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YOUTH FIGHT FOR A FUTURE

Not their wars and climate disaster

- For real jobs and decent pay. Ban zero-hours. £15 an hour for all, rising with the cost of living
- End sky-high rents. We need rent controls and council homes
- Fully fund our services. Make the super-rich pay!

Build the international youth walkouts on 20 November Fight for socialist change

The devastating effects of climate change, with wildfires burning; the brutality of war and Trump escalating tensions and conflict, villages and mosques burned by violent settlers in the Palestinian West Bank; and the inability to meet the rising cost of living while the super-rich get richer - all are issues facing young people and the working class internationally.

One in six young people in Britain are unemployed. About two-thirds of 23-year-olds still live with parents, unable to afford rents. More than half of unemployed graduates have not yet found full-time employment a year after finishing uni.

Following all the rules, working hard, taking on huge debt to go to uni - and yet the rigged system still doesn't offer a way out. Similar pressures facing young people have driven the mass 'cockroach' protests in India, forcing the education minister to resign (see page 10). This is the latest of so-called 'Gen Z' protests internationally.

Trade unions

It is essential for workers and young people to get organised and fight to defend ourselves and our futures. The Socialist Party is fighting for the trade unions in Britain - which organise over 6 million workers - to lead in the fight against the cost-of-living crisis, and for there to be no let-up on demanding what is needed from the new prime minister Andy Burnham (see pages 3 and 16).

We are also helping to organise youth walkouts in the autumn - part of the international walkouts on 20 November under the banner 'Youth fight for our future, not their wars'.

If the system can't afford to fund our schools and NHS, if it can't afford to keep our pay rising at least in line with rising prices, and it leaves a million young people out of work, education and training - then we can't afford the system!

As things stand, the vast majority of the world's wealth and resources are owned by a tiny minority who ruthlessly compete for profits. It is a system which drives war, environmental destruction and poverty.

We need socialist change to take wealth and resources out of capitalist hands, to be brought into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management. Without bailing out the parasitic big capitalist bosses - compensation only where there is proven need. That way, a socialist economic plan can be developed to meet the needs of all while protecting the environment - and international working-class collaboration can replace war and conflict.

BURNHAM'S FIRST WEEK: COST-OF-LIVING GOVERNMENT OR MORE OF SAME? ▸▸▸ p2-3

ECONOMY: GARY STEVENSON'S DOCUMENTARY ▸▸▸ p6 & WORLD CAPITALIST PERIL ▸▸▸ p8-9

INDIA 'COCKROACH' YOUTH MOVEMENT ▸▸▸ p10-11

Fight for rent control and council homes

TESSA WARRINGTON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Barely a week in office and new Labour Prime Minister Andy Burnham has already backtracked on support for rent control – a policy that in one fell swoop could lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty. Housing Secretary Angela Rayner announced the government would not be capping rents, despite Burnham's previous support for the policy. He signed an open letter in 2023, as Mayor of Greater Manchester, calling for a freeze on private sector rents, and again this February stated that rent controls "should be on the table" as part of a strategy to combat soaring rents and the cost-of-living crisis.

"England's private renters face some of the worst affordability pressures in the developed world" – so begins a recent report on rent control published by the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose. Almost a quarter of UK private renters spend over 40% of their income on rent, rising to almost 50% on average in London. For the bottom fifth of earners, rent accounts for nearly two thirds of household income. The report states that "rents are typically considered unaffordable when they exceed 30%"! UK renters are paying a higher rate of rent than any other country in the OECD group of advanced capitalist countries.

The Renters' Rights Act, introduced in May this year, does little to address the crisis of affordability. Rents have increased 14% in just the last two years and the Office for Budget Responsibility projects rent rises absorbing all average wage growth until 2030 and beyond. If rents were capped at 20% less today, not only could housing support payments be raised to cover the cheapest 30% of local rents but the government would also save roughly £2 billion a year in spending on housing-related benefits. This would save the average renting household around £2,400 annually, increasing disposable income for the poorest households by 22%.

So why is Burnham's government ignoring such a win-win policy? Because the losers would be the super-rich landlords. Rayner indicated this when she said that the Renters' Rights Act was "already having a significant impact on the market". They may as well come out and say that they are too scared to upset private landlords! These fat cats currently cream off £13.4 billion a year from the government in housing benefit; the highest level of housing subsidisation in the OECD. For a typical landlord paying a mortgage, 20% off rents would still mean pre-tax profits of 70% to 64% - 4.5 times more than the same margin for UK businesses! And for landlords without a mortgage it'd be even higher!



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

Burnham's so-called 'policy blitz' is currently amounting to the meanest of scraps for workers compared to the huge profits being amassed by the super-rich. If the chokehold landlords have over the rental market is so strong then we need to break it. A mass programme of council house building and the taking into public ownership of the swathes of rental accommodation owned by exploitative mega-landlords is what is necessary. Burnham's first weeks of premiership, making clear that he wants to cut public spending to pay for increased military spending, show he is unprepared to stand and fight for what's needed to address the dire financial situation facing the working class, despite his left-wing rhetoric. We need a party that will; one built on struggle, rooted in the organised trade union movement and democratically controlled from below by working people. Real class fighters don't capitulate to the bullying control of the markets. They get organised and fight back!

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Burnham energy cut not enough
Nationalise and bring down our bills


PHOTO: STANISLAV/CC

RICHARD STALLARD
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Andy Burnham's first major announcement as prime minister was to cut VAT on household electricity. He has spun it as a lifeline for struggling families. We are told this measure will save the average household roughly £45 a year. But for working-class people staring down the barrel of another brutal winter, this saving is just a drop in the ocean. After years of price hikes that have seen energy bills skyrocket, knocking less than a pound a week off our direct debits is frankly insulting. It barely scratches the surface of the Ofgem price cap increases we've already endured, let alone the further rises predicted this autumn and winter. Burnham's tax cut does nothing to address the root cause of the crisis: the profit-driven energy industry. Private energy bosses and shareholders continue to rake in billions in unearned dividends. As long as basic utilities are treated as cash cows by the wealthy, our bills will keep going up and the vital investment we need will be wanting.

If Burnham's government actually wanted to slash bills and protect workers, it would take the energy companies, both the producers and suppliers, into democratic public ownership. By nationalising the energy sector, we could immediately strip out the profit motive and lower tariffs to reflect the true cost of supply. Furthermore, socialist public ownership is the only mechanism that can guarantee a massive, co-ordinated investment in green renewables, ensuring a just transition without forcing the working class to foot the bill.

Burnham bus cap not enough
We need high-quality free public transport

AARON SMITH
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Two days into Andy Burnham's new government, he announced the restoration of the £2 bus fare cap starting in January 2027. As Mayor of Greater Manchester he introduced the same in 2022 in the run-up to the launch of his newly franchised Bee Network, then later expanded England-wide by Tory Boris Johnson. Under Keir Starmer, this was increased to £3, claiming a lack of funding for the policy. Burnham was one of several Mayors who maintained £2 bus fares under Starmer's government.

This comes 40 years after Thatcher's bus deregulation which was forced on everywhere outside of London and later forced the privatisation of London buses. Burnham has quite rightly described this, as well as the privatisation of utilities and loss of council housing to Right to Buy, as "a series of wrong turns". Cities, towns and villages nationwide have seen routes slashed, and safety standards and working conditions forced into a race to the bottom. Ruthless competition prioritised profitable routes while rural and suburban areas were left abandoned and isolated with little public say. Lower ridership was then used as an excuse to further cut routes. Loss of funding in the 2010s saw whole areas abandoned and people unable to rely on buses. Rural areas especially have been hit hard, forcing people into expensive car dependency or left isolated.



PHOTO: ED WEBSTER/CC

Despite increasing public funding under Labour (currently £1 billion a year), buses remain heavily cut back compared to pre-2010 levels. For many, a £2 bus fare cap will have limited everyday use without a significant expansion in services. Instead of subsidising private bus companies which make massive profits, we need our buses to be renationalised, planned and run for the needs of all. Restore the thousands of routes lost over the past 40 years and deliver a high-quality, free public transport system.

Burnham's first week: A cost-of-living government or more of the same?

Socialist Party

WHAT WE THINK

Andy Burnham has now been prime minister for a week. The 'King of the North' has unfortunately quickly shown himself to be a master of making the most of very little. His 'big' announcements at the start of his 'cost-of-living government' included scrapping VAT on household electricity bills, capping bus fares, and cutting business rates for pubs, clubs and other music venues.

Even the smallest measures to lessen the cost-of-living squeeze will be welcomed by workers, but these are very small indeed. Burnham says that he wants to reverse the economic policies of the last 40 years, but so far - when it comes to measures that would really help with the cost of living - his government has spent the week explaining why they can't be done! Both rent controls and an increase in the level at which workers have to start paying tax have been ruled out.

The serious capitalist press is so far giving him a vote of confidence. Financial Times commentator Robert Shrimsley, for example, said, "It is refreshing to see a leader who can articulate a cogent political argument" and a "clear theory of politics and a project" and that it's good to see "the return of the political professional".

The Financial Times and other mouthpieces of the capitalist class wouldn't have written that about Jeremy Corbyn or any politician who really promised to stand up for the working class and young people! Burnham is going out of his way to make it clear that he does not pose a threat to their system, and he would not step outside its confines. His announcement of welfare reforms and making it harder for young people to claim benefits will be welcomed by capitalists.

Yet during his by-election campaign in Makerfield, Burnham said that his stand was the "last chance" for Labour. Just a week in, we know what Labour Party he has been talking about - the one that defends the interests of big business and the capitalists' 'national interest'. The makeup of his cabinet is another indicator of that.


Is Andy Burnham going to cut welfare to pay for warfare? PHOTO: UK PRIME MINISTER/CC

If Burnham was serious about challenging neoliberalism, or being "close to people, close to the public", as he said in his first big broadcast interview, he would come into conflict with his current allies.

The honeymoon, if there is one, won't last

Any prime minister replacing the deeply unpopular Keir Starmer would be expected to receive an initial bounce in support. And there is hope that Burnham will be better than Starmer, who set the bar very low. He also had a very slight breathing space because the inflation rate is at a 15-month low of 2.6%. Of course, in reality, real inflation is much higher and the announcement offers no comfort to millions of workers facing the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. For working-class households, the real cost of essentials continues to rise, and the VAT cut on energy bills will be undercut by increasing energy prices.

Any optimism about the economic outlook will be short lived. In his first week, instability in the Middle East has pushed oil prices above $100 per barrel and back down again, while Donald Trump's latest round of tariffs threatens additional inflationary pressures and increased disruption to global trade.

British capitalism is particularly vulnerable. Faced with economic stagnation, employers will seek to protect their profits by attacking workers' pay, conditions, and rights.

For the bosses or the working class?

Pleasing both the bosses and the working class are mutually exclusive and Burnham already knows this.

When elected as Manchester mayor in 2017, he made ending rough sleeping a central priority. Despite his promises, homelessness was not eradicated by 2020, and rough sleeping remains a major problem across Greater Manchester. He now wants to bring 'Manchesterism' to the rest of the UK and plans to end rough sleeping nationwide.

But he has already ruled out rent control and Angela Rayner, housing minister, defends this position, stating: "I don't think that rent freezes, rent controls, is a way forward at the moment."

This highlights the limitations of Burnham's approach. How is he planning to deal with the acute housing crisis? There are over 1.3 million households currently on council house waiting lists and 176,000 children living in temporary accommodation. Labour has repeatedly and consistently failed to kick start the housing sector. Fewer homes have been built since it came power two years ago than under the Tories.

Burnham's says he is to build the most council homes since the post-war period. Reaching these aims means coming into direct conflict with the UK housebuilding companies, who are already putting on pressure to remove safety regulations so that they can increase their profits at the expense of safe housing.

> **Only by workers coming together and fighting for what we need, can victories be won**

Trade unions must organise action

The capitalists hope to use Andy Burnham's premiership. They want Burnham to carry through their agenda of austerity attacks. Yet the majority of trade union leaders are trying to raise hopes in Burnham in order to hold back national workers' action.

However, the state of the British economy and the fiscal constraints the government faces make this task impossible. Despite their best efforts, the trade union leaders are not finding it easy.

Anger at the cost-of-living crisis, while simultaneously bosses rake in record profits, is simmering away. Thames Water has increased its bonus payouts to £4.1 million for senior managers in the year to March, despite a ban on bonuses because of pollution failures.

The anger against the conditions facing workers is beginning to find an expression. The government pay offers in the public sector have been rejected by PCS, local government and education unions.

Workers rightly demand more. Britain has experienced the longest period of wage stagnation since the Napoleonic Wars. After adjusting for inflation, average earnings have remained largely frozen since 2008. This 'Great Stagnation' has left many workers thousands of pounds worse off compared to pre-2008 trends.

Socialist Party members have been central to the fight in the leaderships of the trade unions, not to allow Burnham to be used as an excuse to step back from strike ballots. Ballots of local government workers in Unison and Unite are currently taking place, and are planned in the autumn for NEU members in schools and UCU members in further education. In the civil service union PCS, the new left majority on the National Executive Committee has won agreement for a national cost-of-living campaign.

The PCS union is taking a motion to the Trades Union Congress in September, to "call and to organise a national Saturday demonstration this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies". For "the new Prime Minister and his government to reopen talks on public sector pay for 2026-27 on the basis of protecting workers from the cost-of-living crisis, and undoing more than a decade of pay austerity." And "for all public sector unions to join a united campaign on pay, and, if need be, to plan for coordinated industrial action."

The NSSN lobby of the TUC in Brighton on 13 September, which the Socialist Party is helping to build for, will lobby delegates to support those steps - and to make them a reality.

Faced with this massive pressure, his government can be forced to back down. But that will not be achieved by trying to sweet talk Andy Burnham. Only by workers coming together and fighting for what we need, can victories be won.

Join the fightback

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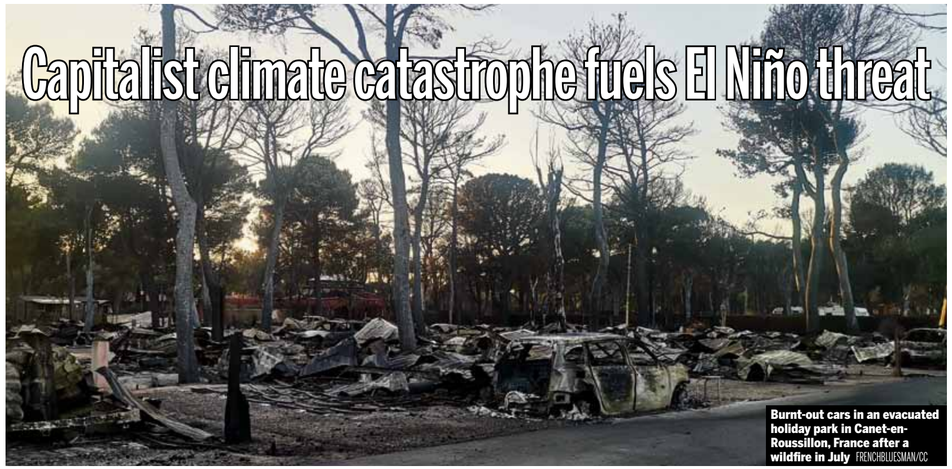
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

Capitalist climate catastrophe fuels El Niño threat



Burnt-out cars in an evacuated holiday park in Canet-en-Roussillon, France after a wildfire in July FRENCHBLUESMAN/CC

As the Socialist goes to press, huge wildfires have meant that 220,000 people have been evacuated in France, and tens of thousands more in Spain. Britain is about to enter its fourth heatwave of the year; extreme heat earlier in the year meant over 1,000 people died who would not have otherwise. As **Joe Fathallah**, Cardiff East Socialist Party, explains below, capitalist climate catastrophe is upon us, and we need socialist change to fight it.

El Niño Southern Oscillation, a recurring climate phenomenon caused by changes in the surface temperature of the Pacific Ocean in the tropics, has begun.

These conditions can last for months, potentially disturbing weather patterns across the globe. For example, the El Niño of 2023 hit production of maize by up to 70% in parts of eastern and southern Africa. El Niño periods can cause heatwaves, hurricanes, and both drought and heavy rain in different areas. The scientific consensus is that the increasing severity of El Niño events is being driven by worsening climate change. Within the last 50 years, there have been three 'super' El Niños, in 1982, 1997, and 2015, that have caused deaths and damage from freak weather events, and broken temperature records.

Disruption to agriculture caused by the El Niño is set to drive global inflation in food prices, compounding the effects of Trump's war on Iran, and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz – which has already pushed up the price of fertiliser. Analysis by the European Central Bank in 2023 indicated that a severe El Niño could result in 9% food inflation over a period of 16 months. For small economies in Africa, the effects of this could be catastrophic.

In Britain too, already-stretched family budgets will be pushed to breaking point. In response to severe food inflation, we need emergency price caps on food and essential household goods, as well as immediate mitigation measures – such as flood defences – against the worst effects of climate change.

We need socialist change

However, to break the cycle of climate degradation and food shortages, a socialist plan of production is desperately needed. Huge investment into renewable energy, alongside research and development into technologies for electricity storage and transfer, could eliminate the need for fossil fuels.

For example, concentrated solar power – using mirrors or lenses to focus a large amount of sunlight on a small area – could supply the entire world's electricity requirements with just 2% coverage of the Sahara Desert. However, such a project would be almost impossible on the basis of capitalism, such are the geopolitical complications and the economic power of the fossil fuel industry.

Socialist planning could also allow for the production and distribution of food based on need rather than profits for big agribusiness. This will require taking the huge monopolies in the major economies into public ownership, run under a system of democratic workers' control. This way, it would be possible to achieve food security worldwide, alongside managing and minimising the worst effects of climate change.

A workers' transition

In the debates about 'net zero', the Socialist Party argues that it is essential that there is a transition away from fossil fuels, but that must be on the basis of a plan that saves jobs, livelihoods, skills and the life of communities.

That means we need nationalisation of the energy industry, under democratic workers' control and management, and with no compensation to the energy bosses whose already exorbitant profits have gone even further through the roof. They have enriched themselves while bills have soared and the planet burns, meaning working-class and poor people pay several times over. Compensation should only be on the basis of proven need.

That would ensure a transition that protects the lives and livelihoods both of people today and of future generations.

Water privatisation disaster

DEZZY TAYLOR
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Swindon is a town that is suffering at the hands of privatisation. Like everywhere in the UK, the encroachment of profit into public services has impacted their quality and our quality of life suffers.

It has become something of a bad joke in Swindon that Thames Water is only good for hiking prices and providing a sluggish response to burst pipes. Previously, burst pipes were a big deal due to how rarely they happened. Now barely a year goes by without a large-scale burst affecting Swindon. This year's occurred on Nythe Road, leaving a large portion of the town without running water and bottled water needed to be distributed.

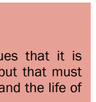
And its not just in Swindon - Bermondsey in London recently suffered a severe flood affecting requiring evacuation. The number of burst pipes and the delays and subsequent issues can be directly linked to the record profits reported by these water companies. Every penny of profit made by these leeches is money that could go to valuable maintenance work (paying for both labour and materials). It would also help to stop the waste of water lost from burst pipes.

Testing themselves

Operator self-monitoring, in which water companies essentially marked their own homework, has landed an ex-CEO of Southern Water in court because they allegedly falsified records of how safe water was. Evidently, running any service properly and safely is not profitable. The fact that this extends to water is a damning indictment of the system and presents numerous potential crises on its own.

We need to take the water industry out of the hands of the profit-hungry bosses, to be placed under the democratic control of workers, with no compensation paid to the private equity leeches. That way we can plan to invest in improving our water system, using the wealth and resources of wider society held in democratic public ownership, to bring down our bills, prevent wastage and stop environmental destruction.

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Fight for our futures not their wars

We need free education, not militarisation

MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

35 universities have become founding members of a new initiative launched alongside the Ministry of Defence, the 'Defence Universities Alliance', which aims to use the resources of universities around the country to 'strengthen research and innovation and build the highly skilled workforce needed to support the UK's future defence capability. After almost 100 universities applied, Manchester and Liverpool were among those chosen to be founders.

This is happening in the midst of the worst funding crisis the higher education sector has ever seen, with nearly half of UK universities presently running at a deficit – whilst young people more broadly are struggling with crises of unemployment and the rising cost of living.

On his way out of office, Keir Starmer announced an annual 'defence' spend increase to £80 billion by 2029. Andy Burnham, Starmer's successor, has since then indicated support for increased military spending at the expense of welfare spending. This is alongside similar, and in some cases more extreme, moves in other countries. Our universities have made clear that they seek to be a part of the capitalist class's drive towards militarisation.

Wanting to help build a fightback against a system in crisis, that offers no future to young people, Socialist Students recently joined a Europe-wide youth assembly in Cologne with other anti-war youth and student organisations. The outcome of this meeting was an agreed international youth strike on Friday 20 November. Over twenty groups from eight different countries have agreed to support and build for the strike so far. This includes German youth organisations who recently helped lead a strike of 55,000.

We are pleased that Liverpool Guild's [equivalent to a Student Union] officers have come out and opposed the university's actions, and we hope they will join us in November. Liverpool Socialist Students believes that the resources of the Guild should be used to build among the widest possible layer of students at our university, while making contacts with officers in other student unions to seek support from other universities, particularly those directly complicit in the drive toward militarisation.

Held us build towards the strike on 20 November under the banner: "Fight for our futures, not their wars."

Join the student fightback!
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Socialist Students organised school and college walkouts against Trump's visit in 2025 SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Gary Stevenson's inequality documentary: capitalism indicted, but is a wealth tax enough?



Gary Stevenson with Francis Fulford, whose family was given the land he now owns by King Richard in 1191 CHANNEL 4

OSCAR PARRY
HACKNEY AND ISLINGTON SOCIALIST PARTY

"If we do not do anything about this system, then very quickly the billionaires will own everything, and you will own nothing." Gary Stevenson has built a large online following with his calls for a wealth tax, and his new documentary on Channel 4 continues his campaign.

As an indictment of British capitalism, it is excellent. Gary's statistics are damning: The richest 56 people now own as much as 27 million of us. In 2025 alone, average billionaire wealth grew by £231 million, while real wages remain below the level of almost 20 years ago.

Gary interviews his old headteacher, who now runs a group of 55 academy schools. 43% of pupils qualify for free school meals, and his schools run food hubs because families "can't survive week by week". An NHS doctor lists what over a decade of cuts has taken from us: 600 police stations, 800 libraries, 750 youth centres, 1,400 SureStart centres, 8,000 bus routes, 25,000 hospital beds. Nathaniel, who crewed ambulances for eleven years, lives in a van in Bristol because his flat became unaffordable. While filming, the council served him notice to vacate within a week.

A tax on wealth?

Gary's solution is a 2% annual tax on wealth over £10 million, raising an estimated £24 billion a year. The Socialist Party fully supports the idea of taxing the rich, which is popular among many, and no doubt will be discussed as part of the process of developing a new party of the working class. But £24 billion is roughly one week of government spending. The government spends £100 billion a year just on paying interest on its debt. Set against collapsing services and a housing emergency, taxing the super-rich 2% while leaving them owning "your house, your supermarket, the farms that grow your food, the power plants", will not resolve what is driving down living standards into the dirt – the crisis of capitalism. The Socialist Party would go further and argue that we need to nationalise the big companies and financial institutions that dominate the economy, and place them under democratic working-class control and management – for a socialist programme to end capitalism itself.

£231 million
the average billionaire became this much wealthier just in 2025

The rich won't give up easily

The film itself shows the rich will not politely pay up. Feudal relic Francis Fulford, sitting on £40 million and 29 generations of inherited privilege, declares: "We fight to win." Businessman Bassim Haidar, with over £100 million in UK property, threatens: "I'll walk away... and I'll never come back." Faced with capital flight and sabotage, the answer is not a modest levy but taking the banks, land and major monopolies into democratic public ownership, with capital controls to stop the rich taking their money to tax havens abroad, so society's wealth can be used to plan production and distribution of goods and services to meet the needs of all.

Gary rightly points to the post-war decades, when the top income tax rate passed 90% and working-class households could get homes, pensions and job security. But he never asks why capital allowed those concessions. Those gains were forced from below by a mighty workers' movement, and by bosses terrified of revolution. What was conceded under pressure has been clawed back ever since. That is the fate of reforms which leave capitalism in charge.

Will the politicians listen?

And Gary's strategy? "We tax the rich. How do we tax the rich? We convince politicians." Appeals to the Treasury, which declined to take part, and hopes that Labour will shift left. But new prime minister Andy Burnham has pledged to stick to the 'fiscal rules': more cuts. Gary is right that "the politicians won't do it for you; you need to demand it". The force that can is the organised working class. The 2022-23 strike wave wrenched billions in improved pay from employers who had pleaded poverty. That collective power in the workplaces needs its own political voice: a new mass workers' party with socialist policies. That is what the Socialist Party is fighting for, not a fraction of the wealth, but a society run in the interests of the vast majority, not for the profits of the billionaires.

- *Britain's Inequality Problem... And How To Solve It: How To Get Filthy Rich, available to watch on YouTube and Channel 4*

The struggle for NHS overtime pay

Northern Care Alliance strikers call for national campaign

NORTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Unison members in theatre departments at the Northern Care Alliance Foundation Trust (NCA) in Greater Manchester continued their strike action over overtime pay on 23 and 24 July.

NHS pay has been degraded year on year, with no pay rises followed by below-inflation pay rises, and now another cost-of-living crisis.

This elevated previous grumblings among workers about the imposition of a new 'NHS Professionals (NHSP)' system for workers to access overtime to an all-out dispute.

In June, NCA critical care staff accepted an employer offer that was a partial victory. It restored access to the previous overtime arrangements, except for the lowest-paid workers.

Perhaps that potentially divisive offer gave an indication of the employers' response to the similar grievance from theatre staff. Directly before their July action, the Trust withdrew a tabled offer, and then from all negotiations to resolve the dispute.

Striking members told us that at first they were surprised at their employer refusing to talk. But that surprise was quickly replaced with anger and a resolute demand to fight for their workplace rights.

Strikers told us: "We aren't asking for anything silly or special." They are quite right! These workers, a majority of whom worked frontline through Covid, putting themselves and their families at risk, are simply demanding their employer pays them the overtime rates already nationally agreed through Agenda for Change (AfC).

Currently the NCA and many other NHS trusts are forcing staff to undertake overtime through NHSP, a private company wholly owned by the Department of Health, on reduced overtime rates, meaning staff are offered less than their substantive pay to undertake overtime.

And some of these overtime shifts are not an option. When theatre lists run over, in order to get the patients' surgery completed, the staff stay over their planned shift time. The employer simply expects it, maybe because NHS staff are 'angels'. Well, angels don't have to face the mortal reality of a food shop cost that's more than doubled, crazy rents and mortgage payment levels, fuel costs through the roof!

While there is mounting pressure on NHS workers' ability to meet the cost of living, NHSP posted profits of £11.4 million last year.

Whilst we were at the picket an inpatient came out of their ward to support the strike and signed the petition. Members of the public gave their support and donated to the strike fund.

Public social media posts on the strike have said that the 'King of the North' claimed he "didn't like NHS outsourcing and this can't sit with a government looking to extend and protect workers' rights".

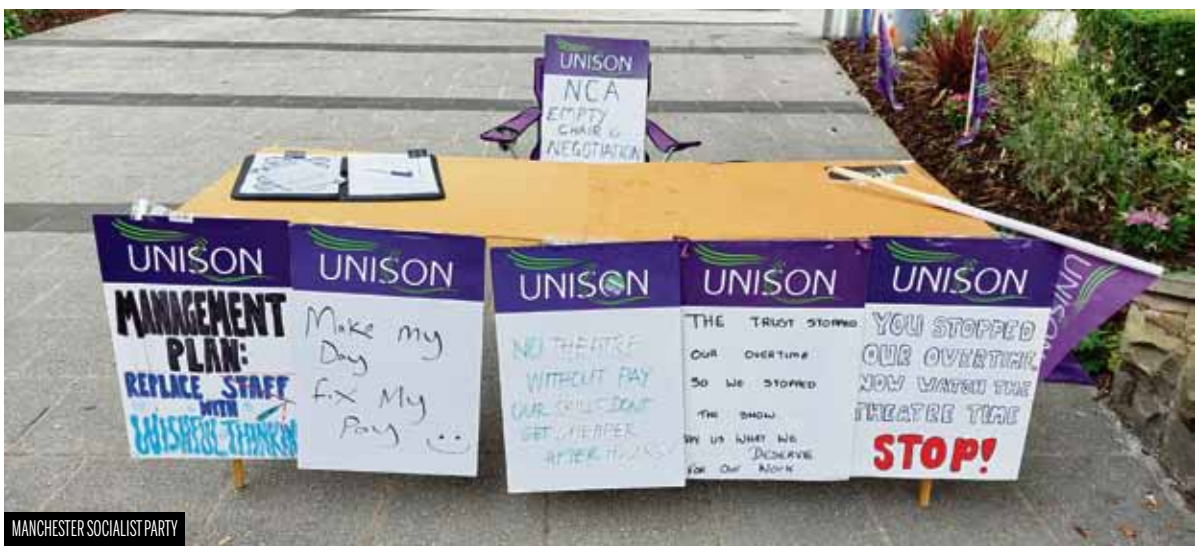
Burnham

Too true. What will Burnham's promise of a "change of direction" and being "unashamedly Labour" mean for hardworking NHS workers who are simply demanding that they are paid under agreed terms and conditions?

Pickets told us that a theatre strike meeting unanimously agreed that the strike committee will demand that the Unison Health Service Group Executive convenes a meeting of all branches in or moving towards dispute. This is a national issue, not limited to NCA or to theatres.

Any resolution has to include the reintroduction of AfC overtime, wholly paid for from fully funded central health budgets.

Dates for future strike action will be announced; solidarity messages to unisonnca@nca.nhs.uk



MANCHESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Leeds still fighting on pay bands after two years

Coordinate the pay banding disputes

IAIN DALTON

After a dispute beginning two years ago, with on-and-off strike action since December 2025, theatre assistants at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) have taken another fortnight of strike action.

Managers at the hospital are "passing the buck between themselves", was how one striking Unison member described the current impasse.

Several rounds of negotiation have taken place, but with no progress towards resolution of the basic issue that workers are doing Band 3 work but only being paid Band 2.

Around 40,000 hospital workers around the country have been re-banded to reflect the skilled work they undertake, including workers at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust, which is overseen by the current Leeds boss Brendan Brown.

The new health secretary is local MP, Yvette Cooper – strikers should take their demands to her. What does Andy Burnham's promise to "be better" mean for NHS workers?

Many health workers at NHS trusts around the country have had to fight on pay banding as bosses try to get away with increasing workload and responsibility without paying for it. Many disputes and some victories have been reported in the Socialist. The Unison Health Service Group should coordinate the multiple disputes about pay banding around the country.

NEU fights massive academisation in the north west



North west NEU members on strike and on the march in the strike wave in 2023 MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

REES MELVILLE
LIVERPOOL NEU MEMBER

A major dispute is taking place in the north west of England over education.

Over the next four years, the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool is attempting to transition over 210 schools (42 in Liverpool) into one of three Catholic multi-academy trusts (CMATs), without consulting staff members or trade union representatives, in breach of long-standing agreements with Liverpool City Council.

Church authorities failed to consult anyone before publicising their plans in the local 'Echo' newspaper, only to then invite union members the day after for a one-off consultation.

Backlash from educators and parents has been immediate. National Education Union (NEU) members have already delivered an overwhelming strike mandate, walking out before the summer holidays. There was a 100% 'yes' vote at St Bede's in Ormskirk and Corpus Christi in Preston, and a 96% vote at Cardinal Allen in Fleetwood.

Headteachers represented by the NAHT (National Association of Headteachers) have also rejected the plans, with many threatening resignations.

In response, the Catholic Archdiocese has resorted to undemocratic measures, threatening to replace any school governor who votes against the plan with a compliant appointment.

Socialist Party members in the NEU have fought consistently for official NEU policy to not only oppose academisation, but to also establish a clear route back to local authority control.

Privatisation

Academisation is privatisation of public education, allowing MATs to dictate and diminish the curriculum, 'top-slice' vital school budgets to fund central bureaucracies, harm staff terms and conditions, and further syphon vital money in six-figure salaries into the pockets of trust executives - while schools issue redundancies to staff due to the £600 million unfunded pay rise of 2025.

Education must remain publicly owned and accountable to the democratic control of educators and working-class communities to stave off further cuts and syphoning off of vital resources.

I am a member of the Liverpool Trades Council and we are organising a public meeting in the autumn term to bring together education unions such as the NEU, NASUWT, NAHT and Unison, as well as local communities and parents, to help spread awareness and discuss an effective strategy to fight back against these developments.

This is Andy Burnham's backyard. He says he wants to "change education". He could start by ending the blight of privatisation. To win that, cross-union coordinated action is vital for the working class to protect our vital services and working conditions.

Battles against university cuts continue while bosses offer pay cut

National fight on cuts and pay needed





Socialist Party members bringing support to UCU battles at London Met (top) and Southbank (bottom) SOCIALIST PARTY

The enormous funding crisis in higher education is also in new Labour prime minister Andy Burnham's inbox.

Even as universities were winding down in July, struggles against devastating cuts were continuing.

- University and College Union (UCU) members at London South Bank University were on strike against fire and rehire, which would involve moving some staff into a sham company to remove them from the standard pension scheme and put them outside the national pay framework
- A strike ballot began at the University of Exeter against cuts which put 500 research and teaching jobs at risk, with 200 compulsory redundancies
- A ballot started on 1 July at the University of Sussex over plans to cut 200 jobs - despite more than 500 staff having already left Sussex over the past two years
- UCU members at the University of Lincoln are preparing to ballot over threats that put more 140 jobs at risk
- London Met UCU members continued their fight against huge cuts – their battle has led to some success, but there are still 47 compulsory redundancies
- Action continues at Goldsmiths in London and Nottingham University
- In Scotland, workers at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh have been on strike, and UCU members are preparing to strike in Dundee in September
- 20 other universities are in dispute, undertaking action short of strike, or preparing to ballot

Time to press ahead

Instead of simply praising Andy Burnham's supposedly "excellent team", as UCU general secretary Jo Grady has done, the union should be using this moment to press ahead with preparing for the national strike ballot against job cuts that was agreed at the union's conference in May.

The right-wing-dominated Higher Education Committee decided not to go ahead – but dozens of branches around the country are passing motions challenging this decision and demanding a recalled Higher Education Sector conference.

At the same time, the university employers' body UCEA has made an insulting pay offer of just 2% - a real-terms pay cut even before the effects of the Middle East crisis really kick in.

Consultative ballots of members of the education unions UCU, Unite and Unison are ongoing - preparation for coordinated action is essential!

PCS MOTION TO TUC FOR A DEMO AGAINST AUSTERITY AND COORDINATED ACTION

The National Executive Committee of the PCS civil service union, with its new left majority, has agreed the following motion to go to the Congress of the TUC (Trades Union Congress) in September. This is a motion which trade unionists across the public sector and wider can rally around, to campaign for the trade union movement to pile the pressure onto Andy Burnham's Labour government.

Congress notes the appointment of a new Labour prime minister, Andy Burnham. This change in leader means nothing unless there is a change in direction that meets the needs of workers and working-class communities, still caught in the cost-of-living crisis.

Congress calls on Burnham's Labour government to launch sustained public investment, to jump-start economic growth. The UK is 80%-plus a service sector economy, which relies to a large extent on consumer demand to deliver growth. Congress endorses the research commissioned by the Public and Commercial Services Union which confirms that increasing public sector pay, especially for lower-paid workers, acts as an engine of growth and more than pays for itself through:

- Higher income tax receipts and NI contributions
- Increased consumption raising tax receipts
- Spillover into the private sector, boosting sales and potentially wages
- Reduced reliance on Universal Credit to subsidise poverty wages or help with housing costs

Congress applauds the rejection by PCS, by NEU, and by local government unions, of the attempts to restrain public sector pay rises to around 3.5%.

Congress calls on the new prime minister to reopen talks on public sector pay for 2026-27 to protect workers from the cost-of-living crisis.

Congress agrees to urgently call a national Saturday demonstration this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies.

Congress urges all public sector unions to join a united campaign on pay, and, if needed, to plan for coordinated industrial action to secure real gains for workers.



PAUL MATTSSON

Campaign for the unions to pile on the pressure

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on 27 June agreed a list of demands to put on Andy Burnham's government - steps that would really address the cost of living. The NSSN will take these demands to a lobby of the TUC in Brighton on Sunday 13 September. It will demand the TUC calls a national union-led demonstration against Labour austerity - a policy agreed at last year's Congress, and called for in the PCS motion to the TUC.

NSSN action programme

- Above-inflation pay rises for workers – automatic rises in pay as inflation increases. In the public sector, for these to be fully funded by central government
- Scrap all age exemptions on pay, including the national minimum wage. 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
- Stop the profiteering: nationalise the energy and water companies
- Freeze rents and energy and utility bills
- Demand that councils refuse to implement cuts, and instead pass no-cuts needs budgets
- Oppose disability benefit cuts and attacks on pensions and campaign for a fully resourced, supportive social security system to meet the needs of working-class people
- Demand that the TUC enact Congress 2025 policy by calling an Autumn national demo against Labour austerity. If not, for a trade union 'coalition of the willing' to step in to organise such a demonstration
- Support the NSSN lobby of the TUC Congress in Brighton from 1pm on Sunday 13th September, in the Holiday Inn Hotel
- Strike together: co-ordinate the fight on national public sector pay – unite workers across the public and private sectors
- Repeal all the Tory anti-union laws – immediate scrapping of the undemocratic 50% strike ballot threshold
- Restore the right to strike to the POA
- Workers' unity to face down Reform and the far-right: for the unions to implement 2018 TUC Congress policy 'to launch a campaign of Jobs and homes not racism'
- Launch the discussion for a Workers' Charter, and how we can fight for it, against the attack on our living standards

Union branches, union reps and shop stewards committees, trades councils and individual union reps, members and activists can sign up to the NSSN Action Programme here

NSSN lobby of the TUC Congress in Brighton from 1pm on Sunday 13 September, in the Holiday Inn Hotel
www.shopstewards.net

WORLD CAPITALIST ECONOMY IN PERIL

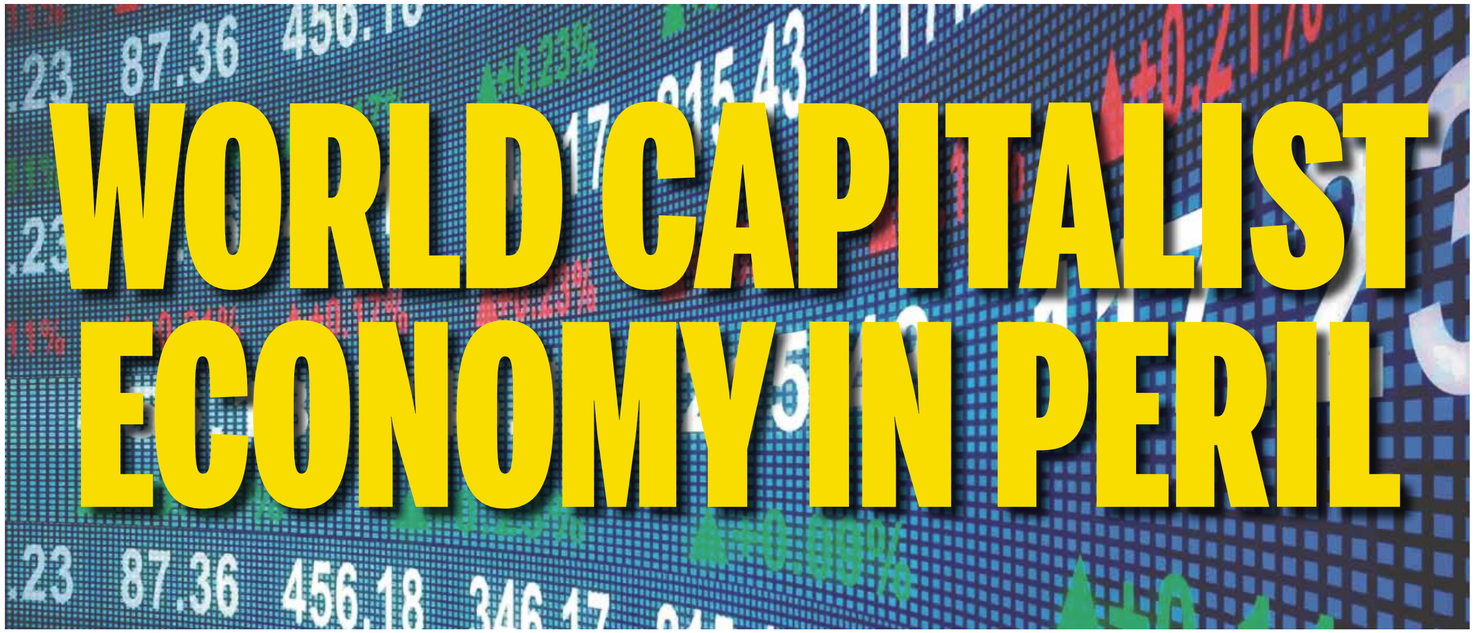


PHOTO: KAPTAN RAVI THAKKAR/CC

PHILIP STOTT
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

In late 2025, we published an article on the Socialist Party Scotland website titled Fractured World Economy Heading for a Crash? In it, we pointed to the various crisis factors that could trigger a new global capitalist recession. The AI bubble, the increased role of private credit markets, debt-saddled nation states, overvalued stock markets, and Trump's destabilising tariffs were all featured.

How do things stand today, eight months later? Has capitalism stabilised the ship, or are these aforementioned factors getting worse? If anything, there is an even more precarious situation for the global economy. Since that article was written, Trump launched, with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, their ill-fated war on Iran in February 2026. That conflict is, five months later, still going on and has certainly weakened the US and the world economy further.

The impact of the war is yet to be fully felt, but the IMF has downgraded its 2026 growth predictions twice this year already. Rising costs of oil and gas are also driving up inflation, expected to be at least 4.7% in 2026. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which facilitated about one-fifth of global trade in oil and liquefied natural gas before the war, is having a major effect on fuel prices and food production costs.

As one commentator, John Plender, wrote in the Financial Times on 18 July: "The Trump administration increasingly resembles Plato's ship of fools. The patience of the bond markets will ultimately wear thin. My guess is that the crunch will come within the next twelve months."

Stagflation and debt

Higher inflation and lower growth - a form of stagflation - predominates in the advanced capitalist nations generally. Plender's comment about the bond markets is apposite. Stagflation, accompanied by rising levels of nation-state debt, leaves even the strongest capitalist nation vulnerable to bond markets moving against them.

For example, Trump was forced to retreat on much of his 'liberation day' tariff campaign, in large part due to the fear of rapid increases in the cost of financing US debt. Yet tariffs on goods entering the US are at their highest levels since 1938, another destabilising factor.

When the markets began to move against US Treasuries, officials panicked and, in Trump's words, "became a little queasy", forcing a retreat.

In an economy with one of the highest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world, a market sell-off of US debt alone has the potential to spark turmoil in the financial and stock markets.

Capitalism has increasingly turned to debt to maintain its crisis-ridden system. Indeed, debt levels in the advanced capitalist economies are back to where they were at the end of World War Two, even though there has been no world war.

However, there has been the Great Recession of 2007–09, a pandemic, and the inflationary shocks that followed, alongside economic stagnation and increasing geopolitical conflict, including international and regional wars.

In order to try and stave off social and political revolt, the capitalist classes in the US, Europe, etc, have increasingly resorted to using the state to bail out and 'save the system', alongside brutal attacks on the working class through austerity, the slashing of public services, and wages that do not keep pace with inflation. For example, US public debt was 60% of GDP prior to the Great Recession and now stands at a record-breaking 120%.

Unlike post-1945 - when US capitalism acted as a giant stimulator that produced the largest economic upswing in world history between 1950 and 1973 - there is no prospect of it being able to repeat that feat today.

Without organic economic growth, we have seen the accumulation of massive state indebtedness. The public debt of emerging economies is also at an all-time high. Higher interest rates, a tool used by governments to tackle the post-Covid inflationary spiral, mean government debt is more expensive to pay back.

Private debt is also increasing dramatically. Data from the Institute of International Finance shows private gross indebtedness is close to where it was on the eve of the global financial crisis in 2007.

Moreover, the US Federal Reserve estimates that large private hedge funds' holdings of US Treasuries - at $2.5 trillion - doubled between 2023 and 2025.

"The Bank for International Settlements [BIS], the central bankers' bank, has warned that the hedge funds might have to dial back their stakes in government bond markets even quicker than they arrived - a possibility it describes as one of the most troubling financial stability risks in the world today." (Financial Times, 20 July)

Irrational exuberance of AI

In 1996, the then Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan characterised the boom in technology, media, and telecom stocks as showing signs of "irrational exuberance". Within four years, the bubble had burst. It's clear that the huge investment in AI is distorting the economy massively and, more importantly, is highly irrational based on the likely return that can be accrued from that investment.

The AI bubble has grown yet further over the last year. Spending on data centres and AI infrastructure has soared. It's estimated that around 1.1% of current US GDP is accounted for by this investment. 40% of the S&P 500's market capitalisation is down to AI-linked stocks. Increasingly, capitalist commentators are drawing parallels with other bubbles that went bust in the past.

As Martin Wolf commented in the Financial Times recently: "Over-investment, destructive competition, waves of bankruptcies and then painful consolidation are standard features of such episodes, from the railway booms of the 19th century to the internet boom of the 1990s. This is the classic capitalist story of booms and busts."

He goes on: "The valuation of US stocks is even higher today than in September 1929. In only one other period since 1881 has there been a higher valuation of the US market than today's. That was in 1999-2000, immediately before the bursting of the 'dotcom' bubble."

The fears of those analysts for capitalism are based on the scale of investments by the multibillion-dollar AI hyperscalers and those specialising in AI infrastructure - the likes of Amazon, SpaceX, Nvidia, Alphabet/Google, and Microsoft. Until recently, the huge investments - $400 billion in 2025 alone, the four biggest hyperscalers Google, Meta, Microsoft and Amazon combined on track to spend more than $725 billion in 2026 - have come mainly from the profits of these companies, increasingly they are relying on debt and the private credit markets to raise finance for investment.

The share of private credit to AI-related companies has increased from less than 1% of total outstanding loan volumes to almost 8%. It's estimated that outstanding private credit to AI firms could reach around $300-600 billion by 2030.

The BIS has warned of the circular nature of AI investment. That is where tech companies and chipmakers finance AI model developers, who then use that capital to buy computing hardware and cloud services from those same tech companies.

For example, say Nvidia agrees to invest in OpenAI to help fund data centre construction, and OpenAI, in turn, commits to filling those centres with millions of Nvidia chips. Both benefit, and it looks good on the books and for potential stock valuations. However, it inflates the actual revenue and value of the companies, as, in effect, it's the same money counted twice, masking the fundamentals of some of those companies.

Goldman Sachs, the mega investment bank, reckons that AI is just "one big trade on the US economy". If stock markets fall in value, this will have a huge impact on company valuations and profits as well.

Catastrophic impact

A former chief economist of the IMF, Gita Gopinath, has calculated that a fall in stock markets equivalent to that of the dotcom bubble in 2000 would remove $20 trillion in American household wealth and another $15 trillion from wealth internationally - several times more severe than that of 2000. Household equity held in stock market investments in the US has more than doubled since 2010.

Such a crisis would have a global impact. Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia are major exporters of tech-related hardware. When the AI bubble bursts, it will have a devastating effect in the US and internationally.

Marxists cannot predict the exact timing of a new crisis or the exact proximate cause, but we can point out the growing accumulation of crisis factors that will eventually lead to such a crash.

While China has emerged strengthened overall from the catastrophic shambles of Trump 2.0, not least the failure of the war on Iran, the CCP is by no means immune from the growing problems in the world economy.

Weak domestic demand has been compensated for by a massive global trade surplus for Chinese exports. However, a new economic crisis will cut the market for Chinese goods internationally, increasing the problems facing a CCP regime reliant on the world market.

Unlike the 2007-09 Great Recession, when capitalist governments coordinated massive bailouts of large parts of the global financial system, today the possibility of such cooperation has been undermined by the increasing national conflicts that have erupted between, for example, the US and Europe.

While governments will seek to firefight the next crisis, it is likely their response will be less effective as a result of the deepening divisions among capitalist powers, which will worsen the complications of the crisis.

Capitalism is a casino. Blind bets are laid by billion-dollar companies, and if they go bust, their CEOs will demand that national capitalist governments bail them out. Meanwhile, workers and families pay the price in the loss of jobs, homes, incomes, and everything that goes along with it.

Socialist planning offers a viable alternative to profit-driven chaos. Public ownership and democratic workers' control and management of the world's resources will increasingly be seen as the only way out of the nightmare of capitalist rule.

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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INDIA'S 'COCKROACH' YOUTH MOVEMENT TAKES ON MODI



PHOTO: SUMITA ROY DUTTA/CC

MILA HUGHES

A joke about cockroaches has grown into a wave of challenge to Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in its twelth year in power. What began in May as an online jab aimed at India's Chief Justice has, within weeks, pulled hundreds of thousands of young people onto the streets in several main cities; forced the resignation of a government minister; and put the sharp question of jobs, corruption and democratic rights back at the centre of Indian politics.

The spark came from Chief Justice Surya Kant who, from the bench, dismissed some unemployed young people and social media critics as "cockroaches" and "parasites". Within a day, a young political strategist studying in Boston, Abhijeet Dipke, had turned the insult into a movement: the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). That slogan speaks for itself as the voice of the 'lazy and unemployed,' with millions following online. By early June, the joke had become a physical occupation of Delhi's Jantar Mantar protest ground, joined by established left student unions, AISF, AISA and SFI among them. Growing online anger fused with a leaked paper in the NEET medical school entrance exam that forced two million students to sit the test again.

There was also Ladakhi engineer and campaigner, Sonam Wangchuk, who raised the temperature further with a 26-day hunger strike, ending only after he was dragged off the protest stage by plain-clothes police and hospitalised. When more than ten thousand marched on Parliament on 20 July, they were met with the brute force of the state with tear gas, baton charges and mobile internet shutdowns. Human Rights Watch documented scores of injuries, with one protester left in a critical condition.

Education minister forced out

The movement spread to main cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and beyond. In the media, they are already calling it the most serious challenge to Modi's authority since the 2020-21 farmers' protests and the 2019-20 movement against the Citizenship Amendment Act. In a defeat for Modi, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was forced to resign which shows the potential of a force on the streets and was a victory won not handed down from above.

None of this came from nowhere. Behind the exam scandal lies a much deeper crisis facing India's young people under BJP rule. The Azim Premji University's 'State of Working' India report finds roughly four in every ten young graduates unable to find work, with only a small fraction landing permanent, paid jobs within a year of finishing education.

Since 2004, there have been 110 incidents of major exam paper leaks affecting 22.5 million candidates, the overwhelming majority of them since the BJP took office in 2014. The rising cost of living, while fortunes are made by a handful of Modi-linked billionaires, and entrenched caste networks deciding who gets ahead, is the reality of most Indian youth. This is met with a government that answers protests with jailings, communal scapegoating and internet blackouts, hence the 'cockroach' joke landed on ground already primed to erupt.

Modi's government talks endlessly of a 'Viksit Bharat', a developed India built by its youth. For millions staring down a rigged exam or a locked job market, that promise reads like a sick joke.

Members of New Socialist Alternative, the CWI's sister party in India, have been out at Jantar Mantar and in solidarity actions elsewhere, raising the banner of socialism inside a movement still searching for a way forward. Alongside the existing left student unions, we have argued against pinning the movement's hopes on a single hunger strike or a backroom deal with a minister, and for democratically elected action committees, controlled by protesters themselves, capable of drawing striking workers, trade unionists and the wider working class into the fight.

Anger at rigged exams is real and justified, but it will not be settled by reshuffling a cabinet. We have argued for linking the exam struggle to the fight for guaranteed jobs, decent pay and a publicly funded plan of work, and against the movement being funnelled into yet another capitalist party. Talk has already begun of the CJP's leaders forming one that would leave untouched the profit system producing this crisis in the first place.

What India is living through is part of a wider wave. In 2022 it was Sri Lanka's Aragalaya, in 2024 Bangladesh, in 2025 Nepal's Gen Z movement, which toppled a government within days. Each has shown that a regime which looks unshakeable can be forced onto the back foot by young people and workers acting together. India's rulers have just discovered the same thing.

The task now is to turn this glimpse of what youth and working-class action can achieve into something lasting: independent organisation, a socialist programme, and a mass party fighting not just for one minister's resignation, but for a society run in the interests of the many who build it, not the few who own it. That is the case we will continue to make alongside the young people and workers building this movement from struggle.

Solidarity with the movement

London

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Trafalgar Square on 26 July in solidarity with the Cockroach movement, in a demonstration organised by the Students' Federation of India (SFI). The crowd, formed mostly of international students, held placards calling for the resignation of major BJP politicians, including Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, alongside placards expressing solidarity with struggles faced by people across India, including ending violence in Kashmir and fighting the rise of Islamophobia. Many posters directly mocked statements made by prominent Indian political figures, echoing the sarcastic and defiant spirit with which the cockroach symbol was adopted.

Speakers in attendance took turns to voice their resentment against the oppressive regime and its effects on young people's economic futures and unemployment in particular, leading the crowd to chant "inqilab zindabad" (long live the revolution), a slogan which dates all the way back to the Indian fight for freedom from British rule over 100 years ago. Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg addressed the crowd with a message of solidarity.

Several Socialist Party members from across London attended, showing our solidarity with the struggle. We had many discussions with impassioned protesters and our message of running the education system and the broader economy in the interest of the working class resonated with a crowd, who felt disenfranchised by a state that has openly disregarded the needs of the people. By adopting the cockroach label, these young people have taken what was meant to be a dehumanising insult from the ruling class and turned it into a symbol of resistance.

HAMZA KHAN



London PHOTO: ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

Leeds

Around 40-50 people, mostly students from India, gathered outside Leeds University in a protest linked to the mass youth movement taking place in India.

In part, the protest had a tone of celebration, after the education minister Dharmendra Pradhan had just been forced out of office under pressure of the movement. But there was also conviction that this was only the first victory, and the fundamental issues had not been resolved. Protesters spoke about their own experiences in the education system, and about broader issues including state authoritarianism and the cost-of-living crisis.

ALI MANSFIELD



Leeds PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

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

Socialist Students solidarity message

Socialist Students sends its full solidarity to the student and youth protests organised by the Cockroach Janta Party, which have erupted in India in reaction to the exam paper leaks, against a backdrop of rising youth unemployment and the bleak future facing young people. This movement has been met by brutal repression by the Indian state, but that's not stopping the movement.

The sense that our generation doesn't have a decent future is not only provoking youth rage in India but all over the world. In Britain we also face rising youth unemployment, a broken underfunded education system, and racist division being stoked from our own Labour government. And the Labour government is now planning fresh attacks on benefits and education provision for disabled students, as part of a wider round of attacks on the working class - all while boosting military spending.

All over the world, capitalist crisis means that our future in the hands of the super-rich will be bleak. But young people are fighting back. Internationally, over the past few years youth movements have erupted in various countries, including a wave of uprisings across South Asia. On Friday 20 November, young people across Europe will be walking out and protesting under the slogan, "Fight for our futures, not their wars!". We say fighting for our futures means fighting for socialist change. If you want to get involved and build a walkout at your school, college or university, visit socialiststudents.org.uk or scan the QR code.

Build for international youth walkouts on 20 November

Join the student fightback: join...

socialist students

- Visit **socialiststudents.org.uk/join**
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and school, college or uni to **07958 032 071**

General strikes in Portugal see off assault on workplace conditions and union rights

CASPAR LOETTGERS
SOL (CWI GERMANY)

In 2025, the Economist magazine named Portugal the 'Economy of the Year.' According to the magazine, high growth rates and a lucrative stock market promise good investment opportunities for those with the necessary capital. But this is not enough for the Portuguese capitalists. In order to remain an attractive production base, particularly for German and French companies, capital demanded further structural 'reforms' from the government. Following two general strikes, Portugal's working class has, for the time being, fended off these plans.

'Trabalho XXI' was the name of the labour market package presented in July 2025 by the minority government, consisting of the conservative CDS-PP and the conservative-liberal PSD. According to these plans, protection against dismissal was to be weakened, collective agreements made easier to terminate, the right to strike undermined by 'essential services,' outsourcing simplified, and the weekly working hours unilaterally extended by companies to up to 50 hours through individual hour banks. These reforms were intended to follow on from years of neoliberal policies which, since the euro crisis, have eroded social standards and were designed to make Portugal more attractive to investors.

Portugal stands still

The government's proposals were rightly met with outrage among the general public. In Portugal, 1.8 million people are already living on less than 632 euros a month. Poverty is particularly acute in the overseas territories due to their long history of oppression. In the Azores, almost one in three people lives in poverty. Consequently, the call by the two largest trade union confederations, the CGTP and the UGT, for a one-day general strike in December 2025, was well received.

On 11 December, Portugal came to a standstill. In a country of 10.8 million inhabitants, around three million workers took part in the strike - as many as during the revolutionary period in April 1974, when the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship was overthrown.

From the outset, the government tried to play down the level of participation in the strike. The Minister for the Presidency, António Leitão Amaro, stated: "This appears to be more of a partial strike by the public sector. The country is functioning. The level of participation is negligible."

The reality, however, was clearly quite different. At the country's largest factory, the VW Autoeuropa plant, the production lines were at a standstill that morning; in most hospitals, only emergency services were available; and at Lisbon Airport, half of all flights were cancelled (100% of TAP Airlines flights and 80% of EasyJet flights). Demonstrations took place in all major cities; in Lisbon, 30,000 people, among others, and in Porto 10,000 people expressed their anger at the government's plans.

In June of this year, the CGTP organised another general strike, which received widespread support despite the UGT leadership's refusal to call for a strike.

There were also numerous sectoral strikes spread across the last few months.

When the legislative package was finally tabled for its first reading in the Assembleia da República on 19 June, only the parties of the minority government and the Liberal Initiative (IL) voted in favour. The Left Bloc, comprising various left-wing parties, voted against it.

The far-right Chega party negotiated with the government right up to the end, but then, surprisingly, also voted against it. However, it did not do so because it was opposed in principle to reforms in the interests of capital, as the negotiations showed. As recently as 2019, Chega went into the election calling for the trade unions to be dissolved and the labour market to be fully liberalised. Yet even Chega relies on a voter base that would be affected by labour market 'reforms' and which largely rejected them. As in Germany, there are also sections of the working class in Portugal who, out of anger at the existing conditions and disappointment with left-wing parties, give credence to the right-wing's piedpipers' slogans. The pressure from the strike movement was so great that the Chega leadership ultimately felt compelled to side with the left-wing parties against it.

From a defensive struggle to the offensive

Ultimately, under capitalism there will always be a tendency to roll back hard-won reforms in the interests of the working class. In Portugal, too, Labour Minister Ramalho announced shortly after the lost vote in parliament that she would "take up the matter again". This makes it all the more important now to build on this success and prepare further strikes to secure improvements. In doing so, we must also discuss how to build consistent political representation for the working class – in the form of a mass socialist workers' party.



CGPT union PHOTO: PEUPLIER/CC

Socialists at Pride and Trans Pride

Spirit of fightback at huge London Trans Pride

ASH RITCHIE
NORTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

150,000 people marched, according to London Trans+ Pride organisers. The huge number is not surprising, given the Supreme Court ruling being used to attack trans people and others.

The size shows the anger and urgency felt. When one group's rights are attacked, working-class people do show up in solidarity.

The atmosphere was anger, resistance, and determination. Trans Pride typically remains more radical and political than other Pride events, which have increasingly become corporate funded.

Many conversations Socialist Party members had with other attendees reflected this. Pride's origin as a protest is being diluted by corporate interests.

Chants echoed down the streets, with calls and responses.

"When trans rights are under attack, what do we do?"
"Stand up, fight back!"

"What do we want?"
"Trans rights"
"When do we want them?"
"Now"

As well as "No Pride in Genocide", showing the link between different movements.

Next steps include building organisations with democratic structures, to ensure safeguarding, training, and stewarding, so everyone is safe on these demonstrations. This should be the role of the trade unions.

Consultation on the anti-trans guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) ends on 6 August. Afterwards, employers will start to decide and implement policies. The trade unions have an important role fighting against bosses' attempts at division, and to fight for the needs of all to be met.

This year reveals a movement that refuses to be pushed back into silence. Now, that energy has to be carried into our workplaces, unions, and communities, building the democratic structures capable of defending trans rights every day of the year.

If Pride began as a riot, then our task today is to turn that spirit into organised, collective resistance. A movement powerful enough to meet the attacks coming.

● Read more - 'Interview: Fighting for Trans rights in 2026' at socialistparty.org.uk



London Trans Pride IAN PATTISON

Nottingham – nothing can stop us

Marching with the Socialist Party banner created lots of opportunity for conversation on why Pride is political. We even got a shout out from the organisers to thank us for our support.

We had three Socialist Party campaign stalls in the 10,000-strong Pride march. We handed out leaflets and chatted with the crowd – solidarity across the working class is vital to a socialist alternative.

Socialist Party member Yousef explained the role of young people in our party to Pride attendees. We invited people to our Socialist Party Pride public meeting on 3 August.

Ash from Northampton Socialist Party will introduce that discussion. Ash attended Trans Pride in London on the same day (see opposite).

When we arrived from the march through Nottingham, Socialist Party members on the campaign stall already there were busy getting names. We achieved a list of 23 people interested in the Socialist Party. 17 people bought our Socialist paper, and we handed out 1,000 leaflets.

Nothing stops the Socialist Party campaigning. Not even far-right vloggers, who turned up to ask: "Why the unions had become politicised?" We didn't hold back explaining the role of unions, how they have always been political, winning workers the rights we all enjoy today.

Days like this remind us why it is so important to stand in unity across the working class, and not allow the bosses to divide us.

SARA SAMUELS
NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY

Hull youth want to fight back

IAIN DALTON
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Like many others, Hull Pride has become increasingly dominated by big business. This year's parade, charging £5 per person for those joining it, had only one trade union contingent – the National Education Union (NEU).

But, despite this, our Socialist Party campaign stall between some of the Pride venues was busy. People came to buy our Socialist papers whilst we were still setting up the stall, and we still had people wanting to sign petitions as we packed down.

18 people bought the Socialist paper, donating another £40 to our fighting fund on top.

Our petition opposing the ongoing attacks on trans rights, but also for the material funding for health and other public services to be able to exercise those rights, was the most popular amongst young people. We also had people asking for more information about the 20 November youth walkout.

Newcastle – government and right couldn't dampen our mood

TYNE AND WEAR SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

8,000 people assembled. The rhythmic beating of drums and chants calling for trans rights flooded the city centre.

Supporters lining the route joined from all walks of life. Passers-by stopped to cheer.

The atmosphere felt optimistic and passionate, despite the countless actions taken by government and the far right to dampen it these past years.

Representing the Socialist Party, we joined the march displaying posters, distributing leaflets, and selling the Socialist paper. Attendees were positive and engaging.

Local and national trade unions attended – CWU, Equity, Unite, and Unison. While their presence was appreciated, the attendance of more unions showing support to LGBTQ+ people would have further demonstrated the strength of unity – particularly within the workforce.

The event was an illustration of the solidarity we need, now more than ever, to fight for our rights.

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Hackney – summer socialist sales in the park

Selling the Socialist
Just some of the events where the Socialist newspaper was sold in the past week...

BRIAN DEBUS
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

Hackney Socialist Party has organised three socialist 'park sales' this summer, sometimes instead of our normal Saturday Socialist Party campaign stall. It has been very successful.

Across three events, 45 young people have bought our Socialist paper. Once, we sold out. Each of these event involved just two Socialist Party members.

The sun is out. It's warm. So large numbers of young workers and students flock to their local park.

Just by approaching individuals or groups, asking 'would you like a copy of the Socialist that shows Burnham is fundamentally no different to Starmer' gets you an in. You will be amazed at how many Socialist papers you can sell, and conversations engaged in.

We've met bus drivers and film workers as well as a local housing activist, who are now interested in finding out more about the Socialist Party.



PHOTO: JAMES IVENS

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Stop Cardiff Llanrumney data centre
Public land and transport sacrificed for profit

NICK COOPER AND REX HENRY
CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

Cardiff's Labour council is trying to replace an essential public transport link to University Hospital Wales, with a massive 23-hectare corporate data centre and related campus.

The council has now quietly wrapped-up public consultation, as it enters the final planning stages. The strain on local infrastructure and the rest of south Wales could be immense.

The council pushes its 'green' credentials and a narrative of 'net-zero digital growth'. But the 30,000 square metre campus will consume water equivalent to 1,800 homes.

It risks thermal pollution to the ecologically sensitive River Rhymney, home to bats, otters, and kingfishers. It's a vital lifeline to acres of woodland that currently protects Cardiff from flooding and pollution, and acts as a carbon-sink.

Names of tech giants missing

Vast tracts of south Wales are being snapped up for massive, power-hungry industrial complexes. But you won't see the names of the world's richest tech giants in the planning applications.

Instead, they hide behind generic corporate shells – deploying front organisations, private infrastructure developers, and non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) to do their dirty work.

By the time the community becomes aware, the contracts are signed, and the NDAs are locked in. The 'shell' infrastructure is then ready to be handed over to an 'anchor' tenant, whose cloud or AI operations run 24/7 behind high security fences and razor wire.

In Cardiff, this corporate game has landed on our doorstep, targeting two key sites. Cardiff East Park and Ride in Llanrumney, and the industrial coastline of Rover Way in Splott.

Data centres are bottomless pits for electricity. The Llanrumney proposal features an on-site substation to feed its immense computing infrastructure.

100,000 homes

These local projects could consume hundreds of megawatts of power – equivalent to adding 100,000 local homes to the grid – threatening to drive up regional energy bills.

Thousands of high-performance servers creates an unimaginable amount of heat. To keep from melting down, they require advanced cooling systems that consume millions of litres of water every day.

This risks depleting local water supplies, just to keep corporate servers cool. Vantage Proxy in Newport consumes over £8 million worth of energy and water a month.

It's a multi-pronged attack on Cardiff's working class. The community will lose access to their communal playing fields and nearby green space.

The development site is the 'park and ride' used for Wales's largest hospital. Many will struggle accessing specialist services, already because of the lack of parking and public transport facilities. Many underpaid NHS workers rely on the 'park and ride', keeping 1,000 cars a day off the road.

This is asset-stripping. Any profits from this corporate land-grab will not benefit the people of Cardiff.

The community has been ignored, public land liquidated, and an essential transport asset is sacrificed to maximise profit. Cardiff Labour is facilitating this, scrapping a previous legal requirement to retain the 'park and ride'.

Concrete tomb

Labour councillors claim there will be hundreds of jobs created. But data centres are massive concrete tombs for computers.

While they require workers during construction, completed they operate almost autonomously. A site of tens of acres might only yield a handful of permanent roles.

The system is broken. A planning committee composed primarily of Labour councillors is willing to trample on working people to enrich the capitalist class.

We need a new mass workers' party, guided by trade unions and grassroots communities affected by these decisions. We need planning decisions back in the hands of the working class, in a sustainably planned, nationalised economy.





One of dozens of protests in London condemning the genocide in Gaza. Thousands of people have met the Socialist Party on these ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

Why I joined the Socialist Party
'I couldn't fence-sit anymore'

AMIRAH ABRAHAMS
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

I was about to turn 30, setting up a new life, taking a mental health break from being a physiotherapist, and considering a career pivot. It was 2024.

I had finally moved back to the UK, after spending two decades in South Africa, where I'm from. On top of all that, the world watched as a genocide unfolded, every day worse than the one before.

I was often a fence-sitter around serious topics, feeling like I didn't know enough to have an opinion. But what happened after 7 October left me passionate enough to stand for something – fighting against the displacement and blatant murder of Palestinians.

Next big demo

Having been to a few protests against the Palestinian genocide when in South Africa, I was feeling guilty about not attending one since I had moved. I decided to go to the next large demo that came up, even if it meant going alone.

As soon as I entered the crowd, I accepted a placard and agreed to give a donation to the Socialist Party. I was completely unaware of us at the time.

That's when I got asked a question I had never been asked before: "Would you consider yourself a socialist?" I panicked, because I had never even given it a thought. "I guess so."

But really I didn't know enough to give a truthful answer. I had never had a political identity.

But, if these were people fighting for exactly the same thing as me, we must have the same values and views of the world. So I filled out a 'find out more about the Socialist Party' card, thinking I would not commit to anything.

But that's not the way it went. The Socialist Party members in west London contacted me.

I couldn't make the Thursday branch meetings. But they were kind and convincing enough that I joined a reading group for new Socialist Party members, and people thinking about joining. It was hosted by an older member.

I may have felt very out of my depth. But the group was filled with young people like me that I could easily relate to.

Tea and biscuits

We chatted about socialism, which I was slowly learning about, and also feminism, health, colonialism, AI, and everything in between, over cups of tea and biscuits.

It took a few months, multiple occasions leafleting with other Socialist Party members, attending Socialism 2025, loads more reading, and continuous welcoming from the west London members, which eventually convinced me to join. I'm so glad I did.

I have tons more to learn, and we may be a long way away from smashing the capitalist system, but I definitely plan on staying for the fight. And I hope so many new, young members join us too.

Do you agree?
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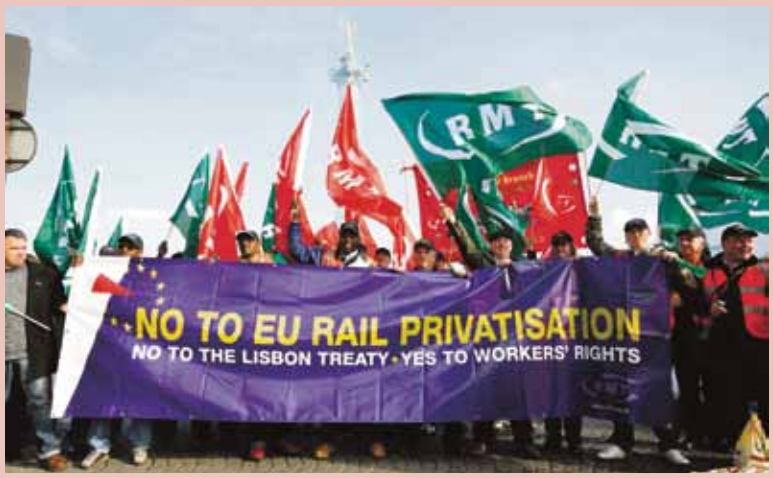
AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026	DEADLINE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2026
South West	2,061	2,100		98%
Wales	888	2,400	37%	
East Midlands	514	2,050	25%	
Southern & SE	347	2,400	14%	
West Midlands	336	2,700	12%	
Northern	88	800	11%	
North West	131	1,200	11%	
Yorkshire	253	2,650	10%	
London	473	5,000	9%	
Eastern	96	1,300	7%	
Other	436	2,400	18%	
TOTAL	5,623	25,000	22%	



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- *Send your news, views and criticism, in not more than 150 words, to editors@socialistparty.org.uk - or if you're not online, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT*
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THE SOCIALIST INBOX



Wiki editor worker solidarity

British workers for the Wikimedia Foundation (WMF), the educational charity which hosts Wikipedia among other internet projects, have formally requested union recognition through the Communication Workers Union (CWU). Since May, the WMF's disbandment of its Community Tech team and termination of MediaWiki developer Brooke Vibber has drawn the ire of editors, who subsequently formed the union Wiki Workers United. Their Wikipedia petition has rallied over 1,200 editors to support the union, "up to and including staging an editorial strike" if necessary.

Wikipedia is the largest reference work in history. It is a non-commercial project sustained by donations which has been met with recent attacks from oligarchs in the tech industry seeking to dominate the Internet. Notoriously, Elon Musk has called for the website's defunding and has formed his own AI-generated encyclopaedia, which has engaged in Holocaust denial and HIV/AIDS denialism, amongst other controversies.

Amidst polarisation and disinformation on social media, Wikipedia serves as a refuge for factual information, free not only at the point of need for all users, but also aiming to be free from corporate meddling.

I have been a volunteer editor since 2020. The work is indeed painstaking and cumulative, meaning editors warrant all the resources needed to keep improving articles and expanding the project for readers. WMF's union-busting tactics defies this need, and must be opposed by all editors.

Antagonising the workers who volunteer their services is biting the hands that feed them, which is why unionisation matters for every workplace. Solidarity against encroaching casualisation and far-right attacks is more important than ever. Unionising Wikipedia workers and uniting them against bureaucracy and layoffs can help keep the free encyclopaedia free for all.

JAMES GRETTON
SOUTHAMPTON



PHOTO: PIERRESELIM/CC

EU's true nature

Helen Pattison's article, Would workers be better off had Britain stayed in the EU? (issue 1374 and online), was excellent. During the Brexit referendum campaign, most trade unions recommended their members to vote Remain, which is ridiculous given the true nature of the EU in relation to workers' rights.

Key to this is the European Court of Justice (ECJ), with an appalling record of attacks on workers' rights, as demonstrated by legal rulings like Viking, where the Viking Line shipping company wanted to register a Finnish ship under an Estonian flag in order to employ a cheaper crew. The International Transport Workers Federation planned strike action in opposition to this move, but the ECJ ruled that the strike action would restrict the employer's right to establishment, and was therefore illegal.

Similarly with the Laval case, the ECJ ruled that a Swedish trade union's blockade against a Latvian subcontractor, paying its workers below the Swedish trade union's negotiated rates, was illegal.

During the UK's period of EU membership, the Alemo-Herron v Parkwood Leisure Ltd was referred to the ECJ by the Supreme Court, and it was ruled that national governments could not interpret previous ECJ rulings more generously than the original ruling, resulting in this case by limiting pay of workers who transfer from one employer to another to the actual pay on transfer, ignoring any annual rises that may be provide for in the Contract of Employment.

In general, the EU-based trade unions have been strongly pro-EU, but the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) got its fingers burned when an agreement made between EPSU and the EU Commission on information and consultation rights for civil servants could not become an EU Directive following an ECJ ruling.

These rulings are not widely known about, but are clear evidence of the true nature of the EU, not a liberal-minded upholder of workers' rights, but a vicious attacker of them, particularly in respect of trade union-organised labour.

ROGER BANNISTER
LIVERPOOL

Getting the socialist message out in east London

CHRIS NEWBY
TOWER HAMLETS SOCIALIST PARTY

Every week the Socialist is full of articles describing the struggles of workers around Britain and internationally, putting forward a socialist alternative, written by workers themselves.

Many of these strikes and campaigns are not reported anywhere else. So it's vital that we try to get the Socialist paper into the hands of as many people as possible.

Political and social developments have a big impact on people wanting to find out more about socialist ideas. We discussed what we could do in Tower Hamlets Socialist Party to increase the reach of the Socialist.

We made sure that as many Socialist Party members had copies of the Socialist with them. Because you never know when you might meet someone who wants to talk about socialism!

This led to more Socialist Party members selling the Socialist, on top of our regular campaign stalls. We regularly hold at least three campaign activities a week, including outside the local 'Royal London' hospital, which employs several thousand people.

As with many parts of Britain, there are many local campaigns and strikes that we take part in and support. In the last week, there were two school strikes and a housing workers' strike – each lasting 2-3 days.

Regularly one or two striking workers will buy a Socialist paper from us on each of these. When we visit these strikes and campaigns, we try to make sure a short report always goes into the Socialist. Then we go back to these workers with that issue of the Socialist.

We have a Socialist Students group at our local university, Queen Mary's, where Socialist Party members play a leading role. The Socialist paper is on every campaign stall, which take place weekly during term time.

During the local election, Socialist Party members stood under the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) banner as council and mayoral candidates. We organised campaign stalls in different parts of the borough to reach as many people as possible.

We campaign on issues that are important to working-class people, including the need for a new mass workers' party. A particularly important issue locally that we are taking up is on the severe housing crisis, particularly affecting young people.

As a result of all of this, Socialist sales are increasing in Tower Hamlets, and we are determined to increase this even further.

THE BATTLE OF CORPORATION FIELDS IN HULL 90 YEARS ON

On 12 July 1936, the organised working class of Hull, 10,000 or more labour and trade unionists, including activists from the Hull and District trades council, dock and railway workers - together with a significant number of Hull's Jewish community - marched onto Corporation Fields to confront Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. They won a resounding victory.

What took place, known as the Battle of Corporation Fields, was one of the precursors to the more well known Battle of Cable Street in London, which took place three months later. The battle in Hull was ferocious. For the Blackshirts, it was a shock that they had not expected. In the words of one fascist:

"The trouble which developed and the size of the opposition that had assembled there before our arrival was absolutely beyond our comprehension. It was obvious before the meeting started that there was going to be serious trouble". (John Charnley)

A pitched battle took place. Despite Mosley's attempts to speak, he was drowned out by the crowd. His cause was not helped by a microphone failure. One theory (unproven) was that two youngsters were encouraged (with a bribe of an ice cream) to cut the electric cables to the microphone speakers.

The fighting was so intense that the police feared that there might be a fatality. Notwithstanding this, the so-called neutral police continued to protect Mosley and attempted to drive the workers away. One police observer reported that:

"The Yorkshire National Inspector in attendance yelled out : 'This can't go on. Get your bloody belts off! We did and using them in self-defence kept our frenzied assailants at bay.' The police recovered many homemade weapons including iron bars, bicycle chains and potatoes with razor blades."



Mural depicting The Battle of Cable Street PHOTO: JIM OSLEY/CC



Socalist Party members fighting the far right in Hull today PHOTO: IAIN DALTON

Eventually, despite the attempts of the police, the anti-fascists proved too powerful. The police advised Mosley to give up and retreat. While he was being driven away over Park Street bridge, his car window was smashed. Most people believe that it was a gunshot, though this has not been corroborated.

Lessons

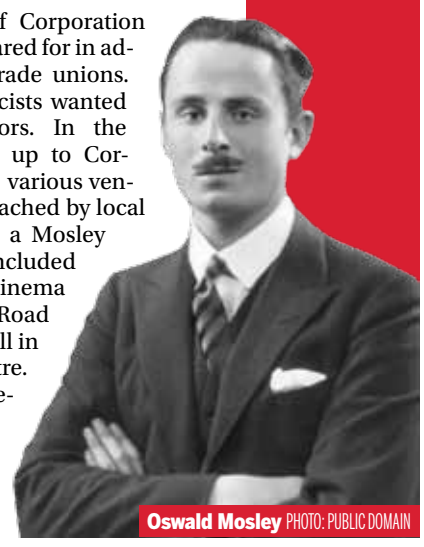
Today we celebrate the magnificent mobilisation of the Hull working class in defence of their communities against the far right, and it is important for today's generation to learn the lessons of those battles. One important lesson is that the demonstration against the Blackshirts did not drop from the sky readymade. The British Union of Fascists was formed by Mosley in 1932. Yet 1936 was the year when they suffered significant defeats. The four years between 1932 and 1936 were spent educating and explaining why fascism was a threat. Alongside patient education, anti-fascist activists did what they could to physically stop the fascists. Often these activists showed extreme bravery in doing so. 1932 was also the beginning of a recovery of trade union membership and activity following the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, this went hand in hand with the building of the anti-fascist movement.

In 1936, mobilising meetings were held in the main workplaces. A central but not exclusive role in this was the activities of the Communist Party branch in Hull. The battle of Corporation Fields was successful because of a combination of clear-minded activist leaders of the trade unions, but also because a huge number of anti-fascists took part in the counter-demonstration.

A further lesson for today's generation is that the police cannot be relied on for protection. At Corporation Fields, the police were not neutrals standing between the fascists and the workers. They did everything they could to allow the fascists to hold a successful rally. The labour and trade union movement cannot rely on the police today. It means we need to ensure that any demonstration we organise is properly stewarded by ourselves. Any demonstration against the far right carries with it a degree of risk but it is important that, as far as possible, demonstrators feel as safe as possible.

The battle of Corporation fields was prepared for in advance by the trade unions. In fact, the Fascists wanted to meet indoors. In the weeks running up to Corporation Fields, various venues were approached by local fascists to host a Mosley rally. These included the Astoria Cinema on Holderness Road and the City Hall in the town centre. The management of the Astoria were left in no doubt that if they allowed Mosley in, there would be a picket outside of every film they would try and show. Unsurprisingly they refused to hold the proposed rally.

> **Perhaps the most enduring lesson from the Battle of Corporation Fields is that determined militancy in any field helps builds the trade union movement and that ensures we can win**



Oswald Mosley PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Spain 1936

1936 did not see the end of the fascists. It was however a pivotal year in which they were increasingly beaten back and stopped from marching and rallying. The battle against the far right increasingly focused, not only on the situation in Britain but on the civil war in Spain. General Franco had organised sections of the Spanish army to try and crush the democratically elected Popular Front government. Franco was an ally of Hitler and Mussolini and a victory for his nationalist forces would be a victory for fascism. Around the world anti-fascist volunteers travelled to join the International Brigades or other anti-fascist workers' militias in Spain. We are aware of at least eight volunteers from Hull. At least two, probably more, of the Hull volunteers who joined the International Brigades were at the battle of Corporation Fields.

Joe Latus and Morris Miller were definitely there. Morris, who was to die in Spain at the battle of Ebro, was both Jewish and an active trade unionist. He was quite badly beaten up at the battle of Corporation Fields but was a determined socialist and anti-fascist and would not be put off by a few cuts and bruises. Joe was a key organiser of the anti-fascists on the day and in fact served a short prison sentence after being arrested for his activities at Corporation Fields. As a young sailor, Joe had attempted to organise trade unions on the fishing boats going out of Hull. Joe survived the Spanish Civil War and continued to fight fascism throughout World War Two. Among other heroic activities, he piloted a boat to help with the Dunkirk evacuation.

Many of those who did not go to Spain were active in organising support for the International Brigades and continued to organise against fascism. The battle against Mosley's fascists helped shape the trade union movement in Hull. It is not surprising that the generation that gave Mosley a bloody nose on Corporation Fields went on to be the backbone of a determined and militant workforce on the docks and in other workplaces in the post-war period. Most significantly, winning job protection through the dock labour scheme and better terms and conditions for dock workers. Perhaps the most enduring lesson from the Battle of Corporation Fields is that determined militancy in any field helps builds the trade union movement and that ensures we can win.

GARY HAMMOND AND MIKE WHALE
HULL AND DISTRICT TRADES COUNCIL

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FUND OUR SCHOOLS FAIR PAY NOW



PAUL MATTSSON

‘Our fight can’t wait!’

LOUISE CUFFARO
NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Burnham has been crowned but education workers (teachers and support staff) cannot afford to pause the pressure.

Teachers and support staff are already being asked to wait until October for a strike ballot over pay and funding; action would not happen until sometime in the new year.

But ordinary workers in all nurseries, schools, colleges and universities - just like in the NHS, social and welfare services, and council housing - cannot wait any longer.

Our services are completely depleted, many are broken up and privatised, exploited by profiteering corporate outsourcers. Extortionate privately run special educational needs facilities drain state funding from ordinary schools and colleges, for example. Many school nurseries face closure because they are no longer ‘financially viable’.

The National Education Union (NEU) is one of the largest trade unions in the country and, together with other public sector unions, must build for action. Myself and other Socialist Party members on the union’s executive are arguing against those who think that we should ‘give the new prime minister time’ and ‘try to influence his thinking’. But what is more persuasive than the threat of national strike action in schools? Our ballot is still on!

Socialist Party members are fighting for the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to organise an Autumn weekend mass demonstration to defend public services and demand the funding we need. If the TUC fails to act, then a ‘coalition of willing’ trade unions should set the date.

Education workers are preparing for strike ballots, public sector workers in health, local authorities and the civil service are all fighting cuts and for fair pay, with Unite and Unison members in local government balloting too. A demo bringing those workers together could be used as a launch pad for future coordinated strikes.

New Labour prime minister Andy Burnham talks about keeping to Keir Starmer’s ‘fiscal rules’ designed to keep the capitalist bosses happy. Instead we need politicians and a party that serves ordinary working people and our trade unions.

There is loads of money in the system, it is just not in our hands, and it’s not being used for the benefit of the working-class majority.

There is no time to wait and see what crumbs Burnham will give us. It’s time for trade union action!

Join the NSSN lobby of the TUC in Brighton on 13 September.

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shopstewards.net • @NSSN_anticuts • supported by the following national unions
RMT FBU CWU NUJ napo Unite

LOBBY THE TUC

1pm SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER
Holiday Inn, 137 King’s Rd (seafront), Brighton, BN1 2JF

SCAN TO REGISTER:
INFO@SHOPSTEWARDS.NET
WWW.SHOPSTEWARDS.NET



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY’S MAIN DEMANDS ►►► see column on p8-9

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