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the Socialist

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formerly **Militant**

For lower bills and real public control

NATIONALISE!

CALLUM JOYCE
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

‘Cost-of-living crisis’ was a new term in 2022. Now it has become a part of everyday language.

Workers and young people in Britain have faced rising costs and falling real-terms incomes.

Now utility bills are set to rise again, with some energy companies predicting the price cap may have to

rise by 20% as soon as January! Numerous water companies have been granted permission to raise more than £3 billion through bill increases over coming years.

Triple lock

Decisive action is needed to end this misery. Prime Minister Andy Burnham spoke at Labour Party conference in Liverpool, including announcing plans to end the pensions triple lock. He points to the failures of privatisation and the need for greater ‘public control’ over utilities, correctly. He talks of increasing regulation and devolving regulatory powers to local authorities.

Anglian Water, among other water

companies, was banned from granting bonuses to executives last year because of their record of leaking sewage and failing to maintain infrastructure. Was their response to this regulation to finally start investing where it’s needed? No, instead they granted a £500,000 ‘retention payment’ to their boss, while executives at other companies were granted hefty pay rises too!

Nothing less than full nationalisation - a policy supported by the overwhelming majority - if under democratic working-class control and management, can achieve the genuine democratic public control required to bring down our bills and end the sewage scandal.

This should be done with no compensation for the vulture shareholders who have already made billions from hiking bills and piling up debts. Those that have a proven need for compensation - workers who have part of their pensions invested in utility companies, for example - could easily be paid using the wealth of the super-rich, and have their pensions secured.

Working-class control

Burnham talks about his ‘plan for public control’. A real plan for the economy - a socialist plan - would mean nationalisation not just of utilities but of the banks and all major monopolies under the

democratic control of the working class. Just four UK banks made a profit of almost £29 billion in the first half of this year. Under democratic public ownership, those resources could be invested in upgrading and renewing Britain’s energy and water infrastructure, while slashing bills.

But the capitalist bosses won’t just hand it over. Burnham has made it clear he won’t be encroaching on their wealth, power and profits. The working class has to be mobilised to fight for it. As part of that, the trade union movement should take steps towards establishing its own party - a new mass workers’ party, armed with a socialist programme.

**NO CALM WATERS FOR BURNHAM, NO
ESCAPE FROM WORKERS’ STRUGGLE >>> p4-5**

**BATTLE OF CABLE STREET 90 YEARS ON: THE ORGANISED
WORKING CLASS CAN DEFEAT THE FAR RIGHT >>> p8-9**

**YOUTH STRIKE
>>> p2, & 10-11**



On 20 November, we will be joining them!

‘Fight for our future, not their wars’

Sign up to build the international youth walkout

On Friday 25 September, Socialist Students held a rally in solidarity with striking German students at the German Embassy in London. We carry a shortened extract of the speech from **Adam Powell-Davies**, Socialist Students national organiser

Solidarity with the tens of thousands of young people who have again today walked out of class, taking action against the threat of military conscription in Germany!

This follows on from a tens of thousands-strong movement that has continued since the start of this year. It is out of their inspiring example that we are now taking part in an international youth strike on 20 November, of young people all across Europe under the slogan ‘fight for our future not their wars!’

In many ways, young people in Germany are on the sharp edge of the drive by governments all around the world to increase military spending. Continuing their business as usual, defending the interests of the super-rich and the capitalist billionaires day-to-day, increasingly looking for military means in order to do so.

In Britain, this Labour government wants to spend £25 billion per year extra on the military. That sum would be more than enough to scrap

uni tuition fees to reintroduce maintenance grants, for example.

The increase on military spending around the world shines a light on the question of who makes decisions in society, and in whose interests. Should it be a tiny few capitalist billionaires at the top and their political representatives, or should it be the majority - using wealth, resources and technology to meet our needs?

Socialist Students says it's the latter. We stand for a socialist society, run democratically by the working class to meet the needs of all, not the profits and warmongering interests of a tiny few at the top.

So we stand in full solidarity with young people in Germany who are walking out today. And on 20 November, we will be joining them!

Socialist Students groups around Britain organised activities, campaigning in solidarity with the German students and building for 20 November. The newly formed York St John University Socialist Students society held its first ever protest in solidarity with the German student strike.

Students gathered outside the students union to leaflet passers by. Anna and Louie from Socialist Students spoke about the strikes in Germany, linking it to conditions here as the Burnham government plans to fill the over £11 billion in extra military spending proposed but not funded by Starmer.

The protest was joined by several students at their first protest and/or Socialist Students activity, including one from Germany, and several students stopping to listen.



DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

THE SOCIALIST INBOX

Support petition against cost-cutting SEND changes

The Labour government is proposing to change the education system for families of children and families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including mental health and neurodivergent conditions such as Autism, ADHD, and Dyslexia.

The main difference will be taking away the legal right of families to go to a tribunal to get the provision and support that their child/young person needs.

The government is proposing to place all but those students with “severe complex needs” in mainstream schools in regular classrooms and ‘inclusion hubs’.

I am a member of a campaign group called ‘Save Our Children’s Rights’. We agree that the system needs changing, it is not working for anyone at the moment, least of all the

young people with SEND, who should be prioritised.

But we feel that the motivation of the government is to save money, not to meet children’s individual needs. The money that is being promised to local authorities and schools will not cover the extra expenses incurred by having classes of 30+ children with 6-9 children with some kind of additional need that will need extra support.

Teaching unions have raised concerns that the government has not provided enough staff or specific per-class allocations to properly support inclusion. Teachers have highlighted insufficient staff and workload were already high barriers to inclusion in schools.

This is not only an issue for families with children and young people with SEND, it will also affect any children in class as there will be less time

available to spend with those that still might need some support or direction. Teachers will be too busy supporting the ones that need individual support.

We are trying to get 100,000 signatures on our petition, which has been written by Teejay, a 15 year old autistic young person. This will hopefully trigger a debate in Parliament, as children, parents and school staff’s views are not being listened to and acted on at the moment.

Please could you sign and share the petition, anyone with an email address can sign it.

We have until 14 October to get enough signatures, we have 84,000 at the last count.

In the fight for a socialist society, education and support for all is critical, none more than children and young people who are the future changemakers.

CHRISTINA CRAMSIE

• Sign at: petition.parliament.uk/petitions/764268

WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?
editors@socialistparty.org.uk



Hypocrisy on full display at war-drenched United Nations

JAMES COLLETT
SOUTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISER

World leaders gathered in New York last week for the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly, a circus of lies, hypocrisy and blather.

Delegates who walked out as the Israeli Prime Minister began his speech were labelled “moral cowards” by Benjamin Netanyahu. Any talk of morality loses its meaning in the mouth of this butcher whose government has slaughtered at least 74,000 Palestinians in the genocide of the last three years, but token gestures by capitalist politicians are equally meaningless. Later in his speech, Netanyahu claimed that Israel’s destruction of Gaza had “prevented genocide” and that the war on Iran was launched in order to “save civilisation”.

Which “civilisation” is being saved? The leaders assembled preside over a world in catastrophic turmoil and conflict. The governments of 193 nations are represented in the UN General Assembly, all of them in competition with one another, all of them presiding over a system which exploits and oppresses the working class and poor inside and outside their borders. For all the words they twist and contort, they can offer nothing but carnage. They have no solution to the environmental destruction and mass poverty created by their system.

With his right-wing coalition trailing in polls and elections due in October, Netanyahu was aiming his speech at a domestic audience, and

at an American public whose support for Israel is rapidly falling. He wants to revive his image as ‘Mr Security’ but what becomes clearer every day is that there is no real long-lasting security for anyone within the capitalist system.

Trump’s bluster

Donald Trump in his own speech said that he will choose whether to “annihilate Iran” or to make it a “great country” (allegedly Trump’s team had provided him with the word “annihilate” because he’d become bored with saying “obliterate”). But the choice is not his: the US and Israel’s war on Iran has demonstrated US imperialism’s weakened position in this era and has triggered a new phase of wild instability for the world economy. Although in long-term relative decline, the US is still the world’s most successful capitalist nation, but what does this success look like? The top 1% of US households now have almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%! This ‘civilisation’ is built on obscene inequality.

The Palestinian delegates, for the second year in a row, were denied visas so couldn’t attend. Protesters at the Jewish Voice for Peace demonstration outside the Assembly were arrested and carted away. Inside, the murderous pantomime continued

and empty phrases were uttered while the world burns.

Amidst the torrential outpourings of deceit, a few truthful words were accidentally spoken by the president of the European Council, Antonio Costa: “Alone, no country can prevent a pandemic, stabilise the climate, secure resilient supply chains, regulate artificial intelligence, ensure financial stability or deliver sustainable development. Alone, no country, however powerful, can build lasting peace.”

The lesson which will never be drawn by the UN, European Council, or any other capitalist institution, but which must be drawn by the working class, is that capitalism cannot overcome its systemic crisis. Based on exploitation, it is a system incapable of solving any of the fundamental threats facing the world. The disparity between words and their meanings at the UN is no surprise. The United Nations is not united. The ruling classes are not fit to rule. Only the working class can end this deadly system and replace it completely with what we need: an international socialist plan of production to harness the abilities and resources of the human race in the interests of people and the planet.

If you want to join the fight to put this sick system to bed, get in touch with the Socialist Party today.

Join the fightback

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to find out more about joining us today!



Capitalist system unable to avoid climate catastrophe

We need socialist change

RYAN LEONARD
HILLINGDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Ecological collapse could become a profound threat to national security and prosperity. So warns Britain’s own intelligence assessment, conducted by the joint intelligence committee and buried by Keir Starmer’s government. Its six case studies examine how ecological collapse in rainforests, coral reefs, mangroves and mountains could lead to a global refugee crisis, resource wars over water, insecure food chains and decreased profits for the bosses.

The report is highly confident that climate collapse will have a significant impact on the security and prosperity of Britain. Collapse refers to ecological systems becoming unable to maintain essential function and structure – a point of no return. The review found all six key ecological case studies to be on their way to collapse.

The geopolitical competition for food and water caused by ecosystem collapse has a high likelihood of impacting Britain, making the price increases following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine pale in comparison.

The government knows that ecological collapse will make home uninhabitable for millions around the world, forcing people to flee rising tides, temperatures and increasingly insecure food chains. ‘Stop the boats’ is as fitting a slogan as ‘whip the sea’!

The Labour government was far more responsive to pensioners opposing genocide than the climate crisis. Starmer’s government used the Tories’ Police, Crime and Sentencing Act to prosecute climate direct action protesters for their participation in a Zoom call. It’s clear that despite the severity of the intelligence that the government has, successive governments have attempted to minimise and hide the reality of what capitalism is doing to the planet.

The coming el Niño climate event is a prologue to far more devastating climate crises. The climate impact lab has predicted around half a million more heat-related deaths next year as a result of the climate phenomenon.

Andy Burnham, with full access to this information, has “no fixed position” around granting new licences to expand North Sea oil and gas fields. The government is showing not only how underprepared the country is for the coming crisis but also its contempt for human life compared to profit.

The situation facing us is dire; the only way to prevent the mass death and destruction posed in the report is to end the rule of the polluting capitalist bosses. If the working class owned the wealth and resources of the world and ran them democratically for our good, instead of for the bosses’ profits, we could avoid climate catastrophe.



A great egret stands in a dry lake during the drought in Puerto Rico this year. LIGOCISNARF89/CC

the Socialist

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

Send us reports of your workplace and community campaigns, short letters on working-class issues, or ideas for other articles.

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

NO CALM WATERS FOR BURNHAM, NO ESCAPE FROM WORKERS' STRUGGLE

WHAT WE THINK

Andy Burnham takes to the rostrum in Liverpool at Labour Party conference, as the Socialist goes to press.

He does so with opinion polls seemingly improving, albeit from a position of 'absolutely dismal' for his Labour Party at the time of Starmer's departure. To put things in perspective, according to the polls, if a general election took place today, over 100 Labour MPs would lose their seats.

Of course, that is as if polls are accurate - which they increasingly aren't. And that things aren't volatile and unstable - which they increasingly are! That there is the possibility that the 'Burnham bounce' could be rudely punctured by a defeat in the Holborn and St Pancras by-election on 8 October is proof enough of its fragility. On the other hand, while a Labour win will be presented as evidence of the existence of a 'bounce', this is a constituency that has been held by Labour since its creation and which Keir Starmer won with a 30 percentage point majority a little over two years ago.

Labour's misnamed 'landslide' election in 2024 was in fact achieved with the lowest share of the vote for any 'single party' government since the first world war. This May, Labour failed to win in Wales for the first time in a century, while 58% of its council seats in England were lost. Its 'projected national vote share' was just 17% - the lowest ever.

So too, the other of the main capitalist establishment parties - the Tory party - has been wrecked. British capitalism's two-party system has

been smashed apart by working-class anger, fuelled by austerity and falling living standards. Labour's base of support among the working class has been crumbling for decades, and was dealt huge blows by Starmer's willingness to attack pensioners and those on benefits, on behalf of the capitalists.

Substantial change, more than 'hope and vibes', would be needed to stop that process of destruction, let alone begin to repair the damage.

Bosses call for more attacks

Meanwhile, the capitalist class is demanding more cuts. Work and Pensions minister Pat McFadden told conference he is on a 'moral crusade' revisiting the issue of benefits cuts that Labour was forced to U-turn on last year, and it is crystal clear that the pensions triple lock is on the chopping block for future attacks.

A majority of the capitalist class would like to give Burnham as much 'breathing room' as possible to make changes that can bring some political stability. So far, much of the assistance he has been given by sections of the capitalist establishment has been in the form of attacks on Nigel Farage and Reform - as well as, to a lesser extent, his current main competitor from the left, Zack Polanski.

But as far as economic breathing room is concerned, things are not so much in their gift. The cost of government borrowing has consistently been on an upward curve. Not because of any of the actions of the Burnham government. But because of global economic turmoil, and Britain's particular vulnerability to it. British capitalism is held in low esteem by investors internationally.

British industry

Chancellor John Healey spoke about "a new age of industrialisation" at Labour conference. But recent weeks



Andy Burnham UK PRIME MINISTER/CC

have seen Jaguar Land Rover - described by Burnham as the "jewel in the crown of British industry" - announce plans to cut 4,000 jobs. The JLR supply chain supports around 180,000 jobs.

Last year, the government handed £1.5 billion over to JLR after it was a victim of a cyber-attack. Why now, a year later, are 4,000 job cuts being announced? The trade unions should be demanding that the JLR books are opened to inspection by workers and the unions.

Action is needed to save all jobs at JLR and its supply chain, but government bailouts and subsidies do not guarantee that. For example, the government's £500 million subsidy

for Tata Steel to shift production at the Port Talbot steelworks ultimately meant over 2,000 job losses.

We need nationalisation

The demand must be for nationalisation, with compensation to safeguard workers' pensions investments and other small shareholders - not to bailout the big bosses. In public hands, under workers' and trade union democratic control and management, investment could be planned to safeguard jobs and union-agreed pay and conditions, including the possibility of switching production to other socially useful industries.

Contrast that to the kind of 'greater public control' touted by Andy

Capitalism is burning.

Time for SOCIALISM 2026

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Thousands of workers' jobs are up in the air at Jaguar Land Rover LAND ROVER MENA/CC



NSSN lobby of the TUC, calling for a national trade union demo against the cost-of-living crisis SHARIYA KHAN

Burnham, for example for utilities, which would leave ownership - and therefore ultimately control - in the hands of the profiteering, polluting bosses.

For years, Thames Water has existed on the brink of collapse. Privatisation is widely acknowledged as having been an utter failure. And yet it stays in private hands. Unwilling to take ownership from the profiteering investors for fear of retribution from the markets, and unable to buy them out because that would be too much government spending for the markets to stomach. The government is paralysed by the confines of the capitalist system, and British capitalism's parlous condition.

Bounce vs the bond markets

Famously, at a Labour conference fringe meeting a year ago, Burnham characterised Britain as being "in hock to the bond markets". And it is - for every £12 spent by the government £1 goes to paying debts, and rising. But now he is in the driving seat, what is his government planning to actually do about it?

At conference, Burnham announced plans for a future 'National Care Service', but only if Labour gets a second term and after the 'fiscal headwinds' have subsided. A big if, and on the assumption that events won't make the headwinds even stronger.

As much as a big portion of the British capitalist establishment would like Burnham to maintain a 'bounce', anything that threatens to take any power or wealth from sections of the capitalist class can provoke a reaction. Measures to fund reforms by making the working class - or sections of it - pay, however, the bosses can accept!

Anything that would take enough off the capitalist class to transform or reverse the decades-long

underfunding of services and stagnating living standards would provoke huge resistance from the capitalists and could only succeed in being implemented on the basis of mobilising a mass movement of the working class in support. To deal with the inevitable economic sabotage would require measures such as capital controls and nationalisation of the banks and big monopolies - to be democratically run in the interests of the working class and to finance investment to meet need.

To state the obvious, that is not what this Labour government has in store. The 28 October Autumn Budget certainly won't be labelled 'austerity', but it also won't fundamentally change the austerity status quo.

Unite the Union is taking a motion to Labour conference calling for the government to unfreeze the income tax thresholds and bring down the energy price cap, suggesting these could be paid for by windfall taxes, including on bank's profits, for example. Any motion passed at Labour conference, however, has no way to determine policy.

Still, some measures such as those are not ruled out. After all, in their last few years in office even the Tories used an energy price cap and windfall taxes. That wasn't enough to stop the development of the biggest wave of strikes in a generation.

Workers' struggle remains

Now, most trade union leaders would have liked to have used the existence of a new prime minister with warm words about 'change' and cost of living breathing room to simply draw a line under nationwide strike action developing. It is telling that has not been possible.

Civil servants in PCS are preparing to ballot for strike action. FE teachers in UCU are too. That the NEU has paused its strike ballot of teachers

after the suggestion from government that their two-year pay award is to be funded can and should be seen as evidence that the members' preparedness to fight has forced concessions. Socialist Party members are fighting on the NEU Executive for this to be used to spur on the campaign for more, including demanding more money from central government (see pages 6-7).

In all those disputes, Socialist Party members elected to the leadership bodies of those trade unions, working with others, have been central to ensuring that members' desire for action has found an organised expression. A counterpressure to that from the union leaders who would like to do all they can to themselves give Burnham breathing space.

Pressure from the members for action against a Labour government continuing to oversee squeezed living standards and crumbling, underfunded public services, is not going to diminish. Big clashes between the working class and the Labour government continue to be posed, including in the short term. And from those clashes conclusions will be drawn among broader layers about the need for the trade union movement to develop its own political voice - a mass workers' party, armed with socialist policies.

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Green Party 'Zionism is racism' motion

Tens of thousands of people joined the Green Party following the election of eco-populist Zack Polanski. It now surpasses 200,000 members. Many of these joined in the period after the Labour Party under Keir Starmer backed Benjamin Netanyahu to the hilt during the Israeli state's brutal bombardment of Gaza.

At the Green Party's online spring conference in March of this year, members attempted to pass a motion entitled 'Zionism is racism', but were prevented from debating it by filibustering actions of other members.

This motion is due to be debated again at the main conference of the Green Party, held in Brighton over the 2-4 October, and Zack Polanski has been under pressure to explain his position.

What attitude should socialists take to this issue? Following the spring conference, Socialist Party Executive Committee member Judy Beishon wrote an article exploring the question in *Socialism Today* magazine. In it she traces the history of Zionism as a right-wing political movement. And looks at what programme is needed today to end brutal wars and give real self-determination to people across the region.

- Read the article 'Behind the Greens' debate on anti-Zionism' and more at www.socialismtoday.org



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UCU ballot of FE colleges must go ahead without delay!



Adult education staff and students demanding more funding in 2025 PAULA MITCHELL

MARCO TESEI

UCU NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The Further Education Committee (FEC) of the University and College Union (UCU) met on Friday 25 September to get to grips with delivering resolution FE5, passed at the FE sector conference in May. This was for an aggregated ballot of over 200 English college branches this autumn, leading to national industrial action for a ‘New Deal for FE’: for binding national bargaining, a 10% pay rise (moving toward pay parity with schoolteachers), and national workload limits.

FE England members have never in UCU’s history been balloted on an aggregated basis, rather than just college-by-college. And with the cost-of-living squeeze getting ever tighter for FE teachers (salaries have lost 40% of their real-terms value since 2010) and the pay gap with schoolteachers now averaging £10,000 a year and getting ever wider, never has such an opportunity for powerful collective action been so timely and necessary. But with this massive opportunity has come an urgent need: for UCU’s leadership to act boldly and decisively!

The special FEC meeting on 11 September set a timeline, starting 2 November. This is important, because FE employers typically make local pay offers at the beginning of October, and any further delay in launching the national campaign risks a haemorrhaging of branches from the dispute. Branch reps like me are already advising members to beware of any paltry local pay offer when we can win so much more collectively.

Coordinate and demonstrate

Duncan Moore and I also moved motions instructing our general secretary, Jo Grady, to press the TUC to implement the civil service union PCS Motion 34 from the TUC Congress, and to start taking a lead herself - to coordinate pay disputes and for a Saturday demonstration for investment in public services. Imagine the benefits of campaigning with a bigger union like PCS, especially if Department for Education workers struck alongside us, calling for full funding for FE pay as well as their own.

But, though heard and supported, our motions were ruled out of order because they were deemed to be decisions for the National Executive Committee – which doesn’t meet till November. We were assured our encouragements would be passed on to Jo Grady!

Friday’s meeting should have been about cracking on with the campaign. Instead, it got hamstrung over a legal question revolving around whether adult education-only providers can be included in the dispute, on which the union’s head of FE (an unelected official) is seeking Senior Counsel. That counsel hasn’t yet been delivered, and therefore the grounds of our dispute cannot be finalised.

Nobody doubts the genuine complexities of framing this dispute, which stem from the unique features of the FE funding landscape. But these issues are resolvable and could have been sorted a long time ago.

Reps on the left of the FEC (Socialist Party and others) are also having to push back against a proposal by the head of FE to exclude branches deemed not to be ‘strike ready’. Yet

FE sector conference Motion 4 established a new policy committing the union to proactively encourage branches to opt into the national dispute.

Furthermore, one of our main agreements at the meeting two weeks previously was to assume the inclusion of branches. Bold leadership is precisely what helps build strike-ready branches.

Push leadership

The FE leadership body, led by supporters of Jo Grady, is trying to avoid leading a fightback against Labour’s refusal to fully fund further education. This is not the kind of leadership UCU members are clamouring for.

In the next crucial couple of weeks, Socialist Party members in UCU and our allies on the left must continue to pressure the head of FE to deliver the legal counsel as soon as possible so that our ballot campaign can be launched.

As soon as this happens, FEC members must insist on the already-agreed official recommendation that branches reject local offers short of the demands of the dispute, and participate in the aggregated ballot. Campaign materials, with the demand for full government funding expressed loud and clear, must be ready to go to branches from the word go.

Meanwhile, reps and activists should immediately start preparing branches for the ballot. Cross-branch collaboration will be vital. We are fighting to ensure this national ballot takes place!

● This is an edit of a longer article at socialistparty.org.uk

PCS prepares national ballot as disputes continue

Civil service union PCS has announced to members that it is preparing a national ballot for strike action, from 20 October to 1 December.

The dispute is about pay, jobs, pensions, and terms and conditions, including a fully funded 10% pay remit, a minimum civil service wage of £18 an hour, and an end to job-cut programmes and imposed office closures. Disputes in specific areas continue, including in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Victoria and Albert museum (V&A).

TUC must enact PCS’s motion to TUC Congress for a national Saturday demonstration

At the 2026 TUC Congress, Motion 34 from the PCS was passed, which included the call for the TUC to organise a national Saturday demonstration.

As was warned in the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) rally before the start of Congress, a motion calling for a national demonstration was passed at last year’s TUC but wasn’t implemented by the General Council. Therefore it is vital that union reps, members and activists call on their respective unions to vote for the motion to be enacted at the TUC General Council on 21 October.

The NSSN model motion, below, can also be found at shopstewards.net

NSSN model motion: For the TUC General Council to enact Motion 34 to call a national Saturday demonstration

This union organisation/trades council welcomes the overwhelming vote at the recent TUC Congress to pass Motion 34: ‘Public Sector Pay’ from the PCS.

The motion instructed TUC Congress to “urgently call a national Saturday demonstration this autumn for investment in public services, against austerity and for pro-worker policies.”

This union organisation/trades council believes that this is a vital action to mobilise the trade unions to put forward our movement’s demands, as Andy Burnham moves towards his first Budget on 28 October.

This is imperative as the employers lobby for policies to make working-class people and communities pay the price for the crisis caused by big business, centred on a further austerity offensive, which could include attacks that have been raised such as the ending of the pension triple lock.

Therefore, this union organisation/trades council calls on our union to demand that the TUC General Council on 21 October 2026 agrees to enact Motion 34 and name the date for a ‘national Saturday demonstration’ before the end of this year.

Get all the latest union news

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 with the NSSN bulletin
shopstewards.net

DAVID HOFMAN REPORTS FROM THE V&A

On 25 September, the first day of a two-day strike at the V&A in South Kensington, dozens of enthusiastic PCS and Prospect members turned out to picket the three major entrances. Management had announced that they didn’t want to pay the London Living Wage, and could not grant a 4% salary increase.

The V&A, apparently, ‘can’t afford’ anything better. This assertion is angrily disputed by strikers like Allison, a trained engineer, with a Masters in Archaeological Sciences, who “finds it hard to survive” in London on a salary of £28,000. Her banner depicted the hypocrisy of the Director, ex-Labour MP Sir Tristram Hunt. His remuneration increase for 2025-6 clearly breached the 4% barrier!

Mark Best adds: The artist and early socialist campaigner William Morris featured on placards and in speeches at the strike rally the following day. The chants of “low pay, no way” continue the fight for us all to, as Morris put it, “live and work in hope and with pleasure.” Workers at the V&A Storehouse appeared to have made progress on one of their demands, for access to water during shifts.



Above: V&A South Kensington

Below: FCDO PHOTOS: SOCIALIST PARTY



TESSA WARRINGTON REPORTS FROM THE FCDO

In the middle of the day on 24 September, workers marched out of their offices in Westminster chanting, shouting and waving their PCS union flags.

