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CUT BILLS, FUND SERVICES, RAISE PAY

STRIKE PROTEST WALKOUT

Every day, another pep talk from Andy Burnham about how different things will be with him as prime minister.

Does it feel any different yet to you? It still hurts when the price of the weekly shop rings up, or the rent exits the account. For all his warm

words, what fundamental change has Burnham got to offer? So far, the summer policy blitz amounted to less than a pound a week off energy bills from January – by which point price rises could have already wiped that out.

Every day, another headline about the cost of Britain's government borrowing rising. 'We must stick to fiscal discipline', government ministers recite, exactly like they did with Keir Starmer as prime minister.

So, to keep the casino capitalist bondholding banks happy, the status quo of underfunded and crumbling public services will remain – albeit delivered with a message of 'hope and optimism'.

Meanwhile, young people are denied a decent future and scapegoated as 'snowflakes'. And the Labour government finds money for bombs, missiles and other military means – like for the assistance given to the Saudi Arabian regime to bomb Houthis in Yemen.

One difference this autumn, compared to the last two with Labour in power, is the fact that three trade unions, NEU, PCS and UCU, are planning to ballot for strikes nationally: teachers in schools and colleges, and civil servants.

In each case, the union leaders have been forced to act under pressure from their members – workers who know that if you want change, it's not enough to simply wait and see, you have to act!

Young people are set to take

action on 20 November, part of an international youth strike under the slogan: 'Fight for our future, not their wars' (see page 16).

And the trade union movement should act too, starting with making good the policy passed by the TUC calling for a weekend demonstration this autumn, bringing together all those wanting to fight for real change – an end to the cost-of-living crisis and fully funded public services (see page 4-5).

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IS A BILLIONAIRE TAX THE ANSWER? >>> p14-15



ROB FARROW/CC

Net Zero by 2050 is not good enough

We need socialist change to prevent climate catastrophe

DEZZY TAYLOR
SWINDON SOCIALIST PARTY

While the devastating effects of the climate catastrophe are on the news every week, the announcement of £30 million to vague, unnamed 'People's Power' projects from Andy Burnham is the prime minister's latest serving of crumbs and vibes. Again, instead of standing up for the vast majority of us, the pro-capitalist Labour government is putting the profits of a few above our needs.

Earlier this year, Thames Water advertised a £6 billion initiative to clean up Britain's waterways. £6 billion from a private water company to clean up the mess that they have made does not feel enough, because it isn't! And, in government funding terms, £30 million for local projects to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 is pennies.

There is also something to be said for the timescale. The world is already close to climate 'tipping points', in which warming effects compound. We have seen the cataclysmic consequences of this already; the extremely high-casualty flash flood in Tibet is just the beginning. Rising sea levels will create millions of climate refugees. We need more than just £30

million, and we need more than urban wind farms or solar cells on public buildings' roofs.

To shift the blame from polluting production, and the bosses that continue to enrich themselves from it, the bosses' media and governments try to push the blame onto us by focusing on things like recycling. We all see how our neighbours diligently recycle but pollution in the world ocean's only increases. But single-use packaging that's impossible to recycle, will be prioritised to protect profit margins.

A workers' transition

No doubt the organised working class would be able to find various sustainable and intuitive solutions. Many would ask: "Why did no one think of this before?" The answer: "The bosses didn't let us!". The Lucas Plan is a prime example historically of how the organised working class free to make human-centred socially

useful products, can solve many problems with the resources already available to us. (see 'The 'Lucas Plan' on socialistparty.org.uk)

2050 is not good enough for Net Zero. We need to look at solutions to make us carbon negative as soon as possible, as well as developing technologies to protect the lives of people as we face a changing climate. The wealth and resources currently hoarded by a super-rich few could instead be put to use transitioning away from polluting fossil fuels and building the infrastructure we need. This would include barriers to defend against flooding, clean, safe, properly made housing for all. Decent pay and services to ensure no one goes cold, or hungry. But only by the working class wrestling ownership and control from the billionaire bosses can we prevent climate catastrophe and guarantee a decent standard of living for all.

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Watered down devolution: new boards, same private owners

ALEX GERROLL
MANCHESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

Labour prime minister Andy Burnham plans to give mayors oversight of water companies in the form of regional water authorities. This comes in the wake of Thames Water's financial woes and pressure on Burnham to nationalise it.

The 16 water cartels paid out around £78 billion in dividends between privatisation and March 2023 in inflation-adjusted terms, while running up more than £64 billion in net debt over the same period, against roughly £190 billion of capital spending. Water companies have run up debts to hand out cash to investors, all while infrastructure crumbles and some of our bills are expected to rise over 50% by 2030 on average. No water-supply reservoir has been both planned and completed under privatisation in England and Wales – that's since 1989!

The idea for this restructure was initially conceived by Sir Jon Cunliffe, published by the Independent Water Commission last July. The commission did not even consider the idea of renationalisation. In the

foreword of the report, Cunliffe states that he understands the concerns about profit within the sector and that, "within the terms of reference", he "looked in depth at ways to ensure water companies are aligned with the public interest". The government commissioned a review of a failing privatisation, and told it not to consider ending the privatisation!

Ministers have already accepted the central recommendation: abolishing Ofwat and folding it together with the drinking water inspectorate and the water functions of the Environment Agency and Natural England into one larger, supposedly more powerful, regulator.

The regional bodies were left out by Keir Starmer's government, however now Burnham is considering reviving them, these new bodies would be tasked with "developing investment plans that reflect local priorities and voices", according to the commission. Currently Ofwat sets limits on what water companies can charge customers over a five-year period, and provides oversight on infrastructure spending.

The report states that any investment plan composed by these bodies

will go to this new regulator for a 'cost-efficiency challenge' and to determine what companies can charge customers. Additionally these new regional boards will have extremely limited democratic input, despite the BBC claiming mayors will be heading these boards, all appointments are slated to be made centrally by the Secretary of State.

Unsurprisingly, water workers themselves won't have an automatic right to decide how the water system is run, nor their unions. Under the proposals, the water companies are still fully under the control of the shareholders, and the new central regulator will have a duty to maintain profits for them rather than to distribute water effectively to people.

The water companies should be nationalised and brought under democratic working-class control instead of a toothless bureaucratic board. Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need, and instead of resources sucked away as profit, infrastructure could be improved through input by water workers and the wider working class, to bring down our bills and protect the environment.



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Timms Review recommendations - what's at stake

A DISABLED SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has published a list of 'emerging recommendations' for reforming the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) disability benefit. It is now putting those recommendations to a set of top-down consultation events.

Some of those recommendations are of great concern. But what's even more striking is what's missing – what we're not supposed to discuss, because it has already been decided.

Pre-determined outcome

The government is quite frank about how the PIP assessment will become "the single gateway for all health-related and disability benefits" by merging into the Universal Credit Work Capability Assessment.

Conflating fitness to work with the cost of disability, in and out of work, is entirely inappropriate. It is a huge change that the review will not permit us to debate.

It also means that the Timms Review is actually a review of the entire welfare system by stealth. Many changes hinge on the conclusion of the review, such as replacing incapacity benefits with time-limited insurance.

Ministers, including Timms, have been frank that they still intend to remove some benefits entirely from disabled people under the age of 22.

The government is preparing its case with the Milburn Review into youth unemployment and the Fonagy

review into supposed 'overdiagnosis' of disability, both to report soon.

The role of the hated private sector in disability assessments is presented as an accomplished fact.

Disability poverty

PIP, as it currently exists, is an inadequate contribution to the real cost of disability. Out of necessity, it is also used by many disabled people, not to meet the cost of disability, but the cost of living.

Disabled people are disproportionately in severe poverty. Disabled workers face a growing disability pay gap of £2.35 an hour – with non-disabled workers earning 17.2% more.

And disabled people who can't work, if they are new claimants, are £2,400 worse off per year as a result of last year's Universal Credit cuts. The new proposals risk cuts to the already insufficient elements of PIP that address disability poverty.

Reject 'cost-categories'

The Timms Review is pointing towards moving away from cash awards based on functional impairments, such as ability to wash, or walk 20 metres. Instead, it is looking at 'cost categories'.

Such an overly bureaucratic model will require disabled people to account for every penny and beg the DWP to approve each item of spending.

The review also proposes reducing awards in place of offering aids, clothes, bedding, and services directly.

What services? Healthcare and social services have been gutted. Will they be funded, or is the review expecting disabled people to replace cut services out of our own awards – in effect, a new completely regressive tax?

Fight for needs-based funding

There has been a consistent trend, since the introduction of PIP under the 2010-15 Cameron-Clegg coalition government, and continuing public sector austerity, to move away from assessed needs.

Disguised by rhetoric of independence, choice and control, disabled people are instead given 'personal budgets.' If our needs are not capable of being properly met out of those personal budgets, then those needs are left unmet.

This is backwards. Disabled people should have choice, control and independence, including personal budgets as one aspect of meeting our needs.

The goal must be to meet those needs, including through well-funded public services – not for the government to pick and choose a 'contribution towards the cost' at a level the Treasury dictates.

Prepare to defeat Timms

These cuts would already be in place if not for the thunderous protests of disabled people last year.

We urgently need a "coalition of the willing" to mobilise in emergency defence of disabled people and carers, who are once again under siege and fighting to win.



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

TUC Congress

Leaders who want to hold back struggle pressured by members demanding a fight

Enact the PCS motion: Name the date for a trade union-led demonstration



ROB WILLIAMS
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

It means taking the Prime Minister at his word and working with him to re-industrialise Britain.”
Trades Union Congress (TUC) general secretary Paul Nowak set the tone at TUC Congress in Brighton, 13-16 September, a tone which most of the union leaders dutifully followed. The clear message was: ‘Create breathing space for Andy Burnham.’
Yet even in the rarified atmosphere of the TUC, at times the desperate situation that faces workers, their families and communities broke through.
One National Education Union (NEU) delegate said that her annual school departmental budget amounted to £4,000 – the same as it was 15 years ago! In real terms, that figure should be over £6,500. This could be multiplied many times over in all sectors and, in microcosm, this is the reality of 16 years of brutal austerity.
The nearly two decades since the 2007-09 Great Recession, triggered by the financial crisis, have been a catastrophe for working-class people. They have faced the huge cuts offensive of successive Tory-Liberal, Tory and now Labour governments, administered by councils of every party stripe.

Two years ago, newly elected Labour prime minister Keir Starmer confidently pronounced to TUC delegates: “I have to make it clear that this government won’t risk economic stability – and with tough decisions on the horizon, pay will be inevitably shaped by that... I call for the politics of partnership – business and workers, public and private.”
Inevitably, that meant governing in the interests of big business at the expense of workers. But in this period of capitalist crisis, any government that represents this bosses’ system will be a government of crisis, as Starmer discovered, thrown out by the anger and frustration of working-class people.
Political crisis
Such is the level of political crisis, Burnham stood as the Labour candidate in the Makerfield by-election as the opposition candidate to the Labour government, in order to be the new prime minister of the same Labour government!
In order to accomplish this, Burnham had to promise a ‘new direction’. Workers are waiting, some hoping against hope, that something better will be delivered, with his first Budget taking place on 28 October.
But the leadership of the trade union movement can’t reduce themselves to wishful thinking. The most militant delegates, many of them

members of the Socialist Party, starting at the National Shop Stewards Network pre-Congress rally and lobby, argued that the union movement must mobilise in order to build pressure on Burnham to counter the agenda of the bosses, who are demanding that workers pay for crisis-ridden British capitalism.
It is essential that the unions take the lead, to ensure a united front is built, to overcome the attempts by the capitalists and their political representatives, including Burnham’s Labour government, to sow division, to pit worker against worker and even union against union. This is the strategy behind targeting the pension triple lock on the basis that young people are disadvantaged compared to older workers, supposedly on golden pensions!
Actually, workers of all generations are suffering from the bosses’ offensive. The unions have the responsibility to give a lead with a fighting industrial and political programme to build a united movement of struggle.
The civil service union PCS motion 34 set out such a strategy, calling on the TUC “to urgently call a national Saturday demonstration this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies” and urging “all public sector unions to join a united campaign on pay, and, if needed, to plan for

The NSSN lobby of the TUC PHOTO: GREG NITEOS

coordinated industrial action to secure real gains for workers.”
This was passed unanimously, but with a ‘statement of explanation’ from the TUC General Council, moved by Nowak, that it’s up to unions to coordinate action, and that a demonstration will be considered by the General Council based on ‘resources’.
Many delegates will be well aware that we’ve been here before – just last year to be exact! Then, a successful motion calling for a demonstration was tabled by the TUC Disabled Workers’ Conference and Trades Councils Conference, and then shamefully ignored by the TUC General Council. An opportunity for the unions to take a lead against Starmer’s hated government was missed, leaving a space for Farage and the far right to look to fill with their divisive poison.
‘Coalition of the willing’
The fighting unions must form a ‘coalition of the willing’ to demand, at the General Council on 21 October, that such a demonstration is called before the end of the year. Those unions that are set to undertake national strike ballots in the next few weeks (PCS, NEU and further education members of the University and College Union UCU) should take the lead, and approach other unions with a fighting record. But at the same time, they should prepare to take the initiative should the General Council again act as a barrier.
Two years ago, when Starmer came to the TUC, we identified two trends in the unions and the workers’ movement – partnership with the bosses, or fight for workers. Starmer, at the zenith of his authority after being elected to end 14 years of Tory governments, was allowed to lord it over the Congress, peppering his speech with the need for the unions to go into partnership with the bosses.
Now, with Starmer unceremoniously ousted, hated by workers for implementing policy in the interests of the capitalist bosses, many of the union leaders are determined to give Burnham space and time. They are

“
This struggle is developing across the union movement and within each union. Three unions, PCS, NEU and UCU, that are balloting members for national strike action

well aware that under pressure from the cost-of-living squeeze, workers’ patience is wearing thin.
Burnham didn’t address Congress because his father had passed away; Labour cabinet minister Louise Haigh deputised for him. Some union leaders praised her speech and welcomed the Employment Rights Act. But despite passing Composite 2 on strengthening employment rights, which demands that the government deliver its election promise two years ago to scrap the 50% strike ballot threshold brought in by Tory David Cameron in 2016, in the question and answer with Haigh there was no mention of this. Similarly, with another demand in the composite, that the POA’s right to strike for prison officers be restored.
Also, on that very Tuesday lunch-time, UCU and Unison organised a protest outside the University of Brighton, less than a mile from Congress, against the brutal threats of management to derecognise both, and to give notice to terminate all collective agreements, including pay scales, hours, grades, annual leave, and a whole range of terms and conditions. For all the welcoming talk of union leaders, this is the vicious reality that still takes place on Burnham’s watch.
But there is another trend, one in which Socialist Party members, at all levels of the union movement, play a critical role – fighting for militant industrial action and a socialist political programme, and a union-centred political vehicle to stand up to the big business parties.
This struggle is developing across the union movement and within each union. The three unions, PCS, NEU and UCU, that are balloting members for national strike action, agreed this position in opposition to their respective union leaders. Tellingly, not one of these unions’ general secretaries mentioned these impending ballots from the Congress rostrum! Instead, it was left to rank-and-file delegates to make the announcement.
This shows that nothing is automatic, as many of the union leaders



A TUC demo in 2022 PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

move might and main to try to prevent action against Burnham’s fledgling government, just as they did in 2024, when they used the authority they had gained during the strike wave to assist Starmer in ending the pay battles.
Yet, right now is exactly when such a struggle should take place, to fight for workers’ interests against the demands on Burnham from the bosses. NEU Executive members will be scrutinising the apparent concession on the funding of teacher pay, announced by NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede at the close of TUC Congress. But the main lesson is that being prepared to take action can force the government to make concessions.
The Blairites and Starmerites that fill his cabinet and advisory team show where Burnham is really coming from. He was comfortable in sending Angela Rayner, now his Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to Congress.
Sitting on the platform, Rayner had one nervous eye on the Unite delegation who, with many other union delegates, refused to join in with

a standing ovation, and with good reason. At last year’s Unite policy conference, an emergency motion was overwhelmingly passed, drafted and moved by Socialist Party delegates and close allies, that suspended Rayner and the cutting Labour councillors from Unite membership because of the vicious fire and rehire of the heroic Birmingham binworkers, to slash their wages by £8,000.
That motion also committed Unite to open up a discussion about its relationship with Labour. Socialist Party members in the union argue for that debate to start, so that Unite and all the unions can grapple with how to fill the yawning vacuum with an authentic and independent political voice for workers, to put forward the policies that workers desperately need.
The election of Burnham as the crisis of UK capitalism deepens, amplifies rather than negates the need for such a discussion about a real workers’ political alternative.
The building of such a political force along with, and to strengthen, militant industrial action, are the main tasks for fighting trade unions and members.



PHOTO: KEVIN PARSLAW



PHOTO: ROB WILLIAMS

Legalease workers strike against low pay

Workers organised in Unite at Legalease, the law publishing and research company which produces ‘Legal 500’, are striking over low pay. A 3.4% offer from the bosses has been rejected and strike action has been taking place since 14 September, with this round continuing until 25 September.

University of Brighton declares war on unions



Fiona Brittle, PCS NEC member, speaking at the University of Brighton protest. BRIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

BILL NORTH
BRIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

University of Brighton (UoB) trade unionists mobilised to oppose an all-out attack on their pay and conditions, with a protest on 15 September. Members of the University and College Union (UCU) and Unison were joined by locals, and delegates to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which was meeting half a mile away in Brighton.

Management have given formal notice that they intend to terminate the recognition agreement with UCU and Unison, and collective agreements covering just about all aspects of employment – job descriptions, pay grades, sick pay, and parental leave.

Brighton UCU has said: “Derecognition would remove the university’s legal requirement to engage in collective bargaining, meaning there would be no standard contracts, and instead every individual employee would require an individually written and agreed contract. Instead of negotiating with staff representatives, university management would unilaterally dictate employee contracts and working conditions.”

A university spokesperson told media: “We greatly value... our trade unions... and we remain committed to working collaboratively with them.” Management

are undoubtedly keen to work ‘collaboratively’ to impose pay cuts and longer working hours.

Like the rest of higher education, UoB faces a financial crisis. Funding from tuition fees is not sufficient to cover rising operating costs.

This is exacerbated by bureaucratic mismanagement of funds spent on new buildings meant to make the university more attractive to prospective students, instead of investing in staff.

But rather than campaigning for higher education to be fully funded by the government, the university management is attempting to shift the burden onto workers. Three years ago, UoB made over 100 staff redundant to save £18 million. This latest attack is being carried out in preparation for a new round of cuts to pay and jobs.

‘The powers that be’ at other universities are following events at Brighton with great interest – another reason why the vicious UoB bosses must be beaten back.

Unions must mobilise

All campus unions, student organisations, and the broader workers’ movement must be mobilised to resist this attack, including the possibility of coordinated strike action by university workers.

Socialist Party Scotland member Fiona Brittle spoke at the rally. Fiona is a member of the National

Executive Committee of PCS civil service union.

She informed the protest that TUC Congress had just passed a motion committing it to organise a national demonstration demanding proper funding for the public sector, and coordinated strike action (see pages 4-5). UCU and Unison should now use their positions on the TUC General Council to demand that this is urgently carried out.

Over 90 universities have made redundancies in the last three years. This is a national issue. It needs a national campaign. UCU members voted for national action at the Higher Education conference this spring, but are now having to fight for that to be implemented.

This must be linked to demanding that the new Andy Burnham government implement UCU policy for fully-funded, free education, paid for by the super-rich – the only way out of the crisis. Forcing students, who already face a mountain of debt, to pay more through higher tuition fees is no solution.

University management will attempt to spin strike action or protest by workers as harmful to students. The opposite is true. Successfully stopping these attacks means defending the quality of teaching and facilities. Fighting student organisations could play an important role – spreading awareness and mobilising students to protest in support of workers.

Ardagh Glass pay win

A worker brought in to provide cover was won to the union, and spoke to the Socialist

ALI MANSFIELD
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Forklift drivers and machine operators at Ardagh Glass near Wakefield have won in their strike against employer Lockwood Haulage. The Unite members were asking for a 2.5% pay rise to keep up with the rising cost of living, and in line with drivers at other sites. The strike was successful, winning the pay rise with back pay to March last year.

Lockwood had previously taken a hardline approach, refusing to engage seriously in negotiations, including unacceptable attacks on terms and conditions. Part of this was a refusal by management to acknowledge the skill and expertise of the workforce, and they brought in strike cover without proper training. But this attitude came back to them in a series of accidents, involving pallets loaded with glass bottles stacked more than six feet high.

Cover worker speaks out

A worker who was sent to Ardagh from his home depot got in touch with the Socialist after reading an

initial strike report, and gave us insight into conditions on the shop floor.

He described his position as “running blind”, having been given no induction since being sent from his usual depot. He didn’t know who his line manager was, and had been given no information on fire safety procedure.

The management apparently had “no idea what goes on on the warehouse floor” and took an irresponsible approach to training. “Their attitude was ‘if you’ve got a licence, get on with it’” This led to a major slowdown in the work, but also to serious accidents.

By the second day of the strike there were already pallets being smashed, and a forklift truck was out of use because of a layer of broken glass on its roof. This situation escalated into a major accident, with reportedly 50 pallets being knocked over, and the broken glass contaminating many more.

“You’d be hard-pressed to find anybody as skilled in a 50-mile radius”, this driver told us about the crew out on strike, and expressed his support. He has now joined Unite.



YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Dispute brewing at Harlow council

ANDY HAMMOND
ESSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

There is a culture of intimidation at Harlow District Council, led by the Tory Council Leader, Dan Swords. A Unison rep told us that workers are not being respected and there have been arbitrary firings of staff to scare the remaining workers. Furthermore, the council refuses to talk to Unison regional officers, even though the union is formally recognised.

In particular, this is about the council trying to enforce a return

to working four days in the office. They are refusing to negotiate with Unison over the conditions of the return, despite Unison having made several attempts to do so. The union is not against the return but insists there must be certain conditions met.

As of Thursday 17 September, the union is formally in dispute with the council. In the evening there was a council meeting in which Dan Swords was handed a letter informing him personally of this. The union reps and supporters then walked out of the public gallery together.

Unison is going to ACAS, and will have a consultative ballot of members to seek a ballot for industrial action.

Teacher pay and school funding – the fight is not over!

THIS IS AN EDITED VERSION OF A SOCIALIST PARTY LEAFLET GIVEN OUT TO NEU MEMBERS ON FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

In the face of the threat of strike action the government has promised £500 million extra to fund teachers’ pay – but where is the money coming from?

- **No smoke and mirrors about whether this is new money**
- **No robbing Peter to pay Paul - support staff will still feel the brunt of school cuts**
- **The government should provide central funding to cover the pay award, not cover it in such a way that will differ area by area and potentially still lead to cuts**
- **Any money saved from pension scheme revaluations should be spent on public services and pay**
- **Members voted to ballot for more pay and more funding. We can’t let Burnham off the hook. We say keep the ballot on to win what members demanded**

National Education Union (NEU) general secretary Daniel Kebede announced that the NEU has secured £500 million extra to ensure the 2026-27 teacher pay award will now be fully funded. Heads have been expected to find £460 million out of existing school budgets, which would have resulted in further cuts and job losses.

In the way it was presented, reps and members would see this as a significant win.

But the money is proposed to come from the revaluation of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).



Teachers and support staff striking together against cuts in North London. LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates as much as £24.5 billion could be ‘saved’ through the revaluations of public service pension schemes across the board, because employers need to pay in less than previously to maintain the schemes.

But the LGPS is a separate pot held by each council or employer. The amounts in the pot and the amounts that employers pay in vary. If the amount the employer needs to pay in goes down, the council or the school would normally expect that they have more to spend on something else.

Now, Heads are saying that what they thought was going to be new money to fund the pay rise turns out not to be. They have already budgeted for this money.

And as the pots vary, some schools will have enough to fund the pay rise fully, others won’t, and there will still be cuts. In many areas, support staff will feel that they are paying the price.

We do not want division between teachers and support staff and we do not want division between unions. This is why Socialist Party members on the National Executive opposed

the decision not to ballot support staff, and it is why we have campaigned all summer for maximum unity between support staff unions instead of division.

As Daniel Kebede said on the day of the announcement, “74% of schools have less money in real terms than they did in 2010... Experienced teachers have seen their pay cut by 23% in real terms since 2010, contributing to the ongoing recruitment and retention crisis.”

NEU’s stated aim is to restore funding at least to 2015 levels and ultimately to 5% of GDP (the OECD average), the equivalent of £14 billion.

In the July ‘snap poll’ of NEU members, over 70% voted to ballot for action to win more overall funding and for more pay than the 3.5% for this year and 3% for next year. The pay increase is above current inflation, but for how long? That was also the decision of the Executive just before the summer holidays.

What about the £3 billion savings the government says is to come from 2027-28 Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS) changes? We need to win the commitment now from government that all of it will be ploughed back, on top of the funding settlement for next year.

Now is not the time to step back. We don’t want our union leadership rushing to let Andy Burnham off the hook. This is a two-year deal – if we don’t fight now, when will we?

**SHEILA CAFFEY, LOUISE CUFFARO, DAN WARRINGTON,
NEU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

● The NEU Executive meets on Thursday 24 September to decide how to proceed

Cwm Taf Health Visitors say ‘Plaid Lied’ – TUC Cymru must step up

DAVE REID
VICE PRESIDENT CARDIFF TRADES UNION COUNCIL

“I have a message for Plaid. We are going nowhere. We will not bow down. You lied!”

So said Cwm Taf Morgannwg health visitor rep, Kerry Parry, at the latest lobby of the Senedd (Welsh parliament) to mark 30 weeks of strike action.

120 workers, members of Unite, have been on strike since February, for their job evaluation at Band 7 to be paid by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. “We have been out in winter coats, T-shirts and now raincoats, but we’re not giving in,” promised Gemma Emanuel.

Incredibly, the strike is just as solid as at the beginning – in fact, more workers have joined.

Before May, it was the Labour health minister who refused to intervene to ensure the health visitors received their fair pay.

In opposition, Plaid Cymru



SOCIALIST PARTY WALES

castigated them and, when challenged, promised to ensure that when they were elected they would pay the rate. Now in government, the Plaid health minister is nowhere to be seen and still the health visitors have not been put on the right rate. Plaid lied.

Unite the Union has supported the workers, but now the wider trade union movement in Wales must step up. Our movement has to show the Plaid Cymru government that it cannot just ignore workers fighting for pay justice nor workers’ rights across Wales. The trade union movement must step up the fight for fair pay.

Cardiff Trades Union Council is calling for TUC Cymru/Wales to call a national demonstration on a Saturday to demand that the Welsh government intervene to ensure pay justice for Cwm Taf Morgannwg health visitors. It should be linked to the demand for pay increases in the public sector in Wales to keep pace with cost-of-living increases.

Workers in Wales should not pay

for the crisis in Welsh public finances. The fight for pay for Cwm Taf health visitors is the first blow in the struggle for fair pay for all Welsh public sector workers.

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Holborn and St Pancras by-election

WHAT NEXT FOR WORKERS' POLITICS?



WHAT WE THINK

The first parliamentary test for the so-called 'Burnham bounce', in Holborn and St Pancras on 8 October, is likely to be as favourable a terrain as the new prime minister will ever face. It is before his administration's first Budget, and there are still some hopes among workers that Burnham's government might, at least, prove 'better than the last lot'. In addition, the timing of the announcement of UK sanctions against Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is partly aimed at winning back Holborn and St Pancras voters, particularly those from a Muslim background who make up 16% of the electorate.

Nonetheless, the outcome is uncertain. The smaller scale tests of council by-elections that have taken place since Burnham was crowned will not reassure Labour – they, along with the Tories, have a net loss of seats, while Reform and the Greens have both made gains. Reform are not contenders for Holborn and St Pancras, but

the Greens – who got 28.8% of the vote in the Borough of Camden in May's local elections – are fighting to win. PollCheck's election simulation currently has Labour winning with 41.7% of the vote and the Green Party leader Zack Polanski second on 37.8%. Election predictions for by-elections are never reliable, but a 3.9% gap between the two lead contenders three weeks out, shows there is a real prospect of Labour losing the seat of the former prime minister, less than three months after Burnham was crowned promising to restore his party's electoral fortunes.

That is no surprise. Yes, Burnham is trying to fan hopes in his government by talking about easing the cost-of-living crisis and taking some, very minor, measures. But fine words but no parsnips and, in essence, Burnham has little better than fine words to offer. The Parliamentary Labour Party that backed him to be leader by more than 95% is the same Parliamentary Labour Party that oversaw cuts to the winter fuel allowance and disability benefits. His most enthusiastic backers include many of those furthest to the right. Remember that the MP who stood down to allow him to contest Makerfield was embroiled in scandal because he was prepared to go to any lengths to damage Jeremy Corbyn, Labour's previous left leader. Burnham's Chief of Staff is the

Burnham at Tata Steel site in South Wales, where thousands of jobs were lost despite the election of a Labour government in 2024. PHOTO: NUMBER10/CC



ultra-Blairite James Purnell, while his Chancellor John Healey only resigned from Starmer's government because he thought it should spend more on weaponry. Healey's relentless mantra of maintaining 'fiscal discipline' is indistinguishable from that of his predecessor Rachel Reeves. In order to try and restore Labour's electoral fortunes, Burnham will try to pose his government's policies in popular terms – something Starmer was incapable of doing – but in reality his government also represents the interests of British capitalism not those of the working class. Like its predecessors, this government will also become hated, as the experience of it in power unfolds.

Whatever the outcome of 8 October, the shallowness of the 'Burnham bounce' will be shown by significant numbers of voters voting for the Greens in order to voice a left protest against the government. A smaller number may also vote for George Galloway, who has belatedly entered the contest on behalf of the Workers' Party of Britain. Justifying the decision to stand Galloway, the Workers' Party explains that in their view the Green Party are on the "left wing" of capitalism." They argue that, "the Greens have demonstrated that they do not wish to enter into any temporary or limited electoral arrangement with the socialist movement". Further, they add that "Whilst the fight to break the link between the labour movement and the Labour Party is far from over,

Holborn and St Pancras

Labour clearly hope that their candidate in Holborn and St Pancras, the current Camden council leader Sagal Abdi-Wali, will prove an electoral asset. She arrived in Camden as a child refugee from Somalia, and was active in her local community before being elected as a councillor in 2022. However, in May this year she became leader of a council which has consistently implemented austerity.

it can never be accomplished if we allow social democracy to syphon the anger of working-class people through the Green safety net."

It is true that the Green Party does not define itself as a socialist party, not even having the same commitment to socialism in their rules as many trade unions do, and certainly not a broad socialist programme to transform society in the interests of the working class. Nor does its structure put central, or in fact encompass in any way, democratic working-class organisation. If a trade union was to affiliate to the Greens its members would have no means through which to influence party policy or to hold its leadership to account. It is also true that the Greens have consistently refused to reach electoral agreements with socialist candidates, standing candidates against Jeremy Corbyn, for example, in every election since he first became an MP in 1983.

At this stage, however, the Greens have stepped into a vacuum left by the failure of the workers' movement to start building a mass democratic workers' party. First and foremost the responsibility for this lies with the national leaders of the trade union

movement, most of whom continue to try and defend the Labour government, and none of whom have yet taken decisive steps towards a workers' party. However, their failure to act has been enabled by the mistakes of key figures and organisations on the left.

Most recently, just over a year ago, more than 800,000 people signed up to support the declaration for a new party from Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sultana. Unfortunately, that opportunity was squandered. Your Party, as it is now called, has not met its potential as a result of a top-down approach and a failure to orientate towards the rank-and-file of the trade union movement.

The by-election confirms Your Party's failure. In the 2024 general election the former African National Congress MP Andrew Feinstein, who was then already part of the Your Party pre-discussions and later of its launch, stood in the constituency and got 18% of the vote, while the Greens got 10%. But this time Feinstein has ruled himself out of standing, instead backing Zack Polanski. Jeremy Corbyn has been MP in a neighbouring constituency for decades, yet Your Party is not standing in the by-election nor, as yet, even publicly commented on it.

Galloway's role

But George Galloway and the Workers' Party's mistaken approach has also contributed to the current absence of independent political representation for the working class. When Galloway won the Rochdale by-election in February 2024, we recognised that, despite our serious differences with him, it marked an important break in the situation, showing the possibility of left candidates outside the capitalist establishment parties being elected. It was undoubtedly a factor that encouraged other potential steps forward, including Corbyn's decision to stand as an independent in the general election and the stand of various 'Gaza independents', including the four who went on to win seats in the general election.

As we warned at the time, however, while George Galloway could potentially have played a positive part in the development of a new mass party of the working class, it would "never be created by any leader or organisation declaring that it is the solution." To play a positive role, we argued, the Workers' Party would need to work "on the basis of collaboration with others in the trade union and socialist movement" marching on the same path, fighting at each stage to "maximise unity between different sections of the working class

moving into struggle: whether via strike action, anti-war movements, climate activism or other means". Unfortunately, to put it mildly, this is not the approach that Galloway and the Workers' Party have taken. Instead, Galloway has repeated the mistakes he made as leader of Respect twenty years ago.

Galloway has continued authority among some sections of workers, particularly some from Muslim backgrounds, because of his record of opposition to the imperialist wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, and particularly the memory of the way in which he fiercely stood up to US senators in 2005 over the Iraq war. The perception that he is a fighter against imperialism and for the oppressed in the Middle East is also bound up, of course, with his consistent vocal support for the Palestinians.

He has repeatedly been able to harness that authority to gain votes. He has already been an MP for four different UK parliamentary constituencies, and has stood for four more, plus three times for the Scottish Parliament. Yet nowhere has initial election success led to him serving more than one term or, more importantly, the consolidation of a base or of stable organisation.

Today, despite the Rochdale breakthrough two and a half years ago, the Workers' Party claims just over 3,000 paying members and has seven councillors nationally, four of them in Rochdale. It is not a broad workers' party and ironically, like the Greens, its structure does not allow for trade union affiliates to have any say in the party. It is organised on a centralised top-down basis, and does not bring together different workers' and left organisations within its parameters.

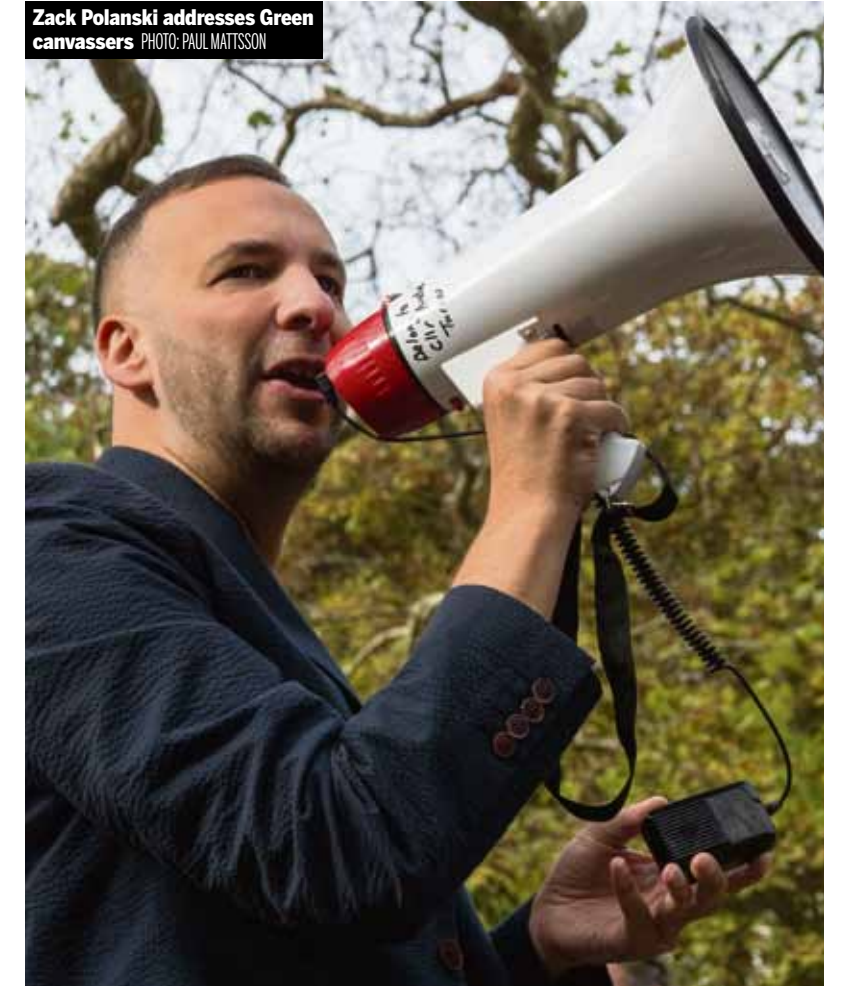
The seven Workers' Party councillors are all elected for areas with a Muslim population of 20% or more. But they are not alone in this. In fact, 88 of the 98 left councillors outside the

major parties elected this May were in wards with a similar demographic. In the recent period, above all as a result of the genocidal slaughter in Gaza, it is workers from a Muslim background that have led the way in breaking with Labour and looking for a left alternative to vote for. This has been a potentially major step forward, but only if it is a bridgehead to reach out to other parts of the working class around a socialist programme.

A serious struggle against austerity, war and racism cannot be won if it relies on just one section of the working class. But unfortunately, neither the Greens nor Galloway are able to draw different sections of the working class closer together in common struggle for socialist policies. In particular, Galloway's social conservatism – including his record appealing to anti-trans prejudices – only serves to deepen divisions rather than fighting for unity.

In this election, the Greens are likely to be the main weapon which voters pick up to express their opposition to continued austerity, militarism and climate change. At the same time it cannot be excluded that the 'Burnham bounce' will include some voters who had previously voted for the Greens or left candidates temporarily giving the new government the 'benefit of the doubt' and casting their vote for Labour.

Whatever the result, the workers' movement will need to draw conclusions from the Holborn and St Pancras by-election. The trade unions in Britain organise more than 6.5 million workers, yet they have no political voice. It is not just switching from Labour to another political 'brand' that needs to be discussed, but how the working class can create its own party with a socialist programme. These issues are on the agenda in Unite, PCS and other unions. The discussion needs to urgently get under way before more opportunities are wasted.



Zack Polanski addresses Green canvassers PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON



George Galloway PHOTO: UK PARLIAMENT

Cumbria uni – linking war, climate, and cost of living

MOLLIE NIXON
CUMBRIA SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Every year, students arrive at Cumbria, expecting an escape to nature, only to find a university much like any other – prioritising profit over academic integrity. Socialist Party and Socialist Students members from Carlisle and the rest of the north west hosted street stalls outside freshers’ fair.

Climate change came up frequently. Many students pick Cumbria for

its proximity to impressive natural landscapes. Students fear this environment being lost.

Many jumped at the chance to sign up to start an official Socialist Students society on campus, after finding out about the ‘Defence Universities Alliance’, which Cumbria uni is part of. The Ministry of Defence is using university funding to covertly funnel students into pro-military research and job roles.

This led many students that we

spoke to expressing interest in the youth strikes on 20 November. Some even took posters to put up in communal kitchens.

Conversation

In conversation, students made the connection between climate and other struggles. Cumbria uni is promoting the military, whilst simultaneously raking in student fees for being located in a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Students raised how much they are paying for their ‘Circuit Go’ laundry – some over £6 per wash at student accommodation. This gave us a great opportunity to raise Socialist Students’ previous dealings with Circuit Go, and the possibility for a local campaign.

40 people signed up to Socialist Students – a testament to students’ desire for action. We have since heard that the university bosses weren’t happy about us being there!

It’s no wonder. The uni is currently threatening staff with ‘fire and rehire’, if they don’t downgrade their pension scheme.

The last thing the uni wants is an organised Socialist Students presence on campus, who would fully back a staff strike!

● Read ‘Circuit No – end rip-off laundry charges’ at socialistparty.org.uk

Southampton uni – capitalist system links the crises

JAMES GRETTON
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We held a public tally, asking participants which issue on the agenda for the 20 November international youth strike resonated most for them. The climate crisis – an existential threat – was the most voted-on issue. Others recognised that all the issues are interconnected, and exacerbated by capitalism.

The runner-up issue was war and militarisation. Many students were aware about Germany’s increased military spending and possible reintroduction of conscription. The new UK Labour chancellor in Andy Burnham’s government, John Healey, has hinted at similar public spending cuts to pay for the military in next month’s Budget.

In the coming weeks, Southampton Socialist Students workshop meetings will cover the alleged ‘Burnham bounce’, an introduction to socialism; real alternatives to Labour and the capitalist system it presides over; and issues for the 20 November walkout.

We’re working with the Young Greens, and other local organisations, including Southampton Uni Green Society, to build for the biggest possible student strike. Socialist Students is prepared to engage with both newcomers and returning students, putting forward the need for socialist change.

Exeter uni students reject future of debt and climate destruction

MYLES HATCHER
DEVON SOCIALIST PARTY

Students saw the International Youth Strike as compelling, and something they wanted to get involved with. Discussions around the housing crisis, spiralling debt, and endless wars were echoed by many students. A large number identified themselves as socialists or on the left.

On the second day, university security eventually asked us for our

credentials, and moved us on from campus. We moved to the exit away from the university grounds, and continued our leafleting and discussions unabated.

We cleared through all of our material. Over 30 students signed up to the International Youth Strike.

Exeter uni currently lacks a Socialist Students society. But there is clearly a keen interest in getting involved in campaign activity and building something. We hope this will develop into a student society with regular meetings, political discussion, and action on campus.

Even the Labour society showed an interest, letting slip that their numbers are dwindling. The Labour Party is unable to offer young people anything to fight for.

Students are looking forward, and beginning to see what they are going to inherit. Not the prosperous future they were promised, but climate destruction, debt, and a continuing cost-of-living crisis. More young people see through capitalist lies.

Leicester WQE college – chats and debates

IKRA REHMAN
LEICESTER SOCIALIST PARTY

This is the first time in recent memory that we have organised campaign stalls at WQE sixth-form college in Leicester. Now, regularly, students come up to chat or debate, or we see them discussing the ‘no to war’ leaflets we’re handing out.

More young people are becoming interested in politics, consider themselves socialist, and have a desire to want to make difference and be part of something.

York College students support £15-an-hour minimum wage

DAN BASSEY
YORK SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We had a large volume of students come by our campaign stall.

At first, students were hesitant. But after handing out a few leaflets, an increasing number came over to talk, eager to hear what we had to say.

Conversations covered the rise of Reform and the far right, workers’ rights, and the climate crisis. The



campaign to increase the minimum wage to £15 an hour particularly resonated. This would double what college students aged 16-18 currently earn, as a minimum.

Young people are becoming increasingly disillusioned with mainstream politics, and are searching for something that can actually improve their lives. We help bring socialist ideas to them. Seven new people signed up to our walkout on 20 November.

Farnham – University for the Creative Arts – students take action

HUW JAMES
ALDRESHOT AND NORTH HANTS SOCIALIST PARTY

The university’s facilities are being run into the ground, despite increased tuition fees. Students rightly wonder where their fees are actually going. One student even organised a sit-in protest against proposed cuts to library services.

Students are worried about being saddled with debt when they

graduate, then struggling to find employment in an increasingly harsh jobs market. They support the Socialist Students and Socialist Party policies of free education, nationalisation, and a £15-an-hour minimum wage.

Young people want better than what is being offered to them by capitalism. And frankly, who can blame them? 12 new students signed up to get involved with Socialist Students, and find out more.

Notre Dame college, Leeds – crowds at socialist stand

IAIN DALTON
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Calling out ‘No to Farage, no to Trump, join the Socialist opposition’, we had Notre Dame sixth-form college students taking leaflets and crowding round our stall near the college.

15 students left the details to join Socialist Students, including some from the nearby university walking

past. We spoke to an organiser with the newly formed Green society at Leeds Arts Uni about how we could work together, to build for the 20 November international youth strike.

Nottingham Trent uni – money for war, nothing for youth

SEAMUS SMYTH
EAST MIDLANDS SOCIALIST PARTY, YOUTH AND STUDENT ORGANISER

There was anger about the constant wars around the world, particularly the British government’s role in supporting and financing them. This opened up wider discussions about why there always seems to be money for war, while young people face rising costs, insecure futures, and pressure around education and the cost of living.

There was willingness to discuss the wider political situation, and what a socialist alternative could look like. We distributed 250 leaflets in just two hours.

Students

1 Build for the N20 international youth walkout!

On 20 November 2026, Socialist Students will be joining over 20 other youth organisations across Europe, walking out of classes to say: ‘Fight for our futures, not their wars!’

Can you collect names of fellow students who can build for the biggest possible walkout where you are?



2 Build Socialist Students at your campus, college or school

Socialist Students is a democratic nationwide socialist organisation which has groups active in over 50 schools, colleges and universities. In September 2025 it organised youth walkouts against the state visit of Donald Trump. Groups discuss socialist ideas, and put them into practice, fighting for decent services, against oppression and for socialist change.

Sign up to help build a group where you are.



3 Buy your Socialism 2026 ticket

On 14-15 November, days ahead of the N20 international youth walkout, over 1,000 socialist activists will come together in London for a weekend of discussion and electric Saturday night rally.

What role for direct action in the struggle for socialism? Are the Greens the type of party we need to transform the world? Does AI mean the end of the working class? They are some of the 30 discussion workshops taking place.

Freshers and school students tickets from £5.



4 Read the Socialist newspaper

The mainstream media: social media platforms, TV channels, newspapers, and so on, all have something in common – they are owned and controlled by the billionaire capitalist class. They tell one side of the story.

The Socialist newspaper tells the other. We are a voice for young people and workers fighting for socialist change.

Read, write, sell and subscribe!

Like what you’ve read?
SUBSCRIBE TO THE SOCIALIST
socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe



5 Join the Socialist Party

To fundamentally change the world and bring about socialist change, wealth and power needs to be taken out of the hands of the super-rich capitalist bosses and put into the hands of the working-class masses. To achieve that, a party is vital.

The Socialist Party takes part in the struggles of young people, students and workers – at every stage putting forward what is necessary to win, linking that to the need for revolutionary change.

If you want to change the world, discuss with us about what it means to be a member.

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





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.
- 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:
- 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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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

Help fund the fightback!

DONATE TODAY

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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.

Why I joined the Socialist Party 2008 made me a socialist, after Corbyn, I had to do something

HUW JAMES
ALDERSHOT AND NORTH HANTS SOCIALIST PARTY

It was the financial crisis of 2008 – or more specifically, our government's response to it – that turned me into a socialist. I saw ordinary people being punished for a crisis they did nothing to create, whilst those who created the crisis got away scot-free.

This was socialism for the rich, and capitalism for everyone else.

Fast forward to 2019, and Labour had just lost two general elections under Jeremy Corbyn, who was then forced to resign. I realised that, paradoxically, the hysterical over-reaction of the capitalist class to this mild-mannered reformist politician demonstrated just how tenuous the capitalists' grip on power really is.

Was it possible?

I was already convinced of the need to overthrow capitalism, and replace it with socialism. But now I started to believe it might actually be possible.

The problem was that the election of Keir Starmer as Labour leader left me politically homeless. Thankfully, two years ago, I joined the Socialist Party.

I found out about the Socialist Party when searching online for socialist groups in my local area. I discovered that there was there a branch in my local town, Aldershot, and they held meetings there every Wednesday.



Huw campaigning with the Socialist Party NICK CHAFFEY

So I decided to go along to the next meeting.

I am struck by how much I have learned in such a short space of time. I was a socialist when I joined the Socialist Party, but had little experience of political activism. Since then, I have taken part in countless Socialist paper sales, demonstrations, and stood for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in local elections.

Our class has power

It was only after I joined the Socialist Party that I began to fully understand that, whereas I as an individual might be powerless, the class of people to which I belong – the working class – has enormous power. The working class has the power to transform society. It just needs to harness that power in the right way.

The thing I like most about belonging to the Socialist Party is being around people who not only analyse the problems with capitalism, but are actually motivated to do something about them. The Socialist Party has a vital role to play in raising class consciousness, and unlocking the full power and potential of the working class.



Anti-racist protesters challenge far right



Swansea ALEC THRAVES

Portsmouth – jobs, homes, and services for all

CHRIS PICKET AND NICK DOYLE
PORTSMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

Saturday 12 September saw another extreme-right racist march in Portsmouth, following riots in Eastney that made national headlines the previous weekend. This demo of about 100 of the far right, many of who came from other areas, was opposed by approximately 200 anti-racist protesters from Portsmouth.

Portsmouth has suffered over £100 million of local funding cuts by Tory, Lib Dem, and Labour national governments, implemented by Lib Dem and Tory councils locally. Huge job losses and increased deprivation has helped support for racist ideas grow, with no alternative put forward by any of the main capitalist parties.

Although the turnout of the anti-racist protesters was made up of genuine activists and individual trade unionists, the organised trade unions were mainly not present. There was also no alternative programme put forward – such as jobs, home and services for all – as a rallying call.

The main slogan was 'unity and

diversity'. But this does not offer a solution to the cost of living, climate crisis, and wars facing the majority of working-class people.

A socialist solution can unite workers to fight real the driver of these crises – the capitalist system, which deepens racism and division.

Swansea city centre welcomes anti-racists, rejects far right

ALEC THRAVES
SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY

150 anti-fascist protesters gathered and overwhelmed a pathetic turnout of 12-15 far-right protesters, plus a horse! To be fair, the horse, when asked if he was a fascist, replied 'neigh'.

Unfortunately, a police cordon protected and allowed this pitifully small, moronic group to march through the city centre, whilst at the same time threatening and intimidating the big, noisy counter-protesters following them.

City centre shoppers overwhelmingly supported and clapped the anti-fascist marchers, sending a clear message to the far right, that they are just a tiny minority in Swansea, and will be challenged whenever their poisonous racism shows its ugly face.

Gloucester Pride – anger at commercialisation and entry fees

VINCE AND BILLY
GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Gloucester Pride saw several hundred people march through the streets. There was a vibrant and defiant energy in the city, echoed by loud chants: "Trans rights are under attack, what do we do? Fight back!"

However, that momentum hit a literal wall at the end of the march. For the first time, attendees at Gloucester Pride were met with a huge fence around the park venue, and a £10 entry fee, for what was once a free event! At our Socialist Party campaign stall nearby, not a single person we spoke to was happy about this.

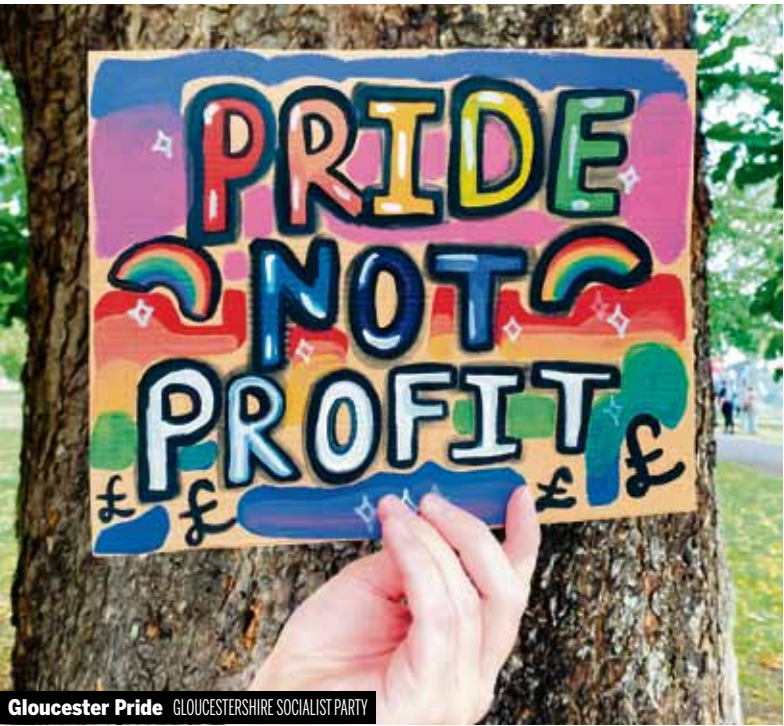
Austerity

With austerity eroding people's disposable income, the £10 ticket is going to impact some far harder than others. Many LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be economically vulnerable.

Organisers explain that the rising costs for 'security, medical and welfare provision' are to blame. But this entry fee shifts the crisis of underfunding onto ordinary working-class attendees.

We spoke to the public about how, in fighting for LGBTQ+ liberation, we need to unite the different struggles in society, and build working-class unity against austerity and division.

This was especially well received by the students we spoke to. Some are now interested in organising for



Gloucester Pride GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

the mass student walkouts across Europe on 20 November.

Despite having the local Labour MP on their list of speakers, Gloucester Pride falls in line with many other Prides in wanting to 'keep politics separate' from the event. The only people who benefit from such an arrangement are the corporations who are there to sell rainbow-coloured merchandise, and aren't interested in listening to the concerns of LGBTQ+ people.

There is a clear desire among workers to organise the community, and fight back against LGBTQ+ discrimination. This can only be achieved if we reject the 'pinkwashing' and corporatisation of our protests, and build a united working-class movement for all.

Workers shouldn't be footing the bill for the underfunding of Pride events by paying entry fees. We need to pass that cost onto the people who have caused this crisis, the capitalist elites.

Building 'resident and tenant power'

SHAC at the TUC

PAUL KERSHAW
CHAIR UNITE HOUSING WORKERS' BRANCH

Tenant and resident activists took the case for a campaigning union, pulling tenant campaigns and residents across tenures together, at the TUC in Brighton.

They got a warm response from delegates talking to them on a stall in the conference centre and at a fringe meeting called by SHAC – the network of housing association residents and workers.

FBU national officer Adam Taylor said that the government does not expect remediation works to make anti-cladding on homes safe, following the findings of the Grenfell Tower inquiry, to be completed for another ten years.

"Tenants and residents complain

that they are often made to pay the costs of this remediation, and they were never told of the risks in the first place," he said.

"Apart from cladding, there are 100,000s of people still living in homes which are not safe.

"Everyone has the right to be safe in their home, and that's why the FBU is proud to support this important fringe/discussion."

Grenfell

SHAC secretary Suzanne Muna said the failures that led to the Grenfell disaster showed a housing union was needed. The meeting heard of the appointment of Laura Johnson, who was director of housing responsible for Grenfell to a similarly senior position in Barnet. SHAC members in the area are alarmed and Barnet TUC has called a protest.

PCS union General Secretary, Fran Heathcote explained the impact of housing costs on union members and former MP for Kensington and author of Grenfell Britain, Emma Dent Coad, pledged to work with

SHAC on the initiative to set up a housing union.

Suzanne Muna commented: "It's becoming clear to people that none of these parties are speaking for us on housing now, so we need to create tenant and resident power.

"I think the lack of working-class representation is a massive factor and that is something that's been a gradual process of erosion. As the Labour Party has moved further and further away from workers it took people a while to realise you can't reclaim it. Tenants and residents are not given any real power to change how their landlords behave and hold them into account.

"The problem isn't that the law isn't there, the problem is that people don't have any way to actually enforce it."

The conference supported a resolution from Unite which calls for mass council house building, rent control and opposes the planned above-inflation rent increases in the social sector. Trade unions should support tenants fighting for these policies and call on politicians to support.

£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk



the Socialist

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FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURES NOT THEIR WARS

SOFIA PANDOLFI

SOUTH LONDON SOCIALIST STUDENTS ORGANISER

On 25 September, German students will again be walking out of lessons against military conscription and rearmament. This is following ongoing youth strikes which have already mobilised 55,000 students in recent months, taking to the streets across the country. In response to government changes to military service policy aimed at assisting Germany's militarisation plans, young people are showing they are not willing to fight for a government and establishment that attacks their rights, education, and futures.

Our own government is no better. While military spending continues to increase, more policies of austerity are being implemented as the government cuts down on the services young and working-class people depend on. 35 universities across the UK have become part of the UK government's Defence Universities Alliance initiative to support future 'defence capability'. Meanwhile, our higher education is plunging deeper into a funding crisis. As militarism becomes more entrenched in our universities, we have to build a socialist fightback on our campuses.

From meeting and discussing with students at various university freshers, we are seeing young people frustrated by a government and a system that offers us only wars and exploitation. Students have expressed worry over the uncertainty of our futures, the lack of opportunities that exist for us, and the international chaos we are living through. Hundreds of students so far have already signed up to find out more about joining Socialist Students because they recognise the need to get organised against a system that sacrifices our futures for the profits of the capitalist bosses.

Socialist Students is organising a solidarity demonstration with German youth strikers on 25 September, building international action amongst young people. Join our solidarity rally to show we are standing up against militarisation, war, and austerity. Build the international youth fightback for our futures, not their wars!

Socialist Students walking out against Trump's visit in 2025 PHOTO: SOCIALIST STUDENTS



Join international youth walkout 20 November

Solidarity with the next walkouts against conscription and militarisation in Germany - protest at 5pm, 25 September at the German embassy 23 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PZ and more actions elsewhere

Join the 20 November walkout visit socialiststudents.org.uk or scan the QR code

socialist students



WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS ►►► see column on p14

