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the Socialist

Issue 1378

13-19 August 2026

formerly **Militant**

PLANET BURNS OIL PROFITS BOOM

**Join the fight
for our future -
Youth walkout
20 November**

Fight for socialist change

BECCA BAYMAN
LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

The consequences of climate change are blasting us in the face. Britain is in its fifth heatwave this year, drought conditions are spreading and temperatures soaring, again.

Wildfires are burning - stretching cut-back fire services, and farmers are harvesting smaller yields early. Around 3,000 excess deaths were associated with heatwaves in England during May and June, the UK Health Security Agency estimates.

Millions of workers are forced to work in sweltering heat and live in cramped, poorly ventilated homes. Unite-organised bus drivers in north and east London are set to strike over unsafe working conditions.

This is a world where extreme heat, flooding, and rising food

costs are the 'new normal'. Young people face our futures shadowed by the looming threats from climate change. 85% report being worried about climate change, 75% expressed fear for the future, according to research published by the European Youth Portal. We deserve a stake in our futures!

Yet those with their hands on the levers of power continue to put profits first. Oil giants Shell and BP doubled their profits in the last quarter as they hike prices for us.

Politicians serving the interests of the super-rich bosses have shown they will not act to save our

futures. Labour prime minister Andy Burnham has told Donald Trump he is 'open-minded' about allowing fossil fuel giants to extend drilling in the North Sea.

If the energy companies were nationalised under democratic workers' control, workers would be able to decide what is best for their industry, consumers, and the planet.

A transition away from fossil fuels must not mean throwing workers onto the fire through cuts to jobs and services. Their knowledge and experience should be used to plan the transition and build a new

energy system without the need for profit - with jobs, pay, terms and conditions upheld with trade union agreement.

The technology and resources exist. We must take the wealth off the super-rich and use it to transform energy production and build clean, affordable energy for all.

And imagine if this was done in every sector. Instead of production being driven by profit, we could plan around what people need while protecting the planet. Ultimately, only a socialist transformation of society can make this possible.

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

Fight for our future, not their wars!

Build international youth walkout on 20 November

SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students - which organised walkouts of school, college and university students last September in protest against Donald Trump's state visit to the UK - is one of twenty European youth and student organisations planning action.

The International Youth Strike has been launched by a coalition of anti-war youth and student organisations from ten European countries, including the UK. The coalition includes youth and student sections of political parties, national students' unions, independent socialist youth organisations and anti-war campaign groups.

The 'strike' is being organised in response to what the coalition describes as a historic acceleration of militarisation across Europe. As governments commit hundreds of billions of euros to military spending, organisers argue that young people's futures are being sacrificed to finance preparations for war.

Organisers have pointed to this summer's European wildfires as burning evidence for why young people need to get organised and take action for their futures. 20 November was the date chosen for the International Youth Strike, as the final scheduled day of this year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Turkey - a day that many young people will see as yet another 'talking shop' while governments gear up for war.

Socialist Students was one of the organisations present at an assembly held in Cologne in June, where the aim for an international youth strike on 20 November was initially agreed.

Socialist Students national secretary, Adam Gillman, said: "By building the international youth walkouts this autumn, we hope to be part of building an international youth movement for socialism, not the war and permanent crisis that capitalism means for young people's futures. We have been inspired

by the example of students fighting against the threat of conscription in Germany, and want to strengthen and spread the youth fightback to Britain."

Socialist Students members will be out building for 20 November over the rest of this summer - putting up posters, giving out leaflets and calling public youth meetings in towns and cities across the UK - in preparation for the start of the new term in September.

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socialist students



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IDEAS TO BUILD THE
YOUTH FIGHT FOR A FUTURE AT

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2026
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Socialist Party WHAT WE THINK

Ten days into Andy Burnham's reign, on 30 July, Labour won the Greater Manchester mayoral by-election, the position he'd vacated to get back into parliament. Labour's leaders will hope this victory, keeping Reform in second place, represents a change in fortunes for the party, and the situation that has delivered seven prime ministers in a decade. But a stable base of support is impossible for a party that continues the austerity fuelling that political volatility.

New mayor Bev Craig was elected as a councillor in Manchester City Council in 2011 and became council leader in 2021. In that period the council made millions in cuts, obediently carrying through Tory austerity. By the time of the first budget under Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership, Manchester City Council had cut £309 million and planned more that year instead of using the opportunity of a new anti-austerity leader to begin the fight against all cuts. Nothing different can be expected now.

And in its national significance, although Labour won on 30 July, even in Burnham's 'heartland' the results do not represent a transformation of Labour's support. While Labour's final vote was 66.3% in a second round run-off with Reform, they did not win an outright majority in the first round and were down 16 points on Burnham's result in 2024, winning just 251,449 votes (47.1%). In previous 'two-rounds' supplementary vote elections for the Manchester mayor in 2017 and 2021 Labour had won in the first round, including in 2017 under Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership with 359,352 votes and a 63.4% share.

But still, Reform fell from its top position in May's local elections across Greater Manchester, with the hard-right Restore Britain cutting into their support and polling 8.7% ahead of the Tories on 7.7%, and Labour have inched ahead of them in national opinion polls.

Having crowned Burnham on a pledge to 'end 40 years of neoliberalism', in his first fortnight in office, Burnham announced a 'blitz' of measures, including a VAT cut on electricity bills which amounts to a saving of less than a pound a week at best, a reduction in business rates for pubs, and a £2 cap on bus fares outside London. While these crumbs will be welcome, the context is an estimated £11,300 a year lost by every worker because wages have not risen according to pre-financial crash (2008) trends.

One or two commentators have dared to hope that the declaration of the death of the 'duopoly', the domination by the Tories and Labour who have governed Britain in the interests of the capitalist elite for almost 100 years, was premature. The basis of this hope is that Reform and the Greens, the most recent beneficiaries of rage at the elite, have fallen slightly in the polls.

But the more serious defenders of capitalism know that this hope is

UNION ACTION NEEDED TO TURN SCREWS ON BURNHAM'S LABOUR



in vain. Labour's poll average is still the lowest for any newly minted mid-term prime minister.

The trigger for the change at the top of Labour was the punishment dealt to Starmer at the elections in May, losing the Welsh Senedd and around 60% of the council seats in England they were defending, while falling further back in Scotland. From the get-go, Starmer's government pushed for attacks on the working class, including on pensioners' winter fuel payments and disability benefit cuts. It was a government committed to representing the interests of the big business capitalist class.

Without a political alternative being put forward by the mass organisations of the working class - the trade unions - the right-populist Reform and Nigel Farage have been able to present themselves as a means by which to strike blows against the establishment electorally. Reform offers nothing however, but the dead end of division serving the bosses.

Andy Burnham has now embarked on a 'listening tour' to "help inform his ten-year plan to bring back hope and make Britain better off." But the problems that make people want change are not complicated or hard

NHS workers in Manchester on strike over pay banding, one of many that have taken place nationally
PHOTO: MANCHESTER SP

to see. The bills are too high, the rents and mortgages are too high, the wages are too low, public services need to be funded, and young people need a decent future.

The head of political polling at YouGov, Anthony Wells, said: "He's obviously closed the gap [with Reform]...In that sense it's all good news. But I think it's all good news because he hasn't tried to do anything hard yet... At the moment he's just setting out, 'here's all the nice things I'd like to do'. It's only when details come out that you start upsetting people, or when you start paying for things."

Some details have already come out. Angela Rayner, his housing minister, has ruled out rent control. Raising the threshold when workers start to pay income tax has been floated and ruled out.

Some strong hints have been given of the direction of travel. He has appointed James Purnell as an advisor. As a minister under Gordon Brown, he presented a plan to cut benefits that was so vicious the Tories praised it to the skies. Burnham's choice for chancellor, former defence minister John Healey, quit over Starmer not increasing military spending enough. He has made it clear he will oversee

"strong fiscal discipline" which means cuts to public spending on services.

The Financial Times, the mouthpiece of big business bosses, has made its view clear: "Britain's new leader has described his philosophy as 'business-friendly socialism'. If he wants to take the country forward, he needs to lean more on the business-friendly elements than on the statist sentiments he has emphasised around his arrival in Downing Street."

That approach, of seeking to do the bidding of big business, means that the room for Faragism still exists, even while Farage faces sustained attack from the establishment, particularly over his shady finances. They give the lie to the claim that Reform is a workers' party. Real representatives of the working class would take a worker's wage not payments from bitcoin billionaires.

A workers' political voice must be built, alongside the workers' movement challenge to austerity and the divisive rhetoric of Reform. It is right that the motion from TUC Women's Conference to the TUC Congress calls for a "campaign on unifying TUC policy of jobs, homes and services, not racism, to cut across the policies of division of Reform and the far right".



The PCS motion calls for the TUC to act, 'to urgently call a national Saturday demo this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies'

PCS demands TUC action

The TUC Congress is the annual gathering of the leaders of the six million-strong trade union movement. The trade unions are the force in British society able to build a political party that fights for all sections of the working class, and would be capable of cutting across Reform. In the 2017 general election, under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, Labour's anti-austerity programme won a million voters who'd previously backed Reform's predecessor UKIP.

Unfortunately, many of the motions to the TUC Congress reflect the approach of the majority of the trade union leaders who want to plead for Labour and to use the change of leader to argue against independent action. Some talk of 'calling on' the new prime minister 'to act' and welcome his coronation as 'a new opportunity'.

The motion from the PCS union however stands out. While demanding that the new government reopens "talks on public sector pay for 2026/27 to protect workers from the cost-of-living crisis", it also points to how the union movement must make its voice heard against those deafening calls on Burnham to 'lean more on the business-friendly elements'.

Crucially, the PCS motion calls for the TUC to act, "to urgently call a national Saturday demonstration this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies". Such a demonstration would give enormous confidence to the working class and youth to fight for our class's interests. The motion also calls for Congress to "urge 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."

Getting this motion passed and an autumn demonstration actually organised and built for must now be the focus of all trade union fighters who want to see a campaign to end austerity realised, not with hopes or vibes, but by our class stamping our demands on the situation. The National Shop Stewards Network has organised a lobby of the TUC in support of this motion on 13 September as the first step in the fighting strategy that's still needed.



Lobby the TUC

1pm Sunday 13 September
Holiday Inn, 137 King's Rd (seafront), Brighton, BN1 2JF

SCAN TO REGISTER:

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Catalogue of failings exposes sexist capitalist system

BEA GARDNER

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The appalling acts of violence by serial sex offender Simon Levy are a stark reminder of the continued violence and harassment women are subjected to in our everyday lives.

His case has also revealed a sickening catalogue of failures by the criminal justice system. The London Metropolitan Police (Met), the British Transport Police (BTP), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the courts, all acted in ways that contributed to Levy being able to continue to cause harm. He went on to murder Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo and Sheryl Wilkins while under supervision as a known sex offender. Their deaths could have been prevented.

Justice failings

The numerous failings expose the lack of seriousness given by the criminal justice system to tackling violence against women. This is not a new development. Back in 2020, the then victims commissioner Vera Baird said rape had effectively been decriminalised as a result of a collapse in prosecutions that allowed many offenders to escape justice. She pointed to both police and the CPS.

Numerous women made reports of sexual assault, including on the tube, which have been found to be attacks by Levy. Several times he was interviewed but no charges were brought. He breached bail conditions but was not re-arrested. He assaulted a female prison officer which was captured on CCTV, but outrageously it took three years for him to be charged.

Some of his victims have been described as vulnerable women involved with street-based sex work. This no doubt contributed to the mishandling of these cases by the Met. One woman reported a violent rape involving strangulation in a Tottenham carpark, giving a detailed

description of Levy and where he lived. Instead of treating her like the victim of a serious crime that she was, she was instead arrested for being in the wrong area. Later her case was closed. Horrifically, Sheryl Wilkins would go on to be murdered in the same car park six months later. When Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo was found dead, with Levy's DNA at the scene, her death was not even recognised or treated as murder until after Levy murdered again.

The Met's appalling treatment of these women raises the question of what is necessary to keep women safe, including those involved with sex work. The police appear more concerned with arresting sex workers than tackling sexual and physical violence against them. Decriminalisation is posed as the answer to this.

Criminalisation of sex work makes women more vulnerable to attacks and it creates extra barriers to reporting abuse. Decriminalisation can contribute to reducing harm.

Women's safety

However, in and of itself, decriminalisation would not guarantee women's safety. It would not, for example, guarantee that reports of violence against women are taken seriously by police and justice institutions. Levy's other victims were not involved in sex work. They reported their assaults immediately and yet it took years for him to be interviewed and charged, despite CCTV and phone camera footage capturing incidences. Their reports were also dismissed or subject to delays. The Met has been found to be institutionally misogynist.

The criminal justice system is not in our control, it is not organised in the interests of working-class people, including women. What is given priority reflects broader political priorities in a context where austerity has closed domestic violence refuges and turned off street lights, and low pay forces women workers into

unsafe travel and vulnerable situations while the bankers got bailed out. Women can be granted legal rights, but more often than not the material resources are not there to mean we can exercise these in practice. For example, women have died while waiting months for the police to release details of whether their partners have prior convictions for domestic abuse. We need democratic community control of policing, including over priorities and hiring and firing.

Misogynist institutions

Ideas about male dominance and control and women's sexual availability are constantly promoted and reinforced for profit and ideological advantage. The police and courts perpetuate these ideas through the handling and prosecution of cases. The multi-billion-dollar sex industry is another means by which such ideas are reinforced. Levy avidly consumed pornography, the majority of which has been found to be violent.

Overwhelmingly research shows women become involved in sex work out of financial necessity, to cover basic survival needs including food and housing. Carmenza is reported to have been a hard-working cleaner for over 30 years to support her children and later her grandchildren. A £15-an-hour minimum wage as a step towards a real living wage would have meant she would never crossed paths with Levy. The blame for that lies with the deeply unequal and exploitative capitalist system that prioritises profit over meeting the basic needs of the majority.

Levy's horrific case is an indictment of capitalism. The system fails women, working-class women doubly so. The struggle to end violence against women is therefore bound up with the struggle against capitalism and for the democratic control of all society's institutions for need not profit.

Early release scheme chaos Probation and prisons need urgent funding

ADAM HARMSWORTH

NAPO NATIONAL VICE-CHAIR (PERSONAL CAPACITY)

Andy Burnham is pushing ahead with the plan to release 5,000 people from prison early. The only reason this is being considered is because of overcrowding in the underfunded prison service. The problem is these 5,000 people are then being released into a deeply underfunded probation service!

Like Keir Starmer before him, Burnham is hoping probation workers will simply shoulder the extra work, and prison workers will keep the overcrowded prisons afloat in the meantime.

Probation trade union Napo has announced that in an indicative ballot, 90.76% voted for industrial action on workloads, which the union says was on a turnout "well within the parameters to give us the confidence that we could follow up this result with a successful formal ballot."

Many probation officers and other staff work over their hours, some are constantly anxious that they are missing service users or making serious mistakes because they are tasked with looking after an unsafe number of people. They are forced to take on this work because neither Tory nor Labour governments have given probation and prisons the funding they need.

Burnham has promised that

nobody sentenced for rape, serious child sex or grooming offences will be part of the release. Domestic violence support groups have spoken out because the scheme could include prisoners in jail for domestic abuse offences. With probation already over-stretched, there is a far greater risk that they will not be properly monitored, and put domestic abuse victims at risk all over again.

Even if Burnham decides to exclude domestic violence perpetrators from the scheme, it won't fix the serious problems of starved probation and prison services. Burnham already paused the early release once, and that was a missed opportunity to commit to provide the funding that probation and prisons need to properly and safely support those in their care. The capitalist press have named the early release scheme 'Burnham's first big test'.



Probation trade union Napo has announced that in an indicative ballot, 90.76% voted for industrial action on workloads



and this new government is proving in its actions that it is just like the last. Instead of ending 40 years of neoliberalism as Burnham promised, he is continuing its austerity diet of underfunding.

It is those policies that have made crime worse and communities less safe. Austerity is driving poverty and desperation, increasing the risk of crime, and then starving the justice system of funding it needs to support victims and stop offenders.

Jobs, homes and services

Britain has the resources to meet the needs of all. We could have jobs and decent housing for all, and public services that actually work without being over-stretched. This alone would hugely reduce crime and start to build a safer and fairer society, but it will not be possible under capitalism.

A socialist society where the wealth hoarded by the super-rich can be used for common good, can actually reduce crime, create a safer society, and fully fund a justice system run for protection and rehabilitation.

Whether early release is carried out or not, prisons and probation need serious funding in the short term. That can only be won from the Burnham government with a campaign of protest and industrial action. The justice unions should work together and lead in this fight, working with charities and campaign groups concerned about the state of the early release scheme.

Probation and prison unions should also support and champion the PCS union's motion to the 2026 Trades Union Congress, which calls for a TUC-led demonstration against austerity. These are vital steps to build the opposition to austerity, and to build up the strength of the working class in Britain. The working class is the force in our society which can win the socialist system that we need.

A socialist programme for social care

DAVE GORTON

CHESTERFIELD SOCIALIST PARTY

Another prime minister. Another promise to tackle the social care crisis. Both their regularity has become commonplace. So have the failures.

Andy Burnham's speech on social care was littered with his family experiences and no doubt heartfelt.

Ultimately though, it will not be private feelings that achieve real improvements but the system under which those feelings operate. Burnham committed to strive for "common ground" across the whole political spectrum.

Common ground?

Leaving aside Labour's shift over recent decades to a party completely embracing big-business capitalism, how do you reach common ground amid wholesale privatisation and huge profiteering deliberately introduced by those parties?

Of course this now includes Labour, who have fully embraced the private ownership of care model. Unite the Union general secretary, Sharon Graham, said:

"Britain's social care system ... has been turned into a cash cow for profiteers making money on the back of ... suffering. Fixing [it] will need a serious plan with real money, that puts workers, pensioners and everyday people first, not the profiteers."

Unite continued: "Immediate actions need to take place including regulation... empowering existing structures to hold private firms accountable for failures and financing local authorities to take over ownership of firms where highly leveraged companies have failed or are highly likely to fail."

The largest social care union, Unison, stopped at "Most social care in England is... delivered by private companies, in a system... run down by huge funding cuts and profit extraction." Nothing about how Unison would challenge this other than trusting Burnham.

Whatever the intent, the announcement was just kicking the can further



The Socialist Party demands:

- **Renationalise social care. Bring all services back in-house with no compensation paid to the profiteers at the top, only on the basis of proven need**
- **Pay care workers an immediate minimum wage of £15 an hour without exemptions, as a step towards a real living wage**
- **Reverse cuts to local government. Take the wealth off the super-rich to fund the services we need**
- **For a democratic socialist plan for health and social care, with workers, service users and the local community deciding what we need not what makes a profit for a few**

Firefighters beat back cuts to fire services in Kent

JAMES GRETTON

KENT AND EAST SUSSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

Cuts proposed by Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) were defeated at a Fire Authority extraordinary meeting on 6 August, following opposition organised by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

KFRS had recommended cutting 63 firefighter posts, six engines and five on-call stations - Chilham, Wye, Cliffe, Grain and Westerham. With the Fire Authority's 17-2 decision, these recommendations will not get as far as public consultation. FBU general secretary Steve Wright celebrated the firefighters' "strong fighting trade union spirit alongside the local community".

The proposal to close the stations was inadvertently leaked by senior officials in June, with KFRS chief executive Ann Millington justifying them as "based on risk intelligence and data analysis". On 4 August, the FBU organised a demonstration at County Hall in Maidstone, where Kent County Council is headquartered. The council's Reform administration has continued with austerity. This has included a failed DOGE-style efficiency unit which has since been overhauled, and a 4% council tax hike, which Reform had promised not to raise.

But faced with the FBU organising, the overwhelming majority of the Fire Authority's members - which includes councillors from all the

down the road. Words about delivering quality care for users and better pay, terms and conditions for workers delivering that care, are meaningless without powers to enforce that against providers who refuse or fail.

That must be the starting point of the discussion surrounding the creation of a National Care Service.

The delivery of residential care in the UK shifted dramatically from the public and voluntary sector being responsible for over 89% in 1960 to today, where private provision stands at 83%. The public sector is responsible for just 4%!

Four of the five largest providers in adult home care are either owned by private equity firms, US hedge funds or billionaires based abroad.

Taking those services out of the hands of the profit-seeking bosses to be public owned, fully funded and under the democratic control of workers, service users and the community must be a key demand from the trade unions.

Imperative

It would be a major boost in getting social care workers - for too long virtually forgotten by unions - to join and fight for their own destiny and the services they provide.

As we wrote in 2025, "if the big business profiteers were removed from the equation altogether, without compensation for the super-rich who exploit the sector, there would be enough money available for year-on-year improvements so workers could benefit from an immediate £15-an-hour minimum wage, full sick pay and decent pensions."

austerity parties, including Reform and Labour - rejected these plans.

After the vote, Millington reiterated her claims that KFRS's cut proposals "were formed based on comprehensive data and evidence [...] while easing financial pressures." Since 2010, over 12,000 firefighter jobs have been cut nationally, including over 8,000 wholetime posts, and 462 in Kent.

The FBU also warned the government in a 2023 report that austerity has left fire services understaffed and ill-equipped to combat wildfires, calling for "urgent climate action."

The answers to austerity and climate change go hand-in-hand. Trade unions organising workers and winning support from working-class communities is the way forward.

Glasgow NHS ward clerks strike for fair pay and grading

EXTRACT FROM A SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND LEAFLET

Socialist Party Scotland gives full solidarity to Unison ward clerks across the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Board, taking a two-day strike over pay and grading.

On Wednesday 5 August the Unison branch organised pickets of hundreds at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Inverclyde Royal and the Royal Alexandra in Paisley - pickets rallied at the board headquarters on the first strike day.

Support has come in from Unison and trade union branches nationally, for one of the most high-profile NHS strikes in recent years.

The enthusiasm for the strike reflects the anger that these workers, often women, are on the lowest NHS pay grade, even though they are being given greater responsibilities and tasks to run hospitals. The Unison strike ballot got a 98% vote in favour, showing the willingness to fight.

The employer, Scotland's largest health board, has been dragging out reviews of grading and pay for years, keeping pay low. This strike makes a mockery of NHS Glasgow and Clyde health board and, behind it, the Scottish National Party (SNP) government's supposed 'partnership' relationship with the trade unions. A year of negotiations took place and still NHS management and politicians stall on an evaluation and back pay.

Before the picketing began,



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

management were encouraging other staff to carry out ward clerk strikers' duties.

As Unison NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS Branch secretary Frances Carmichael said: "These skilled workers are essential to the running of hospitals. Without them, doctors and nurses would be dealing with paperwork rather than focusing on patient care."

A Royal Alexandra picket said: "During the pandemic we were promised that when things got back to normal these roles would be taken off us and pay would be improved, but those promises have been broken."

Support across the trade union movement must continue and widen. The strike will also lift the mood of workers across the NHS in Scotland. Many will also want to organise a fight on pay and grading.

The trade unions have a responsibility to mobilise to pressure the new prime minister Andy Burnham, who has promised a "different course from austerity." But Burnham has also made friendly promises to the bosses.

That's why Socialist Party Scotland members are campaigning in the unions and pressuring the TUC and STUC (Trades Union Congress and Scottish TUC) to organise national demonstrations against austerity and for pro-worker policies. Our members have raised motions in unions demanding the government reopen talks on public sector pay.

The NHS is in crisis from decades of underfunding and a lack of staffing. As are all other public services. For decades the SNP has passed on austerity from the Tories and now Labour in Westminster. Workers and all those suffering austerity need a political alternative.

Through the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist coalition, Socialist Party Scotland stood in the May elections on socialist anti-cuts policies and demanding the mass public investment the NHS needs.

- Send solidarity to Unison NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS Branch: nhsbranch@unionsglasgowclyde.com

UCU: London Met still fighting redundancies

SCOTT HUNTER
UCU MEMBER

Strikers at London Metropolitan University held a rally on 31 July as part of the continuing action against cuts and redundancies by members of the University and College Union (UCU).

Despite eleven days of strike action and a marking and assessment boycott since March, university management has pressed ahead. Some staff have already opted for voluntary exit rather than go through the stress of the redundancy process.

However, the mood was one of determination to fight on as they are still facing 47 more redundancies and increased workloads for remaining staff. There were speakers sharing their struggles from other universities including Goldsmiths, Imperial College and University College London, as well as from the actors' union Equity and strikers at the Institute of Cancer Research, who have just gone on indefinite action.

At its annual congress in May, UCU members passed motion HE11, calling for the union to develop a coordinated national campaign across higher education to defend jobs, pay and pensions.

Marco also reported that the leadership - including general secretary Jo Grady - is trying to backtrack on the members' demands for a national fight.

Socialist Party members will continue to be at the fore in fighting for the UCU to mount a serious national campaign in both further and higher education.



PHOTO: SCOTT HUNTER

UCU ballots in Cornwall and Devon – stop the cuts to further and higher education

ROB ROONEY
CORNWALL SOCIALIST PARTY

Jobs among the academic and research staff are at risk at the Penryn, Cornwall, campus of the University of Exeter - part of a planned overall cull of 500, with 200 compulsory.

A representative of the University and College Union (UCU) spoke at Cornwall Trades Council meeting.

Last year, the UCU was accused of scaremongering when raising concerns about cuts to modules and curriculum. The UCU was right.

Now the vice chancellor denies there is an agenda to withdraw from Cornwall, but the evidence is clear.

The meeting was told there is a mania to "drive down costs rather than protect education as a public good."

That hits the nail on the head! Squatters occupy the commanding heights of our public services

- instead of the people who work in and rely on the services, it's corporate interests making the decisions.

Across the public sector we see the same process. Health bosses have announced the 'temporary' closure of a Barnstaple maternity unit. In Cornwall we see elected representatives cutting and privatising the public services the people rely on, with managers focused on cost-cutting. Need doesn't enter into their calculations.

The UCU is balloting for strike action at Exeter. In January, UCU staff at Truro and Penryn College were on strike over pay and workload. The funding model for both further and higher education is broken. There is a need for the UCU to link up the struggles taking place all over the country, and for students to unite with staff.

Stop these cuts - victory to the UCU!

RMT rail workers on strike East Midlands Railways strike for safety

ALISTAIR TICE REPORTS FROM SHEFFIELD

RMT members across East Midlands Railways (EMR) were on strike on 1 and 8 August, demanding faulty trains are immediately withdrawn. Despite numerous protests by the union, the bosses are keeping trains with dangerous faults in service.

Socialist Party members supported the pickets outside Sheffield station each time and will again on 15 August.

RMT members are taking industrial action because EMR are rolling out a new fleet of '810' trains which have shown a significant number of dangerous faults. In particular, if an 810 fails due to a fault it requires a full 20-minute re-set, which leaves the train with no active safety system,

including loss of communication between drivers, dispatchers and trackside.

Pickets told us there had been 16 breakdowns in a month! On the first strike day, a train broke down at Nottingham and had to be taken out of service. An RMT rep said working to rule meant that members had refused to take out a faulty train that was so bad that even the 'contingency staff' refused to bring it back!

It would be funny if it wasn't so serious. Apparently, the air conditioning provides on-train showers!

RMT demands that the 810s are taken out of service until all faults are rectified. But EMR has refused.

EMR is due to be taken into publicly owned Great British Railways

next year, but this has been delayed due to the faults and dispute. The Socialist Party says that these health and safety issues are another reason why the government should immediately renationalise the whole network, under workers' control, including the rolling stock companies (ROSCOs) and Utilities, which have made millions of pounds in profits and shareholder dividends since rail privatisation in the 1990s.

As Keir Chewings, RMT NEC member for the Midlands, explains in an RMT video: "We didn't choose this dispute, we spent months trying to resolve it. Our members are taking action because they believe safety must always come before performance figures."



PHOTO: ELAINE BRUNSKILL

Rail Gourmet and Bidvest Noonan catering and cleaning staff fight for decent pay and to end outsourcing

ELAINE BRUNSKILL
NORTHERN REGION SOCIALIST PARTY

Catering staff at Rail Gourmet and cleaners at Bidvest Noonan, members of the RMT transport union who work as outsourced workers at Transpennine Express (TPE), took 48 hours of strike action from 31 July.

As well as fighting for decent pay and conditions, these workers also want their jobs to be brought in-house, to end outsourcing.

On the picket line in Newcastle there was huge anger expressed towards the outsourcing companies, and towards TPE, which is happy to outsource this work and thereby give workers worse wages and conditions than if they were directly employed.

Strikers also commented that the companies were continually wanting to "add loads of extra tasks without any extra pay."

One of the strikers explained how they had taken strike action in 2023. Out of this strike the Rail Gourmet employers agreed to a 'roadmap' so that by the end of 2025 workers

would be on £15 an hour. This has not happened. Anger was expressed by one striker who, to cheers from others, shouted "Hate Gourmet!"

Strikers also expressed the hope that in the future there would be more consultation from the union over pay negotiations.

We handed out copies of the Red Line, produced by RMT members in the Socialist Party, and leaflets from the National Shop Stewards Network. Both put forward the message that 'We're not paying for the bosses crisis'. Many of the strikers not only read the leaflets, but also put them in their pockets, hopefully to be re-read later.

The mood on the picket line was really good, and strikers we spoke to made it clear they were 'standing together'. They were also getting loads of support from passing motorists - particularly from bus and taxi drivers, alongside vans with workers in.

We also send solidarity greetings to the other picket lines in this dispute in Carlisle, Edinburgh Waverly, Glasgow Central, Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Piccadilly.

Unite strikers: 'We fight cancer every day, we can't do it on low pay!'



PHOTO: LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

KEVIN PARSLAW
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY AND UNITE LE1228 BRANCH SECRETARY

On 7 August, Unite strikers at the Institute of Cancer Research launched all-out indefinite strike action with a rally.

The previous Friday, 30 July, the strikers marched between their two workplaces and South Kensington Station, where they held a rally. The streets of quiet plush South Kensington echoed to the chant of "We fight

cancer every day, we can't do it on low pay!"

At that point, the strikers had been out for eight weeks after rejecting a 4% pay offer. They demand pay restoration of up to 16% to offset real-terms cuts since 2019, the reinstatement of an increment-based pay policy, and better workplace conditions. Some members have second jobs, while the CEO is on £457,000 per year, and over £30 million sits in reserves.

This is an historic strike, the first in the 117-year history of the Institute.

Unite National Lead Officer Onay Kasab addressed the rally, urging the members to stand firm as they look out to intensify the dispute. Supportively, Unite will now be enhancing strike pay to those members taking action.

● The strikers are making an urgent appeal for finance. Account: Unite London & East Region Sort code: 60-83-01 Account number: 20173988

It is essential that donations are referenced as 'ICR dispute'

work late shifts, as they pay the same hourly rate for all shifts.

To resolve the union's claim would only cost the company £18,000 over 12 months. Instead, due to pressure from the action, so far they have offered an increase of 10p per hour, which has been rejected by the union.

Churchill cleaners working in Washington local rail service are paid above the full Real Living Wage, so clearly there is a precedent for the workers in Liverpool to be paid the same.

Members work diligently and are committed to do the best job they

can, despite regular occurrences of cleaning machinery being in disrepair. Also concerns remain over a lack of PPE equipment and working with hazardous chemicals, as well as over inadequate testing of equipment.

The RMT is also in parallel discussions with the metro mayor over bringing Merseyrail into public ownership, which the pickets support. Solidarity to the RMT Liverpool Merseyrail Churchill Cleaners!

- Messages of support to: Jimmy Brown, RMT North West regional organiser j.brown@rmt.org.uk

The Red Line ➔

Public meeting

We won't pay for the bosses' crisis: Build a real political alternative

Sunday 16 August 12 noon - 2pm

The Sheephaven Bay, 2 Mornington St, London NW1 7QD

The Red Line is a bulletin produced by members and supporters of the Socialist Party in RMT

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Socialist Party members campaign for fighting, democratic trade unions, wherever possible working alongside others, to campaign for the industrial and political strategies workers need

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07958 032071** to find out more today!

INFLATION AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

CALLUM JOYCE

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Following war in the Middle East and the continued blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, there have been numerous headlines asking: Are we facing another surge in inflation? Many of us have already felt the effects of the sharp rise in prices at the petrol pump. The government's energy price cap has risen 13% and there is fear for what that means for bills this autumn and winter.

While the official rate of inflation according to the Bank of England (BoE) is now around 3% - actually its lowest rate since June last year - it has still stayed persistently above the official Bank of England target of 2%. A small degree of inflation is seen as 'good' from the capitalists' point of view as it can help reduce the real cost of historic debts and encourage consumer spending. But even at its relatively low current figure it has still contributed to the systematic chipping away of wages, benefits, and pensions, which are now effectively worth 3% less than they were a year ago, in real terms.

The concern from central bankers and economists is not so much about the current rate of inflation - although it's already bad enough for those of us that haven't had a significant pay rise in years! - but that it could rise further as events in the Middle East unfold.

Worst still to come

The eventual restoration of regular shipping from the Middle East may relieve some of the economic pressure. But, in reality, some of the worst economic effects of this horrific war may be still to come.

Apart from the impact on oil and gas supplies, around one third of the world's fertiliser supplies which normally travel through the Strait of Hormuz have been heavily affected as well. Even if shipping through the Strait returned to normal levels in the next few months (big if!) then the lingering effects of the disruption mean shortages are virtually inevitable for at least a large remainder of the year (see 'Food price crisis looms: Build workers' fightback, fight for socialist planning' at socialistparty.org.uk). For the majority in Britain who had to endure the shock of food inflation reaching over 19% in 2023, the prospect of a return to those days will feel unbearable.

So what can we do to stop it? Most people will remember very keenly the negative consequences of the last surge in inflation. But we didn't just see an historic rise in prices - we saw an historic rise in the class struggle as well. 2022-23 witnessed the biggest sustained strike action in 30 years, with hundreds of thousands of workers taking action, many for the first time. This was not only among groups



like rail and postal workers with a long history of fighting to defend their pay and conditions, but new traditions of struggle being formed by those including doctors, nurses, and even barristers!

Not every victory that those struggles won was perfect - more could have been gained, including through a strategy of coordinating strike action across different sectors. Nevertheless, strikes forced the Tory government and a number of employers to cough up for better pay rises, despite their insistence that there was 'no more money'.

The experience of those strikes and the conclusions to be drawn about future tactics and organisational measures must be discussed and absorbed at every layer of the trade union movement. But the main lesson from the strike wave is that if you fight, you can win! We need a mass trade union campaign to demand fully funded, above-inflation pay rises for all, with members properly prepared for taking strike action if necessary.

Pay offers that do not cover inflation should be exposed and rejected for what they really are - pay cuts! This should include opposing offers that do not take into account the possibility of inflation rising even further. National Education Union (NEU) members' determination to reject below inflation unfunded pay offers from the government, pressuring the NEU leadership to prepare a strike ballot for the autumn, has forced the government to improve its initial pay offer. 6.5% will be offered over two years rather than three. However, not being

fully funded, the NEU points out: "Schools are being asked to find £460 million from budgets already at breaking point. This is the equivalent of 8,300 school staff: 3,900 teachers and 4,400 support staff." This emphasises the need for unions in the public sector to fight for fully funded pay deals.

Of course not every worker is currently organised at their workplace, so a mass drive to unionise those layers who are also suffering the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is needed as well. The best way to do this is to give a clear fighting lead - during the last strike wave the Trades Union Congress (TUC) reported an 800% increase in visits to its 'Join a union' webpage.

The trade unions must take up demands not just for those workers that they directly represent, but for the working class as a whole. That should include demanding at least a £15-an-hour minimum wage with no age exemptions, real living benefits and pensions for those out of work, mass building of affordable council housing, and a guarantee that pay automatically rises at least in line with inflation each year.

Trade union campaign

A serious campaign on these issues would draw the majority of workers behind it and prepare the forces needed to take on and defeat the offensive against our living standards planned by the capitalist bosses aided by the Labour government. The TUC organised a mass demonstration in 2022 against the cost-of-living crisis, which gave a huge confidence boost to workers across the country and played a role in encouraging others to follow the example of the rail workers who were taking strike action at that time. If fighting back worked then, why couldn't it work now? A good start would be implementing the policy passed unanimously at last year's TUC congress and organising a mass weekend demonstration against Labour's austerity with concrete fighting demands. That could be the springboard to then launch a sustained campaign of coordinated industrial action over the autumn and winter.

'But wait, not so fast!' the bosses will cry. 'If wages go up too much, we'll have to raise prices again to compensate and inflation will just get worse.' This will be a familiar argument to anyone who has argued for an above-inflation pay rise in recent years. Already Huw

Pill, chief economist at the Bank of England, has warned against rising wages making inflation harder to tackle. That's OK for Huw while he makes over £190,000 a year!

We would agree that prices have risen as a result of some people increasing their income too much - but it's been the bosses not the workers! BP reports having made a profit of over £2.3 billion in just the first three months of this year - more than double what they'd made by this point in 2025. Meanwhile real wages for the rest of us have stagnated and actually declined. Research by the TUC suggests that if wages had kept growing at the same rate from before the 2008 financial crisis, the average worker would be over £10,000 a year better off. But that holding down of wages still hasn't stopped average prices rising by 67% over the same period. The 'wise sages' of the capitalist economy can keep their advice about pay restraint to themselves!

The reality is that workers demanding better wages are in no way responsible for the rise in inflation. The same companies arguing against it are continuing to make record profits that could easily absorb the costs of increasing pay. The Socialist Party says that the finances of these companies should be opened to full inspection by democratically elected committees of workers and trade

is more than willing to see their businesses go to the wall.

But these 'inconvenient' truths about the wealth in society are often dismissed and all the blame for rising prices is put solely on the war in the Middle East instead. Certainly the war has had an impact on immediately raising energy prices, but more than anything it has exposed and accelerated the already rotten nature of global capitalism, particularly in Britain.

Decades of underinvestment in manufacturing and infrastructure, the use of fragile supply chains that cannot be relied upon in a world of increasingly divided and hostile capitalist states, and the huge quantities of money that were pumped into the economy after 2008 and during the Covid pandemic, have all contributed to an increasingly anaemic economy. It may still be able to massively enrich a few people at the top of society, but it is incredibly vulnerable to new economic shocks and crises, something that there's no shortage of today! This was revealed just as clearly during the last major rise in energy bills after the war in Ukraine. Politicians were quick to heap blame on that conflict, but neglected to mention that inflation had already reached a 30-year high of around 5% before the war even started.

Collaboration between socialist states, based on the interests of the working class rather than the bosses, would be an alternative to the destruction and waste of capitalist competition and war. Only this socialist alternative would be able to access the tremendous resources and technology that exist today to carry through the mass programme of investment that would be needed to grow the economy. On that basis, of socialist democratically planned production, new wealth can be created and decent jobs and living standards for all guaranteed, while safeguarding the environment.

'Happier times'

Inflation today cannot be explained just by 'exceptional' wars and catastrophes around the world. It is instead a symptom of a terminally-ill capitalist system. This is shown by

the inability of the capitalists' own 'experts' to resolve the crisis - in four years they have still not been able to reduce inflation to their desired level despite raising interest rates and using other measures that economists claimed were reliable methods of combating price rises. Even Jerome Powell, then-chair of the US Federal Reserve, said in 2022, "We understand better now how little we understand about inflation." Not exactly reassuring from the head of the biggest central bank in the world!

Workers cannot wait for 'happier times' to fight for decent wages when it's more convenient for the bosses. There are no happier times coming on the basis of this system! That is why as well as a strategy to fight for pay rises in the here and now, the workers' movement also needs to be armed with a socialist programme that can end the chaos of the capitalist economy and provide a decent standard of living for all.

In this era of economic crisis, any pay rises or other concessions that are won from the bosses can only be temporary. Inflation will not disappear as a feature of this system, and neither will rising housing costs, crumbling services, and poor working conditions. Probably much of what was won in the last strike wave has already been clawed back through price rises. Even when official inflation figures drop, it doesn't mean prices go back to their previous levels!

Socialist plan for the economy

This system doesn't work for us - it needs to be replaced with a rational plan for the economy run in the interests of the majority of the population. That would mean nationalising the top 150 monopolies and banks to take the major levers of the economy out of the hands of the 1%. Workers' control and management at every level of the economy would be able to quickly and effectively judge the needs of the population and make changes in supply chains and production patterns efficiently, without relying on the unstable capitalist markets.

Collaboration between socialist states, based on the interests of the working class rather than the bosses, would be an alternative to the destruction and waste of capitalist competition and war. Only this socialist alternative would be able to access the tremendous resources and technology that exist today to carry through the mass programme of investment that would be needed to grow the economy. On that basis, of socialist democratically planned production, new wealth can be created and decent jobs and living standards for all guaranteed, while safeguarding the environment.

‘Britain’s strictest schools’ BBC exposé

End academisation – we need democratic control

DAVID KAPLAN
PARENT AND FORMER SECONDARY SCHOOL
TEACHER

“Dictatorship”, “dystopian”, “authoritarian”. These are not words used to describe the regime of Kim Jong Un in North Korea, but of a group of secondary schools in modern-day UK.

The CEO of Athena Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust (MAT) of three primary schools and six secondary schools in Devon and Cornwall, resigned in May this year, following mass meetings and protests of pupils and parents because of punitive discipline.

BBC’s Panorama programme highlighted the issues in ‘Britain’s strictest schools’. The programme spoke to nearly 100 pupils, parents and former teachers about their experiences at the Athena schools. Pupils and parents queued to talk to the BBC at two town hall meetings the documentary producers arranged.

“You are constantly scared that you are going to do something wrong,” one student with ADHD reported. A parent said of their child: “Day in, day out, he feels like he’s failing.”

Pupils are not allowed to look away from the teacher and get a warning if they do. The schools have a two-strike policy: a warning for one rule break, and then internal exclusion for a second infringement of the rules.

Pupils are sent to a room to ‘reflect’ on their actions, where they work in silence from workbooks. In one of the schools, there were 1,000 such internal exclusions a month between September 2025 and March 2026.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are disproportionately affected. One parent said: “Just to look out of the window to refocus – that’s not harming any of the other children, or their education – but that’s enough to be sent out, because that’s him not focusing on the teacher.” Such behaviour was not recognised as being linked to neurodivergence.



PHOTO: BBC PANORAMA

The suspension rate – being sent home for a day or part of a day – at another of Athena’s schools was almost five times higher than the national average.

Governors of the trust are working with the Department for Education (DfE) to identify alternative trusts to which the schools could transfer. But this is not enough.

The academies programme, allowing local authority schools to convert into state-funded schools independent of the local authority, was introduced by Tony Blair’s New Labour government in the early 2000s.

Initially, they were ‘failing’ schools, where it was alleged that enabling schools to determine their own curriculum and terms and conditions for staff would raise outcomes for pupils.

The Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition government from 2010 massively expanded the academies programme, encouraging Ofsted-rated ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools

to convert to academies, giving them financial sweeteners to convert.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have no academies. But around 84% of secondary schools in England are academies, and around 43% of primary schools.

Academisation is privatisation, and has enabled MAT bosses to run riot with destructive policies of this nature without democratic accountability. There is no evidence that academies have significantly improved outcomes for pupils.

Generally, they have been forced to maintain teachers’ terms and conditions, in spite of having the option not to, in order to fill vacancies and because of industrial action taken by education unions. That’s a glimpse of the potential power the unions have to defend education: the unions should demand that questions such as disciplinary policies, alongside other important issues such as bullying, sexual harassment etc, should be under the

democratic control of union reps, parents and students.

Academisation must end. The education unions should demand that Andy Burnham immediately brings in a legal route for academies to return to local authority control – something that Socialist Party members in the National Education Union fight for.

There needs to be a massive increase in funding to local authorities in order to bring MATs and academies back – with the democratic involvement of education workers, parents and students who have the expertise and local knowledge of what their communities need. We also need to continue to demand the end of league tables and the whole ‘exam factory’ culture that leads to these regimes.

With academies under the control and management of business-oriented academy trusts, there is no guarantee that similar issues won’t happen again.

● ‘Britain’s Strictest Schools’ is available online at bbc.co.uk

Devon and Cornwall National Education Union members speak out

The press release from the Devon and Cornwall districts of the NEU - which confirms that “treatment of children at Athena has often been unacceptable, with pupils with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly poorly served” - has not been widely covered in the national press.

Perhaps the voice of trade unionists has not been publicised because they point to the potential for collective action to tackle these issues. The NEU reports that it has recently conducted successful strike ballots at several Athena schools, with the treatment of staff also a central issue. Staff report feeling “frightened and intimidated”. In some cases, staff were checked on by members of school leaderships dozens of times during a single working day.

They also point to wider issues. Devon and Cornwall NEU calls for the abolition of Ofsted and league tables, and their replacement “with an accountability system based on support, professional collaboration, inclusion and meaningful engagement with school communities”.

They call for the government to “commission an urgent review of the academy trust system and begin restoring schools to a democratically accountable local education service”.



PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

Trade unionists demand anti-cuts stance from Lambeth Greens

YAVNIK GANGULY
LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK SOCIALIST PARTY

‘Workers’ Question Time’ took place in Lambeth on 28 July, with Martin Abrams, Green leader of Lambeth Council. The event was organised by Lambeth Trades Council, to bring together council workers and others to help to apply working-class pressure on the new Green administration.

The Greens have the most councillors in the Lambeth Council (28) but do not have overall control. The Labour Party has 26 councillors and the Liberal Democrats, 9.

Opening the questioning, Socialist Party member Andy Tullis, who is Lambeth Unison’s children’s services convenor, spoke about the attacks of the previous Labour administration on children’s services and asked whether the new administration can commit to a no-cuts budget to stop the cuts on Lambeth’s jobs and services.

Unfortunately, despite Martin Abrams and many of the Green councillors describing themselves as socialists, the leader refused to commit to not making further cuts.

Abrams emphasised the financial difficulty the Greens had inherited

by taking power in Lambeth Council, repeating the excuses Labour councillors have parroted previously. He also claimed that if the Greens put forward a no-cuts budget, the Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors would collaborate to oust the Greens from power. What is the purpose of the Greens holding power, if they fall in-step with the cutting establishment parties they have criticised in order to do so?

The vast majority of Lambeth Green councillors, including cabinet members, signed up to the pre-election Greens Organise pledge to oppose austerity in local government, including to “pursue innovative revenue raising mechanisms as well as reserves and borrowing powers”.

A no-cuts budget, drawn up in collaboration with trade unions, and local youth and community groups, would win huge support and lay the basis for a mass campaign fighting to win the money from the Labour government. The Green administration taking that approach would put real pressure on the Labour and Lib-Dem councillors, and would raise the confidence of workers and young people in the borough to fight back. Rather than the approach outlined by Abrams which basically boils down to ‘we can’t do much’.



Protesting council cuts in Lambeth in 2025 PHOTO: BERKAN KARIV

Eye on the Greens

What's your experience of Green councillors, or young Green campaigners on campus?

● editors@socialistparty.org.uk



PHOTO: UNODC/CC

World Cup privatisation scandal causes FIFA revolt - reclaim the game!

DEAN YOUNG
LIVERPOOL SOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has caused controversy, not for the first time, with leaked information about his attempts to sell shares in the ownership of the World Cup to private investors. Basically trying to privatise the World Cup.

Before the recent World Cup, the largest ever, Infantino had already racked up an impressive list of controversies such as awarding Donald Trump, by all accounts a close friend of his, a ‘World Peace’ prize. That

aged well. Infantino was also gifted a prize by Putin called the ‘Order of Friendship’ in 2019, shortly after the Russia 2018 World Cup.

Added to this is the fact that in the recent World Cup, hosted in the US, Mexico and Canada, FIFA stepped in to overturn a red card given to US national team player Folarin Balogun after Trump told Infantino to do so!

That is not the end of his list of accomplishments. FIFA under his leadership has also implemented ‘dynamic pricing’, a very controversial concept in which ticket prices spike upwards based on the demand.

This resulted in ticket prices being thousands upon thousands of dollars for games, something common in US sport but certainly not in football.

Was football always this way?

A key turning point in the history of football’s commercialisation was 1974 when João Havelange, a Brazilian son of a Belgian arms dealer who spoke positively of Nazi Germany and a supporter of the Brazilian

Junta, was elected as president of FIFA by portraying himself as an anti-imperialist. He went on to take FIFA to new levels of corruption - via the use of a patronage system on FIFA committees (with the perks of vast expenses accounts to representatives of FAs around the world). He also paid lavishly for representatives from neocolonial nations to attend the FIFA Congress, essentially buying up votes.

This shows that football is not immune to the pressures of the world situation. The bureaucrats who lead football’s institutions often have close ties with the most outrageous military dictatorships and finance capital.

Football commercialised in the mid 1970s amid the collapse in the post-war boom; new markets were needed for capital to expand itself and to increase profitable ventures. Today it is similar but capitalism is in an even worse situation - global economic stagnation or downturn. Football, the world’s sport, is a lucrative business. Therefore the capitalist class demands football opens itself up for further exploitation.

But fans won’t accept this. The fight against the Super League in 2021 which resulted in it being cancelled, the fight against domestic league games being played abroad and crucially fights against ticket price increases at various clubs (such as Liverpool recently), suggest any pro-market reforms won’t be accepted lying down. Even Infantino’s plans have been destroyed after continental football associations such as UEFA threatened to refuse to participate in future World Cups!

What is needed is for the world’s game to belong the people it exists for - the world working class and

poor! It is the world’s game because it is played by working-class and poor people from the favelas of Brazil to the back streets of post-industrial Britain (with everywhere else in between!) Football clubs should be community-owned, democratically controlled by fan associations and the wider community the teams serve. There should be a cap on ticket prices, such as the ‘twenty is plenty’ campaign. The global bureaucracy of football should be swept to one side - with those who are employed by the likes of FIFA accountable to a global network of football fan associations and councils.

Football in a socialist world

All of this would only be possible within a socialist world. Football may not be at the forefront of all people’s minds in this transformation but think of all the talented footballers who never get a chance to entertain the world because they are born in such poverty that they cannot play at a grassroots level (or can’t even afford boots, a ball or a kit). Capitalism holds back the cultural development of humanity alongside its productive capacity. The unleashing of human potential internationally cannot even be described fully.

Gianni Infantino in such a world would be confined to being merely an awkward footnote in history. Perhaps one day he might be the topic of a tie-breaker question in a pub quiz.

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School students can organise for change

ADAM GILLMAN
SOCIALIST STUDENTS

‘Has discipline gone too far in schools?’ This is the question raised in the BBC Radio 4 documentary: ‘File on 4 Investigates - Strict schools: Taking discipline too far?’

The documentary has many examples of what students face in secondary school. Launceston College has uniform inspections and silent corridors.

One student said: “You’re not allowed to pick up a pen unless you’re told to.” If you do this twice, you’re sent to intervention.

In intervention, students sit in silence, watched between plastic dividers for most or all of the day. Intervention can be used for acts such as speaking in the corridor, your top button not being done up, and losing focus.

“Zero-tolerance behaviour policies” have been implemented by school managements to control pupils. When there’s little funding for an education students need, it’s far easier to send pupils to a room than to have the staff to be able to help them develop.

Throughout history, students have played a role alongside the workers’

movement in campaigning to change things.

Students have organised against repression. In 1972 students organised in a students union, walking out of schools in London and protesting against corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment was ended in London in 1974, and nationally in 1986.

Student unions need to be rebuilt, so students can fight alongside workers. A student union gives students a way to discuss the issues and take collective actions, such as walkouts, to change things.

All across the world, young people

are facing attacks on our futures, not only with repression in school, but increasing militarisation, wars, climate change and attacks on our living standards, while this capitalist system plunges further into crisis.

In 2019, hundreds of thousands of school students internationally walked out against climate change. Last year, Socialist Students led hundreds who walked out against Trump’s state visit to Britain.

Socialist Students is part of an international campaign for youth walkouts to ‘fight for our futures, not their wars’. We are helping to organise, school, college and university students to walkout on Friday 20 November.

● ‘File on 4 Investigates’ is available to stream on BBC Sounds

Join the international youth walkout on 20 November



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

Video game inflation levels up

SCOTT HUNTER
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Another form of entertainment and leisure is rapidly becoming inaccessible.

Microsoft has announced that it plans to increase the price of its Xbox games consoles by up to 49% in the UK and Europe. Sony has already raised the price of its PlayStation by 19% this year.

Both manufacturers cite the global shortage in computer memory components due to high demand from the AI industry, compounded by inflation fuelled by the conflict in the Middle East. Korean tech giant Samsung – responsible for about a third of global memory supply – revealed in a call with shareholders this month that it expects the shortage to continue until at least 2028.

Like any corporation under capitalism, component manufacturers like Samsung prioritise making the greatest return on investment. With AI companies, fuelled by speculative investment, willing to pay higher prices and sign long-term contracts, more manufacturing capacity is being given over to the high-bandwidth memory needed for AI datacentres with little dedicated to consumer-grade components.

The net result? Tech giants make billions while everyday leisure activities move further out of reach for the rest of us.

The global video game market is worth hundreds of billions of pounds

a year and games are an important source of entertainment. They can also be key venues for social interaction as many, especially younger people, found out during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Veteran gamers will remember that it used to be normal for a console to come down in price over its lifespan, but now the opposite is true. In fact, prices have increased so much that if you bought a console a few years ago you can probably re-sell it now for more than you originally paid!

Sony has also announced plans to end the sale of games on physical discs. This means that the only way to buy games for future PlayStation consoles will be through Sony's own digital storefront, eliminating the second-hand market and ensuring that Sony can keep the price of software high. This move will also make gaming inaccessible to anyone who lives in an area without high-speed internet.

Access to leisure and entertainment is no game! Multiple and varied recreation is a key part of living a full life, to which we're all entitled. It's clear that the profit-driven capitalist system is increasingly unable to provide these basic things.

Bringing the tech giants and other major industries into democratic public ownership would ensure that production can be planned to meet the needs of all – both to fuel new advances in technology and provide entertainment. Fighting for working class access to recreation also means fighting for real wage rises, fully funded public services including leisure facilities, protecting and expanding green spaces and more.



PHOTO: EEM/CC

London solidarity with Kashmiri struggle



Socialist Party members at the protest
PHOTO: SCOTT HUNTER



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

TESSA WARRINGTON
WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

State repression in Pakistani-occupied Kashmir has sparked outrage. Thousands came to a solidarity protest in London on 30 July.

Coachloads came from Nottingham, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, and Luton, which all have large Kashmiri populations.

London Socialist Party members went down in support, and we were welcomed. People were angry and eager to show us online video footage of police killing civilians.

The repression comes after strikes and demonstrations over the past few years against the rising cost of living. Recently, the Pakistani-backed regional government declared the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) a terrorist organisation, imprisoning dozens of supporters.

Part of the JAAC's programme on the affordability crisis was abolishing the 12 out of 53 seats reserved for refugees from Indian-occupied Kashmir living in Pakistan. These are seen as another attempt by the Pakistani state to rig its influence over the area.

Our leaflets were readily taken out of our hands. They called for an end to repression and the release of JAAC activists, for key aspects of the economy to be brought under Kashmiri workers' control, and for the self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

Four people bought our Socialist paper, donating £11 to our fighting fund. Everyone I spoke to agreed with the need to appeal to the working classes of Pakistan, India, and China for solidarity – a joint struggle against the ruling elites of the region.

We also had discussions about the need to fight for Kashmiri national rights and socialism together, part of the same process.

A voluntary confederation of socialist states is needed. This would address affordable access to the most basic necessities of life, ending state repression and sectarian divide-and-rule, and support the freedom of the Kashmiri people to decide their own fate.

Newham youth want a future

CIARÁN O'DONOGHUE
NEWHAM AND EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

London youth unemployment stands at one in four. Newham, in east London, has the second highest of all London boroughs.

Schools are chronically underfunded after years of vicious Tory and Labour cuts. Unis are no different.

The University of East London (UEL) has undergone staff cuts. Young people who do go to uni end up with mountains of debt, with no guarantee of a job afterwards.

We are being priced out of adequate housing – high rents and a massively oversubscribed council house waiting list. The Newham poverty rate is 38%, with child poverty reaching 45%.

We are feeling the brunt of capitalist crisis. That is why the Socialist

Party in Newham has launched a concerted campaigning effort to discuss with young people about the issues affecting them.

We have been meeting young people in local parks and elsewhere. They have anxiety about unemployment and life prospects. Many rightfully worry about a Reform victory in the next general election.

There is also anger about the genocidal slaughter in Gaza and role played by the establishment parties, particularly Labour, in funding and arming the Israeli state. This meant Labour lost their majority in Newham this May, for the first time since 1971.

Labour still hold executive power through the directly elected Mayor who appoints the cabinet. Mistakenly, the Greens have got into bed with Labour, helping them hold onto power.

Young people in the borough

are desperately looking for a way out. There is a receptiveness to our demands:

- Fully fund education
- Scrap tuition fees
- £15-an-hour minimum wage
- More jobs for young people, with no AI replacement

When campaigning, we say fight for jobs, homes, and services, to cut across racist division. Crucially, we raise the demand for a new mass workers' party as a socialist alternative to the capitalist parties. There was huge openness to this.

We link the issues in Newham to the socialist transformation of society, with the power and wealth placed into the hands of the working class to control and own democratically. Many young people signed up to hear more from us, and expressed an interest in attending our meetings.

Why I joined the Socialist Party Organised together we have the power

ELLIE AXE
SHEFFIELD NORTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

Politics was something I kept at arm's length. It felt too overwhelming to confront.

I had my head in the sand. The excuse being one of protecting my mental health from adverse effects of doomscrolling.

Looking back, that disengagement never insulated me from political decisions. It only meant I wasn't taking part in changing them. Compliance through apathy.

But the more I pondered, the more I saw a bigger picture. The problems we face are not isolated failures. I'd lived through too many 'once-in-a-lifetime financial crises' to believe that. They are symptoms of a system where power and priority are broken.

The beliefs I have held from their early formless vibes, to my more coherently structured analysis, are the same ideas at the core of the Socialist Party. Their emphasis on working-class democracy, international solidarity, and the need for ordinary folk to collectively shape society, offers a compelling alternative to accepting austerity.

The sense of working-class unity I have found through socialist organising has expanded my horizons. It has made me more optimistic that meaningful change is possible through collective action.

And as a queer person, I don't see my identity as something separate

from my socialism. I want to bring my fight for liberation into the Socialist Party. And in return, I want to fight for the wider goals of the movement.

The struggle against oppression and the struggle against economic exploitation strengthen one another. Neither can be fully won in isolation.

I am still getting my feet on the ground and asking questions, learning from those with more experience. But I no longer want to face the future with fear or resignation.

Socialism has given me something I lacked before. The belief that ordinary people, organised together, have the power to do far more than simply wallow and hope for better.

Ellie also explains why she's attending Socialism 2026 in London 14-15

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The strikers march and rally before the gig PHOTO: MARIAM KAMISH

Strike Benefit for the Cwm Taf Health Visitors

MARIAM KAMISH
CAERPHILLY TRADES COUNCIL SECRETARY
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

The Cwm Taf Health Visitors have been on strike since 23 February, demanding Grade 7 grading, in line with their qualifications, responsibilities and experience. It's a scandal that first Welsh Labour and now the new Plaid Cymru government in the Senedd hasn't sorted this out. Scottish Health Visitors won their Grade 7, ten years ago!

November, why you should too, and what she's doing to get people along:

This is only my second time attending. But I felt Socialism 2025 did so much good for my own class consciousness.

There are so many interesting sessions. Everyone will have something they'd want to hear about. So I make sure that it's mentioned at each Sheffield Socialist Party meeting. Each week I come with a specific idea of what part of Socialism 2026 I will push.

I check what our branch meeting is discussing that week and link it to a specific session from the draft programme.

Socialism 2026 is a great opportunity to bring socialists together. So far, 29 people from Sheffield have brought tickets!

Stafford Pride: Anger at Reform council attacks



Socialist Party stall at the Pride event
PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

JOSIE SHELLEY
STAFFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

The sun was shining for Stafford's third annual Pride event on 8 August. But beneath all the glittery and colourful costumes there was simmering anger and a feeling that LGBTQ+ rights are slowly being stripped away. Socialist Party members and supporters held a very lively campaign stall outside the entrance to the event.

Many people were angry at the new guidance that has come in regarding same-sex spaces and being used to attack the rights of trans people. People thought that this was 'just the beginning'.

At last year's local elections, Staffordshire County Council fell under the control of Reform UK and they have certainly been making their presence known! We spoke to a Stafford librarian who had been ordered to dismantle a book display featuring LGBTQ+ authors and stories. Another council worker told us about how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies were being stripped away.

We pointed out that all these struggles needed to be joined into a mass working-class movement against austerity, division and oppression.

All in all it was a fantastic stall where we raised almost £30 to aid our political fightback!

Fund the fightback

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- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate or call 020 8988 8777
- or make cheques payable to Socialist Party.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

AREA	£ RECEIVED	£ TARGET	Q3: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026	DEADLINE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2026
South West	2,307	2,100		110%
Wales	1,039	2,400		43%
West Midlands	797	2,700	30%	
East Midlands	558	2,050	27%	
Southern and SE	638	2,400	27%	
Northern	202	800	25%	
Yorkshire	574	2,650	22%	
London	1,058	5,000	21%	
Eastern	225	1,300	17%	
North West	153	1,200	13%	
Other	477	1,200	20%	
TOTAL	8,027	25,000	32%	

‘Cockroach’ youth movement shakes Modi government

An interview with a socialist activist from India

The recent mass movement of youth against the policies of the Narendra Modi government in India was a key topic of discussion at the recent CWI Summer School in Berlin. **Laura Rafetseder, from the CWI in Austria, spoke with Youvraj, a member of New Socialist Alternative (CWI India),** about the origins of the protests, the rise of the ‘Cockroach Janata Party’ (CJP), and the vital lessons for the students’ and workers’ movements.

What began as a response to educational scandals - specifically the cancellation of the NEET-UG medical entrance examination following a massive paper leak - rapidly evolved into a nationwide political movement. While the media outlets focused on the CJP - the satirical online movement launched by ‘communication strategist’ Abhijit Dipke - the true engine of the struggle was the mass mobilisation of youth on the ground.

During the 35-day sit-in strikes in Delhi, particularly following the state’s crackdown on protesters, the movement demonstrated that, despite the authoritarian consolidation of the Modi regime, deep-seated disillusionment and anger are bubbling to the surface. As Youvraj explains, the movement was a classic case of leadership being pushed from below, as students and youth forced the agitation beyond its initial, limited demands for the Education Minister’s resignation, increasingly challenging the Prime Minister and the broader capitalist regime itself.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE CONDITIONS THAT LED TO THE MOVEMENT?

There has been a significant amount of discontent and a kind of disillusionment that has been building up in India because of the expectations of ‘New India’, promised by Prime Minister Modi. That’s how he came to power. But all the hopes and promises were hollow.

Especially after Covid, things started changing and the mood was slowly turning to anger, especially because of joblessness and unemployment. In addition, the educational system is broken. But the opposition was weak, which is how Modi could continue to control the situation. Nevertheless, discontent had been building up as well as disillusionment and anger. You just needed a match to light it. And the trigger was the university entrance exams for medical schools. Medical school is one of the few ways in India to move up, so a lot of young people want to get in, especially because of

how low the wages in other jobs are. There’s a huge competition for entrance into medical schools.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE MOVEMENT’S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

I think the strength of the movement was that it captured the imagination of students and youth. It started as a students movement around that educational issue. But it turned into a mass movement, and in effect challenged the very regime in some ways. It started with a single issue, but later it turned into a generalised mass political movement.

Its limitations are that it is lacking organisation. Instead it was a spontaneous online social media thing. The media talk about the ‘cockroach movement’, and yes, the CJP started it. But the movement went far beyond it. The left student unions did the real mobilisation for the 35 days of sit-in



PHOTO: SUMITRA ROY DUTTA/CC

“

I think the strength of the movement was that it captured the imagination of students and youth. It started as a students movement around educational issues. But it turned into a mass movement, and in effect challenged the very regime

strikes. The rallying point was in Delhi. The sit-in strikes started from 20 June and were successful on 24 July when the Education Minister resigned. The commitment came from the left student organisations, but there were no democratic structures to coordinate the movement. The CJP leadership at one point tried to limit the movement. In effect, it tried to divert attention from the resignation of the minister. When it was pushed from below, it adopted some general demands, like having the right to access education. But the leadership really did not have a broader outlook.

“

THE MOVEMENT HAS SHOWN THAT MODI IS NOT INVINCIBLE. OTHERS ON THE LEFT HAD CLAIMED THAT THE MODI GOVERNMENT IS FASCIST. HOW DOES THE CWI IN INDIA CHARACTERISE THE MODI GOVERNMENT?

We have been saying for quite some time that this is not a fascist

government. For us, fascism is not a loose term. Fascism implies a mass moment to smash the working class. It is true that this is a very right-wing, extremely authoritarian government. At one point, there was possibly a mass movement, let’s say between 2014-2018. But again, it was not based upon a fundamental ideology. Even when it had more popular support, it was based more on Modi’s promises of better days. It wasn’t an ideologically right-wing mass movement. More importantly, in the last seven years, it has been very clear that it is no longer a mass movement. A section does support it, but that is a tiny section. Many more are against the Modi government. It is always necessary to distinguish between authoritarianism and fascism.

HAS THE MOVEMENT MANAGED TO OVERCOME SOME COMMUNAL DIVISIONS?

In the movement, to an extent. It is part of the slogans and chants in the demonstrations: “Whenever Modi is scared of the people he attacks Muslim people. Whenever Modi is scared of the people he brings in the police. When Modi is scared of the people he will bring in division.”

INDIA HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR GENERAL STRIKES IN THE PAST AND HAS HAD A BIG STRIKE A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO. CAN YOU TELL ME A BIT ABOUT THAT?

The Indian working class is large. That means when it goes on strike, a large number is on strike. But of this huge working class, only 7% or less is organised in trade unions. Nonetheless, this organised working class is very important. I think one of the major reasons why we have had more strikes in the last few years is that the government attempted to bring in new labour laws. In 2020, this government said, ‘we are simplifying the laws’. But in fact it was an attempt to deprive the working class of its collective bargaining power. The new labour laws are absolutely anti-working class. Workers could sense that. Which is why, since 2020, there have been general strikes almost every year, at times even twice a year. And because of that, in 2020, even though the laws were passed, the government said ‘we’re not going to implement these laws’. This is a partial success of the strikes. But this year, the government decided to implement these laws. And there was a general strike. But they were not really full-throttle. The union leadership is unable to fully mobilise workers. If they get mobilised, even 5-10% of the working class is a huge power. But the trade union leaders are afraid of that power and they hesitate because it could challenge the government.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME AND DEMANDS THAT WE RAISE IN THE MOVEMENT AND HOW CAN THE MOVEMENT BE LINKED UP TO THE ORGANISED WORKING CLASS?

There are several things we try to do. One is during the movement itself, we put forward a transitional approach. We launched a campaign to connect to the youth - the ‘RRR’ campaign. We said “resist this regime”. The second R is “reclaim democracy”. And the third R is “rebuild the society along socialist lines”. ‘RRR’ - resist, reclaim and rebuild! Resisting and reclaiming democracy is good - but it is not enough because those who are in power do not represent the workers and the masses.

We issued appeals to the left student unions. That they should, along with the CJP, form coordination committees. These committees should coordinate the whole movement with a democratic structure. The left student unions played a crucial role. We welcome that, but they did not take leadership of the movement. We appeal to them that there should be joint coordination committees and that this whole movement should be coordinated.

We also called on the unions to mobilise to support the students, that they must call for strikes and demonstrations in support of the movement. At one point the situation was dangerous, the government was going to attack the movement. So in that situation it was important to show that the students have much larger support. We called upon the trade unions to join the struggle so we can connect them to the youth, so they know the workers are with us. This was no hollow call.

“

At one point the situation was dangerous, the government was going to attack the movement. So in that situation it was important to show that the students have much larger support. We called upon the trade unions to join the struggle so we can connect them to the youth, so they know the workers are with us

We have our own construction workers’ union. Not a large union, but we did hold two demonstrations in support. ‘Construction workers stand with students and youth’, was the slogan. Our students union also joined. We also formed a solidarity committee for the youth movement at the city level. We organised demonstrations and multiple things in support.

USUALLY THE WEAKNESS OF MOVEMENTS AGAINST RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENTS IS THAT THE OPPOSITION IS SO WEAK. THE QUESTION OF AN ALTERNATIVE IS UNCLEAR.

Yes, they feel they have no alternative. Absolutely. How do we confront it? Most of the left had been rallying behind the pro-capitalist Congress Party. They have been saying ‘we need Congress as a lesser evil because this is fascism’. So they don’t really have an independent programme. But the fact is we would need a workers’ government with a socialist programme. And you could see the same internationally in movements in other countries, like in Sri Lanka, the GenZ movements in Indonesia etc.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Reverse all the cuts, kick

out the privateers. Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public ownership under democratic control, in order to provide free, high-quality services for all who need them. Expand services for all women suffering violence.

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

are set by consumers, small farmers, and all workers involved in the production, processing, distribution and retail of food.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars & 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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the Socialist

Issue 1378

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formerly **Militant**

Keep up pressure on Burnham Lobby the TUC for a UNION DEMO AGAINST AUSTERITY

ZAKK BROWN

PCS REP, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The PCS civil servants union, with its left majority National Executive Committee, is going to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in September armed with a motion to campaign for the trade union movement to pile pressure onto Andy Burnham's Labour government.

The appointment of Burnham as the new prime minister and leader of the Labour Party, while giving Labour a temporary bump in the polls, does not mean anything unless there is a real fight for policies which meet the needs of workers and working-class communities still struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.

The motion PCS will move aims to rally the broader TUC movement behind holding Burnham's feet to the fire with action to back up demands.

This will be done through calling on the government to launch sustained public investment. PCS-commissioned research has confirmed that public investment acts as an engine for growth and more than pays for itself through outcomes such as reduced reliance on Universal Credit to subsidise low wages and high housing costs.

PCS also calls on the TUC to demand the new prime minister reopens talks on public sector pay for 2026-27.

The motion demands a trade union-led national demonstration this autumn for investment into public services and against austerity.

And that public sector unions unite on a national pay campaign, taking coordinated industrial action where needed.

This motion will be the focus of a lobby of the TUC by the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), engaging with the other unions in the TUC and helping build support for the PCS motion to pressure the government to deliver for workers.

We have an opportunity to pressure the Burnham government. But it is clear that the Labour leadership is more concerned with 'fiscal rules', appeasing the bosses than protecting the interests of workers. The Socialist Party says the trade unions should debate what kind of political representation we need, and begin to form their own political vehicle for the working class.

LOBBY THE TUC

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WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ►► see column on p15



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