This was the eighth day of strike action over a restructure that puts jobs at risk, whilst the employer simultaneously advertises vacancies. A striker explained: “We are having to reapply and re-interview for our own jobs, competing against colleagues we’ve worked alongside for years. At the same time, 560 jobs - more than the total number of people potentially at risk of redundancy - are being listed by the department online.” The strike has already had partial success, forcing the FCDO not to advertise the jobs externally. A PCS officer said they are prepared to name more strike dates if those jobs aren’t offered to current FCDO staff as a priority.

Socialist Party members supporting the enthusiastic picket line got a great response. These workers had never been out on strike before, but saw the need to take action together and are seeing results. One non-union member stopped and said: “This is what I want to see from the union. A fighting union. I haven’t joined in the past because of a lack of action on a number of issues. I recognise a number of the workers on the picket line and will inquire about joining.” With ongoing action in the V&A, the need for a linked-up national campaign is clear.

NEU votes to ‘pause’ ballot, but we must fight on



NEU members on strike in Bristol in 2025 ROGER THOMAS

DAN WARRINGTON, SHEILA CAFFREY, LOUISE CUFFARO

NEU EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, PERSONAL CAPACITY

On Thursday 24 September, the National Executive of the National Education Union (NEU) voted to pause the teachers’ strike ballot which was due to start on 3 October.

Socialist Party members and our allies on the Executive voted against this position.

A week before the Exec meeting, general secretary Daniel Kebede announced that the NEU had won an extra £500 million to ensure the 2026-27 teacher pay award will now be fully funded. This was achieved through the threat of strike action.

But it quickly became clear that the ‘full funding’ was not as straightforward as it at first seemed. And the union’s demands for more pay than the 6.5% over two years, and for sufficient funding to stave off redundancies, were not met.

We quickly put out a leaflet and statement explaining this and arguing that the ballot should go ahead (see ‘Teacher pay and school funding – the fight is not over!’ at socialist-party.org.uk).

However, at national meetings, in the union’s communications, and in the national press, Daniel Kebede and those around him created the impression that there was now no need to ballot to strike.

At the 24 September Exec meeting, Socialist Party members proposed that the strike ballot should go ahead, but with a delay to the start date, in order to rebuild the campaign. Our amendment was below.

The ‘NEU Left’ ruling group, which includes the SWP, voted against our

proposal. Some in the NEU Left, particularly members of the SWP, proposed a 4-day snap poll of members, asking them if they wanted to pause the ballot or start it on 3 October; requiring a high turnout, in the region of 60%, in order to move to a ballot. This proposal was narrowly amended out, which we opposed. Then the whole of NEU Left voted to pause.

‘The campaign is not over’

We did not agree with this decision. But the leadership says “The campaign is not over. The NEU will continue fighting for increased investment in education. We will also campaign to ensure that the £3.3 billion Teachers’ Pension Scheme (TPS) savings remain in education and are not clawed back by the Treasury. The union reserves the right to reopen the ballot if circumstances change.”

We say we need to ensure all schools have adequate funding to cover the pay deal, prevent closures and redundancies, and provide the education children deserve. The government is clearly on the ropes – let’s keep the pressure on to win more!

That must include putting the pressure on the TUC (Trades Union Congress) to implement the PCS motion to TUC, to name the date this autumn for a national demo against austerity – which our union spoke in favour of and we all voted for at the TUC.

Let’s ‘un-pause’ following the 28 October Budget if we don’t have:

- Funding to increase support for pupils, halt all cuts and redundancies, and decrease workload
- All the £3.3 billion savings from the Teachers’ Pension Scheme put back into schools

● An agreement for a 10% pay deal as a step towards pay restoration for teachers and support staff

We want to work with anyone in the union who wants a serious fighting strategy, especially in preparation for the Executive elections next year.

And if you want to campaign with us - join the Socialist Party!

The proposal Socialist Party members and our allies put to the Exec:

The announcement of the government over funding the pay rise has come about as the result of the preparedness of the NEU to ballot, justifying the decision of the July Executive.

However, there are serious questions about the funding announced by government earlier in September, including that:

- Schools had already budgeted for the money gained by LGPS revaluations
- The available funds vary greatly area to area, and school to school
- There is still the risk of further cuts to education spending
- Money gained from reduction in TPS employer contributions should be redirected into general education funding

This Executive therefore resolves that the dispute is not over.

The Executive resolves to postpone the start of the ballot in order to allow time to rebuild the campaign, and launch the ballot after the date of the next Executive meeting on 22 October.

THE BATTLE OF CABLE STREET 90 YEARS ON

The organised working class can defeat the far right

ISAI MARIJERLA

SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2026

is not 1936, but anyone serious about confronting the far right and driving them from our communities must learn the lessons of Cable Street. The events in East London 90 years ago illustrated the true meaning of the phrase 'unity is strength' and demonstrated that workers united will never be defeated.

What defeated and successfully stopped the fascists marching through a working-class migrant community was the mobilisation of workers from all backgrounds. Neither the date nor the location was an accident. The fascists chose the East End, particularly an area with a densely populated immigrant community, to create divisions and provoke violence. The date itself marked four years since the founding of the British Union of Fascists (BUF). Their plan was to celebrate the day with a massive, militarised march to demonstrate the strength of fascism. Instead, they faced the mighty solidarity, strength and power of working people.

No Pasarán!

The chant that day was "They shall not pass!" No Pasarán! And they did not pass.

The 1930s was a period of revolutions and counter-revolutions, of turmoil, war, polarisation and workers' uprisings. In Spain, major class battles were taking place; between February and July 1936, 133 general strikes were called. The chant 'No Pasarán' was used by workers in Spain when they rose against General Franco's fascist forces and capitalists. Workers internationally were watching these events and getting inspired.

Britain was suffering from huge economic crisis and an acute cost-of-living crisis. There was mass unemployment. The day after the Cable Street events, the famous Jarrow march of unemployed workers set off from the North East. Workers also had to confront fascists who posed

a serious threat. They were organised, violent, and actively stirring division within communities, whipping up fear and threatening migrant communities.

The Labour Party, although seen by big sections of the working class as 'their party', did not put forward the measurers needed to confront the fascists or a socialist programme to cut across their divisive ideas. George Lansbury, former Labour Party leader and who had led the Poplar rebellion in East London in the 1920s, wrongly advised those who opposed fascism to "keep away from demonstrations".

Today, the Labour Party is on par with the Tories in stirring divisions and looking for scapegoats amongst the working class. Their continuation of pro-austerity policies has atomised the vital services for working-class and young people. What future is the Labour government offering to ordinary people? Low pay, overwork and a multitude of crises – cost of living, housing, NHS, education etc. Is it any surprise that the social support base for the traditional establishment parties is low? Workers are picking up any stick to express their anger and frustration. There is an outcry for an alternative.

In 1936, just like the Labour Party, most trade union leaders also called on people to stay away and let the police deal with the fascists.

However, the role of the police, then as now, is ultimately to serve the interests of the capitalist state. On the day itself, 6,000 police officers were on duty. They failed to escort the fascists through the streets because they could not get past the hundreds of thousands of protesters. Oswald Mosley, who sought to emulate Hitler by establishing the BUF after being a Tory and Labour MP, was defeated and utterly humiliated. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner even apologised to Mosley.

In 1930s Britain, the Communist Party, resting on the authority of the 1917 Russian Revolution in which the working class had taken power for the first time, had an important base of support among the working class. On Cable Street, its leadership opposed direct action until the eleventh hour and instead called a rally in Trafalgar Square. East London Communist Party organiser Frank LeFitte issued a statement: "If Mosley decides to march, let him. Don't attempt disorder." Joe Jacobs, secretary of the

Stepney branch from 1933 to 1937 wrote in his autobiography 'Out of the Ghetto' about the mistaken approach of the party. A little over a year after the events of Cable Street, he was expelled from the party for raising these issues internally.

In spite of the Communist Party leaders nationally, its local branches played a key role in mobilisation and organisation. Its members in Stepney were leading local activists on the ground. The local branch had more than 1,000 Jewish members. They had also built campaigns against exploitative landlords, organised tenants, and developed broad support within communities through campaigns that affected working-class people. Just like today, housing was a major crisis then.

The activists and rank-and-file members in the Communist Party, Labour Party and in the trade unions understood that fascism posed a threat to the local community, particularly to Jewish people. Opposition from below was growing, and rank-and-file activists, together with wider communities, were determined to stop them from marching. The community was mobilised in an organised way and the anger was harnessed and turned into action – hundreds of thousands of leaflets were distributed, posters were put up. More than 100 public meetings were organised across London to urge people to oppose the fascist march. These lessons from history are crucial. It is the united working class that can defeat the far right, fascism and racist division.

Working-class unity

In 1930s it was the Jewish community that was on the firing line. The fascists attempted to make it a scapegoat, to try to marginalise a section of the working class and to build a base. Ultimately the aim of the fascists is to smash the working-class organisations. Today far-right activists are particularly targeting migrants, refugees and Muslim communities. It is the mass organisations of the working class that can cut across this.

Unity in struggle can be built between workers of all backgrounds through a united programme. It is important to emphasise the common interests of all workers and foster unity in the fight against a common enemy. The fascists, the far right and the capitalist establishment politicians

promote divisions in order to maintain the power of the capitalist elite and to protect their system.

Last year, the authorities banned the now far-right UKIP from marching through Whitechapel after mass outrage from local communities. Had the march not been banned, it was clear that there was no way the far right could have marched. It was this fear that forced the authorities to intervene.

Cable Street is not just a history lesson; it remains a powerful reminder that the only way to defeat the far right and physically stop them marching is through the mass mobilisation and organisation of the working class from all backgrounds.

Today, the trade unions are the organisations that bring

together workers from all backgrounds across workplaces, neighbourhoods and communities. They are the largest organisations in Britain, representing more than 6.6 million workers.

Earlier this year, at the Together demonstration, hundreds of thousands of working-class and young people marched against racism and the far right. Trade unions played a role in mobilising for that demo, including with sizeable turnouts from the National Education Union, for example. It gave a glimpse of the numbers trade unions could mobilise. And many times more, especially if done by linking the struggle against racism to a struggle for jobs, homes and public services for all.

A march bringing together sections of workers struggling for fully funded services and decent pay would have done far more to cut across support for the right, by offering a genuine means for workers to give an organised expression to their anger – pointing towards the need for a working-class political alternative. Instead, the march was organised with the slogan for 'Love, Hope and Unity'.

The Socialist Party has consistently

argued that the trade union movement must take the lead in the struggle against racism, armed with a socialist programme that defends the lives and livelihoods of all workers.

We also call on the trade unions, where necessary, to organise stewarding and collective defence to protect workers and the anti-racist movement from far-right groups. While these forces remain relatively small, they are growing in confidence and must be challenged through the organised strength of the working class.

Scandalously, in 1936 the leaders of the official labour movement largely vacated the field, leaving the fight against fascism in the hands of local activists, communists, and rank-and-file trade unionists.

Time and again, when racist thugs have targeted marginalised groups, workers and ordinary people have come together to resist them. The leaders of the workers' movement cannot be allowed to evade their responsibility to lead the fight to defend workers from attacks by the far right and those from the capitalist bosses. It is the organised working class that is the force capable of defeating capitalism and the divisions it creates.



The Battle of Cable Street mural, Shadwell, east London PHOTO: DARKROOM DAZE/CC

We carry a shortened extract written by Tony Aitman to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Cable Street. Read in full ('Cable Street: When workers united and fought the fascist threat at Cable Street' at socialistparty.org.uk)



A united campaign of Communists and Jews on Commercial Road and Cable Street, the Irish Catholic dockers who threw up the barricades, the youth and the women – my mother, 17 at the time, sneaked out of the house to join the battle – had dealt Mosley a major defeat

In 1936, it has been estimated that of the 350,000 Jews living in England, nearly half lived in the East End.

In the street where I lived, Yiddish was the lingua franca that enabled immigrants from Russia, Germany, Austria, Lithuania and a host of other countries to communicate.

This was the heart of Stepney, where over 60,000 Jews lived in cramped terraced housing, typical "two up, two down". Our house would later have the luxurious addition of a basement, built to afford shelter during the war.

The lead-up to the events of 4 October was a series of meetings throughout east London, as the fascists attempted to whip up working-class opposition to Jews as the scapegoats for the economic crisis and saying "Jewish interests" were responsible for the looming war.

To consolidate his position, and to intimidate the population, Mosley proposed a march through the East End on 4 October: in full uniform. The fascists were to meet at Royal Mint Street, and, after a military style review of the troops, march in four separate groupings to meetings in east London.

There was an immediate response to this; the Jewish People's Council launched a petition calling for the march to be banned which gained 100,000 signatures within two days. There was massive opposition to the march. Yet, the anger and readiness to act on behalf of the youth and the rank and file of the movement was not matched by the leadership.

The Communist Party (CP) was at its strongest in the East End – CP member Phil Piratin was elected MP for Mile End in 1945. In the street where I lived as a child, virtually everyone was in the Party. However, the Young Communist League had organised a rally in Trafalgar Square on the same day as the march, in solidarity with the Spanish Republic. East London CP organiser Frank LeFitte put out a statement: "If Mosley decides to march, let him. Don't attempt disorder".

The Jewish hierarchy organised a sports day out, trying to get the youth away from the East End: "Jews who, however innocently, become involved in any possible disorders will be actively helping anti-Semitism and Jew baiting... keep away".

But opposition from below was growing. Joe Jacobs, secretary of Stepney CP, was demanding direct confrontation with the fascists. The Independent Labour Party, the CP rank and file, Jewish groups throughout the area, were demanding direct action.

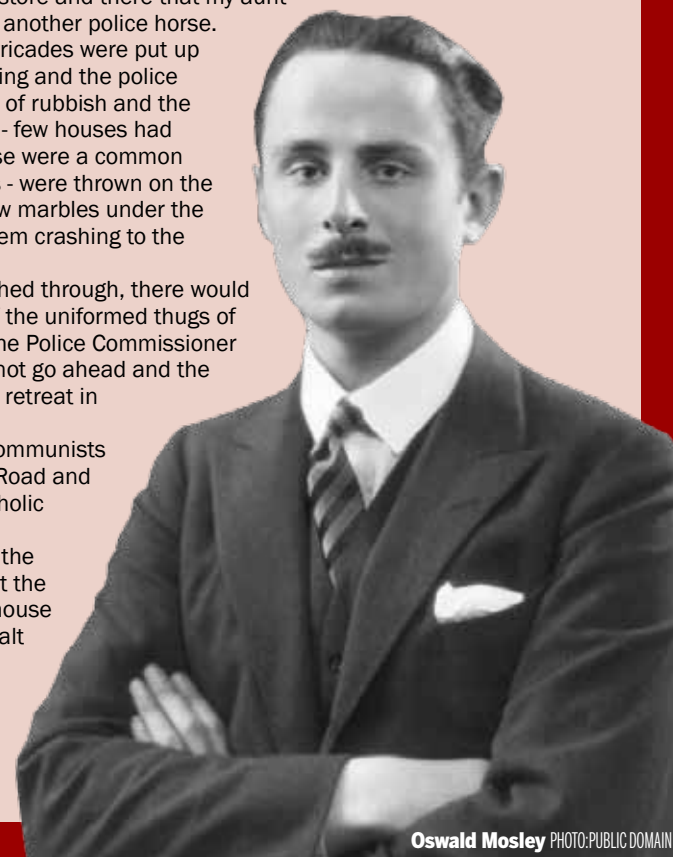
The largest Jewish settlement in the East End then was in Fairclough (now Henriques) Street. Along with the synagogue, ante-natal clinics and youth clubs that it housed, it was an organising and recruiting point for the Communist Party among the Jewish youth – it was there that my mother met my father and recruited him to the Party. They wanted to meet the fascists face to face in organised opposition.

On the day, the East End erupted. Over 300,000 packed east London's streets – 50,000 congregated around Gardiner's Corner, the site of a department store between Aldgate and Whitechapel. It was there that a police horse was pushed through the plate glass window of the store and there that my aunt was kicked in the head by another police horse.

At Cable Street, too, barricades were put up to stop the fascists marching and the police defending them. A shower of rubbish and the contents of chamber pots – few houses had indoor sanitation and these were a common feature of workers' homes – were thrown on the police, while children threw marbles under the horses' hooves to send them crashing to the ground.

If the fascists had marched through, there would have been an utter rout of the uniformed thugs of the BUF. To prevent this, the Police Commissioner decided the march could not go ahead and the Blackshirts were forced to retreat in complete humiliation.

A united campaign of Communists and Jews on Commercial Road and Cable Street, the Irish Catholic dockers who threw up the barricades, the youth and the women – my mother, 17 at the time, sneaked out of the house to join the battle – had dealt Mosley a major defeat, destroying any hope he may have had of building a mass fascist party in Britain.



Oswald Mosley PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Massive votes for strike action in Irish Republic - public sector workers moving onto the offensive

MILITANT LEFT (CWI IRELAND) REPORTERS

Industrial action in the public sector begins on 30 September. Two strike days are scheduled - 14 and 21 October. More are planned. Following massive votes for strike action, public sector workers are moving onto the offensive. This is the most significant campaign of industrial action in almost 40 years. One, which if it happens, will rock the political and capitalist establishment.

It is also a test of the trade union movement and a test for workers. Even at the height of austerity and the relentless series of attacks on public sector workers between 2009-2015, there was no fightback on this scale. What has changed?

Cost-of-living crisis

There are two connected changes. First, the cost-of-living crisis, driven by persistent high inflation, is acting in tandem with an endemic housing crisis to push living standards down for all but the top 10% of wage earners. There is a wage standstill across the economy which affects hundreds of thousands in the public sector. A 3% pay rise is eaten up instantly by inflation running at 3.5%. Workers can feel themselves falling behind. Every gas and electricity bill is higher than the last; every trip to the super-market costs more; with no end in sight. Indeed, worse may well be on the cards as the full implications of Trump's war on Iran are felt in the global economy.

The second change appears to be in the government's attitude towards its own workers. In 2022, the mere threat of a ballot for industrial action was sufficient to kickstart talks on a revision of the public sector pay deal then in force. This time, the government has allowed the last deal to lapse and is clearly in no hurry to open negotiations on a successor.



Strikers, members of the Fórsa union, at Oberstown youth detention centre, Dublin. The workers are fighting for better conditions to allow them to support the vulnerable children in their care PHOTO: MILITANT LEFT

Nor do the massive votes for strike action seem to have had an impact. Why is this?

Alliance to keep wages down

It is no exaggeration to say that Micheál Martin's government marches in lockstep with the bosses' cartel IBEC when it comes to government policy towards workers. IBEC appears, to all intents and purposes, to be able to dictate to the government on issues such as trade union rights, sick pay for workers and pay policy.

'Left alternative' parties

One other element is the lack of vocal political support for public sector industrial action from the political

parties who, we are led to believe, form an embryonic 'left alternative'. Clearly scared by any potential media smear campaign and looking towards government at some point in the future with Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. Sinn Féin, Labour and the Social Democrats appear to have lost their tongues as the largest wave of industrial action in several generations is imminent.

This exposes how, when tensions rise, and contradictions sharpen to the point of social conflict, these organisations do not and will not stand with working people. No doubt they are having intensive 'behind closed doors' meetings with IBEC and other business interests, 'reassuring' them

that they remain 'pro-business'. That is, in favour of keeping wages low with no limit on profits.

Even if, as is possible, the planned industrial and strike action does not proceed, the votes recorded in August and September mark a massive step forward. The public sector is the last bastion of the trade union movement in the South of Ireland, where density levels are higher and workplace organising is widespread and effective. We are not going back to the artificial social 'peace' that held prior to summer 2026.

Militant Left will be standing with public sector workers on this field of struggle. Our members will be on picket lines, on strike committees

and fighting for the maximum return for workers. The political establishment has got used to 'industrial peace' while they wage, often unopposed, their brutal class war on the working class. Regardless of how this present situation resolves itself, a marker has been laid down. Other workers' sights will be raised.

The prospect of other struggles erupting across the private and semi-state sectors is almost certain. Hundreds of thousands of workers on picket lines across the country, many for the first time, will send a powerful signal to the working class.

No more austerity era 'reforms'

An 'inflation-plus' pay award, that protects workers' incomes from inflation, is the very baseline that must emerge from this campaign of action. Protections against outsourcing and AI implementation are key, too. After the devastation to terms and conditions between 2009-14 the trade union movement must firmly reject any more 'reforms' that the government demands. Instead, the return of long-term sick leave, annual leave entitlements and other conditions attacked during austerity must be demanded.

Workers need our own party

Finally, outside of the small left forces in the Dáil, no political party stands unequivocally with public sector workers at this point. As we face another capitalist crisis the need for a mass party of the working class - grows more urgent. Thousands of workers will come out of this process with any illusions they had in the Irish government totally shattered. They will be looking for answers, political answers. Militant Left believes the campaign of industrial action in the public sector marks the first real crack in the consensus in the South. There is a real chance to lay the foundations for a political force based on the working class and unions to face the challenges ahead. Victory to the workers!



KEVIN PARSLOW

UNITE LE 1228 BRANCH SECRETARY

Catering staff and cleaners at the Forest private school in Waltham Forest, London, members of Unite the Union, are on strike from 28 September to 2 October after their employer, the Compass Group, proposed moving them onto term-time-only contracts. This would mean them working 45 weeks instead of 52, but it would also mean a loss of pay of 13.5% per year! There are also losses to pension rights.

These plans will leave workers, who do not receive the London Living Wage, in a precarious financial situation. Meanwhile, Compass group estimates likely profits for 2026 at \$1.8 billion. And Unite found that Forest School had a total annual income of over £39 million for the financial year ending 31 August 2025 while its headteacher earns at least £300,000 a year.

The workers produced placards attacking the cuts, one of them modestly saying: "We don't want more,

we want what you took away." Most of the workers were not in a union four months ago but joined Unite to fight back against these vicious cuts. Workers are also calling for Unite to be formally recognised as their union for collective bargaining.

Unite regional officer Daniel Hogan said: "Forest School pleads poverty; however, it charges thousands of pounds per term and can afford to pay senior staff huge salaries. Expecting workers who are on already low wages to take such a substantial pay cut is completely unfair and the school needs to think again.

"We know parents will be concerned to hear of the strike plans; however, it is entirely the fault of Forest School for putting profits over people and attacking its lower-paid staff."

The workers leafleted parents as they brought their children to school, and they received support from some sixth formers, who were interested to hear about the 20 November walkout.

Fight the Glasgow fire-and-rehire scandal Defend workers' and trade union rights

SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND MEMBERS IN GLASGOW CITY UNISON

Glasgow City Council (GCC) announced on 24 September its intention to sack its entire workforce - excluding teachers - more than 23,000 workers in all. Unbelievably, the Scottish National Party (SNP) leadership, aided by the Scottish Greens, used Tory fire-and-rehire anti-union legislation. That law is due to be abolished on 1 January 2027.

The option to use fire and rehire, if there was not agreement by unions to accept a new pay and grading scheme, was voted through by SNP and Scottish Green councillors at council committee in August.

These disgraceful anti-union actions catapulted the Glasgow equal pay struggle back into the national spotlight. Just as it had been in 2018 when 8,000 mainly women workers took part in a history-making 48-hour strike.

That strike resulted in over £800 million to date being paid to workers in compensation, after years of suffering unequal and discriminatory pay. This current dispute is over the pay and grading scheme that is due to replace the old one by 1 April 2027.

Media outlets across Scotland featured it as their main story. With no Glasgow SNP politician prepared to front up, the spotlight turned on their paymasters in the Scottish government.

During an excruciating BBC interview the next morning, SNP cabinet minister Neil Gray was asked whether he agreed with former SNP first minister Nicola Sturgeon who said after the P&O scandal that fire and rehire was "an appalling practice" and "offends the principle of fair work"? On nine occasions he refused to answer the question: "Are GCC's actions fair?"

By early afternoon, the Scottish government had, under massive pressure, offered the joint trade unions a meeting with the deputy first minister. By 4:30pm, GCC had been instructed to take fire and rehire off the table. Reconvened talks with GCC and the unions are due to start on 29 September.

These events followed an Acas-convened meeting last week during which Unison - the largest of the local authority trade unions in Glasgow - refused to sign up to the new pay and grading scheme. Not least because it left thousands of workers facing pay cuts.

Both GMB and Unite - the other unions involved - had said they were happy to move immediately to consult members. Mistakenly, both unions released a statement in the hours before the council pressed the nuclear option saying they were prepared to accept.

This gave the employer the confidence that they could attack Unison and browbeat the workforce into acceptance by using this corporate terrorism.

In a desperate attempt to deflect responsibility for the crisis, the council's director of communications and governance blamed Unison who had "betrayed its own members" by not balloting them. "The council wanted to get a deal over the line. The GMB and Unite wanted to get a deal over the line, and twice Unison at the last minute have pulled the rug out from all of us."

As Glasgow City Unison, immediately after the fire-and-rehire decision, made clear: "Any agreement would have tied our hands and limited our ability to fully campaign and ballot our members on their rotten proposals. The council did not have to issue dismissal letters today and it was their choice to do so.

"There are nearly 2,000 workers

facing detriment and we are fighting for them right now. We will continue discussions with the council to make improvements. There is not enough money invested in the cash values for the new grading structure, in the allowances model or in pay protection. The proposals do not deliver fair pay for workers."

In taking this stance, Glasgow City Unison are a credit to the entire trade union movement. Events since have proven this to be the case, with the council being forced to withdraw the sack notices and more talks on Unison's demands now due to take place.

It's vital that trade union unity is maintained. And that Unite and GMB fight alongside Unison for more investment into the pay scheme.

As Glasgow City Unison has said: "We will not allow workers to be pitted against each other, and we will fight for all workers for a properly funded settlement that delivers pay justice across Glasgow's workforce.

"We've shown what standing together can achieve, and this week, as negotiations resume, we will continue to build unity and organisation across every service and workplace. Equal pay. No unacceptable detriment. More money in the pot!"

This whole disgusting episode underlines the need for a city-wide trade union and socialist election challenge in May 2027.

Socialist Party Scotland will continue to work with trade unionists, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners to that end, including in the newly formed Another Glasgow is Possible initiative, which stands on a commitment to oppose all cuts while fighting for a needs budget for Glasgow.

• Socialist Party Scotland members play a leading role in Glasgow City Unison



Joint trade union protest at Glasgow City council meeting on 20 August PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Support Risa Tan, suspended Prospect rep

Campaigners for member democracy in the trade union Prospect are calling on members to support a rep suspended from office in the union.

Risa Tan is recognised for massively growing their branch by winning for members. They were also one of the most confident and politically combative speakers at Prospect national conference this year.

Prospect members in 'Democratic Prospects' report that Risa is now facing two disciplinary and was issued with a precautionary suspension as nominations opened for their branch committee. The complaint which gave rise to the precautionary suspension included allegations that Risa is a socialist, that they expressed a minority view against a pay offer supported by the Branch Executive Committee, that they speak to PCS union, and that they were rude in branch discussions.

Prospect members in 'Democratic Prospects' are asking branches to support Risa and help build a democratic, fighting union that protects members' right to organise within the union.

The full statement is published at democraticprospects.uk

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN PROSPECT

Attack on dockworker Unite rep is an attack on the whole workforce

Southampton dockworkers mounted a noisy protest outside the offices of Switzer on Wednesday 23 September in support of Richard Crease, a local tug-boat worker and elected Unite rep, national chair of Unite's Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways National Industrial Sector Committee. The protest was to oppose attempts to cut Richard's facility time. He was attending an appeal hearing at the Switzer offices.

Switzer is clearly preparing to attack the terms and conditions of the workforce by attempting to neuter the strength of the trade union. Unite has already conducted an indicative strike ballot as the first step in the course of action to defend its elected rep. Unite officers made clear the impact that would have in shutting all ports across the country.

The protest was supported by Southampton TUC, and Unite dockworkers are invited to its October meeting to discuss building solidarity.

NICK CHAFFEY, SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Nottingham tram workers strike over pay

GMB members across all sections of the Nottingham Tram Service took strike action on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 September in their fight for a 4.1% wage increase.

As we go to press, two more days of strikes are planned for Friday 4 and Saturday 5 October.

The Tram System is owned by Nottingham City Council (with PFI costs) and run by Tramlink, a private sector consortium with the concession of 22.5 years until 2034.

The strike coincides with Nottingham's Annual Goose Fair that usually attracts around half a million people and which is sited on the Forest Recreation Ground where there is a tram stop!

The strike was solid with picketing from 5am until 6pm. On the Saturday, around eighty members picketed - pretty much the full shift.

The GMB is strongly organised on the trams, with around 90% membership density.

The last strike in 2024, again at the time of Goose Fair, was settled after one day of strike.

The employer has offered 3.3% (with 7% for the lowest paid to avoid chasing the legal minimum wage) and is presenting an intransigent face.

There's a feeling that behind the employer's current intransigence is a bigger agenda - thinking of the future and the end of the contract in 2034 and the millions of pounds associated with returning the network to the council in the condition it was in when the concession commenced.

Solidarity with the GMB! NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

Waltham Forest school staff fight big pay cut



PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

Birmingham building youth walkout and backing bin strike

JAMES TAYLOR
BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Socialist Students had a campaign stall every day of freshers week. On each day, several students walked straight towards us, having arrived at the University of Birmingham actively searching for a socialist group to join.

Over 200 students, and some staff, wrote down their names to be contacted and updated on our activity. We gave out more than 2,500 leaflets.

A layer of students have been inspired and disgusted by the events of the last year. The election of Zohran Mamdani in New York, and the rise of the Green Party in the polls.

But also the Iran war and victories of far-right parties across Europe. Tuition fees and the cost of living came up repeatedly in conversations with students.

Our action-focused approach attracted these people to Socialist Students over other campus groups. Our involvement in the Birmingham bin strike, and building the 20 November youth walkout, excited students ready to get involved and fight for socialism.

We got a good amount of students along to a casual meet-and-greet on campus, and hopefully we will be joined by even more of the 200+ contacts at our first proper meeting of the year this week.

York St John – my first time campaigning

TAMSIN ALLANSON
YORK ST JOHN SOCIALIST STUDENTS

This was the first time I’ve ever done anything with Socialist Students. And it was my first time ever helping out at a campaign stall.

I was nervous at first. For the first hour or so, I mostly kept quiet.

But as the day went on, I really settled in. I watched how others were campaigning, and ended up having conversation with passersby myself. It improved my confidence to do similar things in the future.

People were really receptive. We counted 39 sign-ups at the end of the day.

Queen Mary, east London – Climate crisis, AI, and war

LUCA
QUEEN MARY SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Students agreed with our grievances against the new nearby AI data centre, our previous campaign winning gender-neutral toilets and changing facilities at Queen Mary, safe and affordable housing, and protesting the government’s complicity in genocide in Gaza.

We had two campaign stalls on each day of the freshers’ fair, collecting more than 80 contacts. Students asked ‘what is socialism’, how data centres impact communities, and about the climate crisis.

We held discussions on both days at a nearby café. There, students expressed interest in participating in rallies, campaigns, and discussions about political theory.

Our first meeting was ‘Climate crisis, AI, and war: what is the socialist solution?’ 12 attended, 8 new faces.

We discussed action, we planned for what next. Students were very enthusiastic about contributing.

USW Trefforest – we’re gonna need a bigger room

Students are calling for a change. And at the University of South Wales (USW) freshers’ fair, they are turning to Socialist Students in dozens for that very change. At the University of South Wales, Socialist Students attracted the interest of 173 students at the freshers’ fair. 14 came to our first Socialist Student meeting.

Socialist Party members also invited students to our local Rhondda Cynon Taff Socialist Party branch meeting, more than doubling attendance.

CAVAN GRIFFIN
USW SOCIALIST STUDENTS

24 people crammed around a long narrow table. We had so many students who wanted to come to the Socialist Party meeting, that we couldn’t sort enough lifts.

So, this week, we’re travelling together – carrying posters and handing out leaflets. We hope to use it for our social media too.

This week, we’re asking for a bigger room.

MARIAM KAMISH
RHONDDA CYNON TAF SOCIALIST PARTY

Leicester – enthusiasm into action

ADAM TYAS
LEICESTER SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Each day campaigning at the University of Leicester, the level of our activity grew. On the final day, we had two stalls, and a Socialist Students team walking around talking to students.

Leicester uni campus overlaps with WQE College. Over 150 students showed interest in Socialist Students and the ‘Fight for our

Sheffield Hallam – students worry about future and cost of living

JAMES HOOPER
SHEFFIELD HALLAM SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Speaking to students during freshers week, we heard time and time again, that their biggest worry was their future after university, and the hefty cost during it.

The government wants students to take on a generational amount of debt for an education that only garnishes the pockets of the bosses and the landlords of the city. The University and College Union

(UCU) is taking ongoing industrial action against ‘voluntary’ redundancies, cutting some departments in half.

We had a powerful reception from students, getting details of nearly 80 who are interested in attending meetings. During our first two socials, we spoke about the 20 November walkout, the rise of the modern far right – Sheffield had a far-right march that week – and how students can fight for better conditions during our education.



Leicester IAN PATTISON



Coventry JOHNNY WILKINSON

future, not their wars’ 20 November walkout.

Although students supported us, the student union and university prevented us from leafleting the freshers’ fair queue, claiming that we needed to be an official formed society to do any activity. That’s what we were campaigning to do!

Young people are becoming increasingly politically conscious. Students openly identified as

‘communists’. Others declared that “we should have a revolution”.

What came through most strongly was growing anger at our futures being squandered by government after government, and a desire to fight for a society that works for us, rather than the wealthy.

Students showed particular interest fighting the climate crisis, and challenging the capitalist system that continues to put profit before people

and the planet. Our task now is to turn that enthusiasm into sustained organisation and action on campus. We’ve organised four student meetings in the first week. And we’ve already been getting in contact with students who had signed up.

We need to build for 20 November youth strikes, and develop a proper Socialist Students society on campus. So the university has no excuse to stop our activity!

York uni: no shops, no reception, no security, no bus - paying more for less

LOUIE NARDINI
UNIVERSITY OF YORK SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We kicked off freshers with door knocking at Halifax College. This is an underfunded part of the university. Over years it has been deprived of its Nisa, its local reception, and its bus stop. Students coming back from a night out or shopping now have to walk 15-20 minutes back home through a darkly lit alleyway, with no proper lighting.

During the muddy times of the year, the alley becomes impossible to walk down. The bus company, First, which made millions of pounds in profit last year, says it can’t afford to put a bus stop at the college.

But Halifax is the largest college at the uni, with over 1,000 students. The cheapest accommodation here is St Lawrence Block – HMOs (houses of multiple occupancy).

The rent has gone up

You share with 20 other students, with only one proper kitchen, four toilets, and four showers. The rent went up this year from £99 a week to over £150 a week.

Halifax College was even gifted by Lord Halifax to be cheap and affordable accommodation for students. Not anymore!

This is nothing new in the University of York. The amount of accommodation that is less than £200 a week has shrunk from 47% to 15%, just in the past year. All while tuition fees are rising. We are getting less and less out of our education, while paying more and more.

We got 37 signed up for Socialist Students. And we’re going around the rest of the college and uni this week.

These pressures on students are



IAN DALTON

only getting worse. We hope that the 20 November walkout builds the breadcrumb trail to fight against this cost-of-living crisis, and push forward socialist change for students and young people.

Pensioners back youth strike

ROGER BANNISTER
LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY AND NORTH WEST PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION DELEGATE

The North West Pensioners Association is composed of retired people, who are delegates from retired people’s organisations and trade unions, throughout the north west of England.

Whilst concentrating primarily on issues directly affecting older people, we are totally opposed to ‘divide and rule’. For example, being pitted against young people by government ministers in an ‘either/or’ squabble over cash and resources.

There is enough money to give pensioners a decent living in our retirement, and to give young people decent, free education, and genuine

apprenticeships, with a job at the end, as well as jobs for new graduates.

So the following motion was carried unanimously by the North West Pensioners Association (NWP) at our meeting on 25 September:

“This meeting notes that a recent meeting of youth organisations across Europe was held in Cologne, which included representatives from the British Socialist Students organisation, and that this meeting called for a Youth Strike to take place across Europe on 20 November 2026 in protest against war, youth unemployment, and austerity policies. This meeting supports this walkout and urges NWP affiliates to support any rallies held locally, and to publicise our support in the local news media.”

Cardiff Trans Pride – fighting together to win back services

JOHN WILLIAMS
UNITE LGBT+ EC MEMBER (PERSONAL CAPACITY) AND CARDIFF CENTRAL SOCIALIST PARTY

Gender-reaffirming services in Wales have been ‘paused’. People believed they would be receiving services, only to be told with very little notice, that it had been disgracefully paused.

Trans people in Wales are facing more attacks on their rights and well-being. Socialist Party members supported Cardiff Trans Pride again this year.

This is political

Unlike Cardiff Pride, which has been heavily commercialised – where you have to pay to ‘officially’ go on the rally, and political campaigning is restricted – this event has always been free and welcoming.

At Cardiff Trans Pride, political campaigning is welcomed. Chants treated Tory and Labour politicians the same.

Trans Pride organisers had asked me to help advertise the event to maximise trade union participation, which I did.

There were trade union contingents from Unite, PCS, and Unison. I spoke as a Unite the Union Executive Council member, in a personal capacity.

I thanked organisers for this Pride event being free and open. Pride has always been political.

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 was a

protest against police harassment. When NHS services are attacked, that’s political.

Labour watering down its Employment Rights Act, that’s political. Watering down workers’ rights makes the working conditions of LGBT+ people worse.

I emphasised that the solution therefore has to be political. And that everyone in the crowd should join a trade union.

The best way to fight for rights is through collective action. With trade union membership at more than 6.5 million, it’s the strongest force in society, if mobilised.

Trade unions

I said that the vast majority of the trade union movement stands in solidarity with trans people, as we understand there isn’t a competition of rights, services, and wealth, it’s just that it’s in the hands of the wrong people – the capitalist class.

‘Divide and rule’ is used to keep us squabbling with each other. Only a socialist society controlled by us will permanently change that.

The 20 November international youth walkout is something people can practically do to oppose war and further attacks on our public services that trans people need.

● Read more – ‘Defend health services in Wales: Unfreeze gender affirming surgeries’





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 acadatisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.
- The right to a safe secure home for all. For the mass building of genuinely affordable, high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing. For rent controls that cap the level of rent. Fair rent decisions should be made by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and representatives of trade unions. For cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. Nationalise the privately owned large building companies, land banks and estates.

ENVIRONMENT

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

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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.

Leeds Green tensions



Leeds council chamber PHOTO: CHEMICAL ENGINEER/CC

Frictions have come to the surface among Green councillors in Leeds (where Greens hold 10 out of 99 seats). Councillors Eden Hills and Cristiana Mirosanu have both released public statements criticising the majority of the council group. Subsequently, councillor Mirosanu has resigned from the Green group.

The disagreements emerged after Private Eye magazine revealed that Green Party Deputy Leader and Leeds councillor Mothin Ali had been allocated a special responsibility allowance for the council, suggesting that this was to supplement his work for the party nationally.

But this follows other tensions in Leeds Green Party, including the blocking of a motion, backed by Cllr Mirosanu, for the council's group leader to be elected by party members. The leaked condescending messages from the group leader accuse party members of not having "any idea of what the role entails". The motion was ruled out of order at the request of Mothin Ali.

In recent months, councillors Hills and Mirosanu have addressed a delegate meeting of Leeds Trades Council, to discuss how they could use their elected positions as a platform for trade union campaigns and demands. Socialist Party members continue to raise the demand, supported by the three main council trade unions nationally, for the council to set a needs-based, no-cuts budget – calling on councillors,

including the Greens, to fight for that position.

Ahead of this May's council elections, the Socialist Party in Leeds wrote to the Green Party, raising that demand. Unfortunately, the reply from Leeds Greens, signed by Cllr Mirosanu, concluded: "We in the Green Group will oppose any cuts that are unfair and/or discriminatory, or where we believe there is another possible solution, but we can't commit to always oppose any cuts to services, as much as we would love to."

Socialists would invite the councillors to reconsider this position. A key step in building a mass movement alongside the trade unions to demand the funding our city needs, is seeing councillors prepared to put their necks on the line to take a stand against cuts. Only verbally opposing cuts and then voting for them, as the Labour group leading the council has done for the last fifteen years, will only end up disillusioning those looking for real change.

IAIN DALTON

Eye on the Greens

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

- editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Northern Ireland: Tensions rise over Orange Order march stand-off at Drumcree

28 years after the last stand-off at Drumcree, near Portadown town in County Armagh, the local Orange Order is attempting to march down the predominantly Catholic/nationalist Garvaghy Road as local residents block their path.

Many Garvaghy Road residents have reacted with shock and anger, recalling the 1990s when the disputed parade meant days of confinement under heavy police and British Army presence.

Frank, a Garvaghy resident and Militant Left activist, said: "People were really shocked by the Parades Commission ruling. It brought back memories of terrible times. It's been a very tense atmosphere on the road, and in the Portadown area since then."

During the 1990s, the annual Drumcree stand-offs brought widespread blockades, riots and sectarian intimidation, and scores were killed, including the three young Quinn brothers in a sectarian arson attack in Ballymoney. Public revulsion helped pull society back from the brink.

A few weeks later, the Omagh bomb, attributed to the Real IRA, killed 29 people. For most people, the atrocity underscored the yearning to end the 'Troubles' and helped the Establishment consolidate the peace process and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Working-class people across the North, Catholic and Protestant alike, have no wish to return to those dark days.

Drumcree flared again after a legal challenge overturned earlier procedural rulings, allowing a restricted Orange Order parade down the Garvaghy Road for the first time



Drumcree Church, one of the flashpoints of the conflict. The Catholic area is behind the camera PHOTO: AUGUST SCHWEDERFEGGER/CC

since 1998. A High Court injunction blocked the move, was upheld, then dramatically reversed in a late night appeal. Residents and nationalist politicians responded with a mass blockade to stop the march.

Although the Orange march is limited to 35 marchers walking in silence, the residents of Garvaghy Road retain every right to oppose a parade through their community. They view it as a sectarian provocation, especially given that no such marches have occurred there for almost three decades.

While the Orange Order is a reactionary, sectarian organisation, its members have a right to march. Indeed, they conduct thousands of parades throughout the North annually, most of which take place without objection. Equally, local residents maintain the right to object to offensive marches and to be

free from being trapped inside their homes under virtual curfew.

Sinn Féin and the DUP have both appeared at Drumcree in recent days, on opposite sides, even though they jointly run the Stormont Executive and have failed to deliver on health, education, housing and wages. With Stormont already under strain and an election looming next May, both parties are aiming to shore up support.

The widely discredited Parades Commission – an unelected quango which decides who can walk where – has once again shown itself to be a barrier to genuine negotiation, not a facilitator of it. The CWI in Ireland opposed the Parades Commission from the outset, warning that an unelected body serving the capitalist state could not act as a genuine arbiter and that laws aimed at curbing sectarian parades would eventually be used against workers. Recently,

Camden needs an anti-austerity, working-class fightback!

The following is an extract from a leaflet prepared by members of Camden and Haringey Socialist Party to use during the Holborn and St Pancras by election. The article can be read in full at socialistparty.org.uk

In this election, most people wanting to protest against Labour's austerity programme will do so by voting Green. It is possible Polanski could win the seat.

The Socialist Party argues that we need a democratically run workers' party, backed by the trade unions, with a socialist programme as a step towards creating a real alternative. The need to build an independent working-class political voice to fight austerity is a pressing issue, and a popular idea.

The five Green-run councils, including in neighbouring Haringey, are a potentially powerful force against local authority cuts, but only if councillors take a stand.

So far though, the Green councils have not taken that approach. