking place, as well as opening up the beginnings of a discussion as to how the movement's demands can be met.

IAIN DALTON

Bradford

On 9 June, more than 100 people gathered outside the Pakistani consulate in Bradford to protest against repression in Kashmir. A meeting was called for that evening to discuss the campaign.

300 or more people packed into a meeting hall, filling the standing room at the back and lining the walls. People had travelled from all across Yorkshire.

Speeches were passionate, as many there spoke about family in Kashmir. The whole room frequently broke out into chanting, including chants of "inqilab" (revolution). There were calls for Kashmiri independence, free from the yoke of the "big three powers" of India, Pakistan and China. There was particular distrust of all major Pakistani parties expressed in light of recent repression, and support expressed for the Joint Awami Action Committee, now designated a terrorist organisation by the Pakistan-backed regional government.

The Socialist Party was welcomed, and I was asked to speak. Points about democratic working class control of resources and the need for international socialist struggle were warmly received.

ALI MANSFIELD

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the Socialist

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YOUTH FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST FUTURE

AGAINST RACIST DIVISION

MIHAELA IVANOVA

LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY YOUTH ORGANISER

We are the first generation to be worse off than the one before. 1 in 4 young people are unemployed in London, we are expected to live with our parents until we're 30, we get saddled with massive student debts and our schools have been crippled by underfunding.

Meanwhile, capitalist politicians continue to defend a rotten capitalist system that prioritises profits for billionaires while fuelling wars, a climate crisis and poverty for the rest of us. While our planet burns, we can barely afford to make ends meet.

Young people are fed up of being treated like second-class citizens, getting paid less for our work just because of our age, while facing the same cost-of-living crisis as everyone else! Both the Tories and Labour are responsible, which is why they were absolutely smashed in the local May elections.

Nigel Farage might call himself and Reform UK 'anti-establishment' but he's no different to the big business bosses he rubs shoulders with. We won't let any parties of the rich divide us with their racist lies while they rob us blind! And the huge gains made by the Green Party shows that young people are looking for an alternative to the misery sowed by the establishment parties. That's why members in the Socialist Party and Socialist Students are organising to fight for jobs, homes and services, to unite people of all backgrounds and win the services we need.

We live in a system – capitalism – that creates profits for a tiny handful at the top, hoarding wealth rather than improving the lives of ordinary people. But there is an alternative! The resources exist in society to provide a decent life for us all, not just a tiny minority. If we took the banks, public services and big businesses – like water, energy and transport – into democratic public ownership, we could provide a decent life for all of us. This would ensure that everyone has a decent, well-paid job, free public transport, education and an affordable home to go back to. Steps like this, towards a socialist society, would make it possible to end all war, oppression and division, where the needs of ordinary workers and young people come first.

Young and working-class people have the power to change society. It's time to get organised and build a new political force that fights for us. We need a new mass workers' party that fights for a future for young people – and that means fighting for the socialist transformation of society.

Do you agree?

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

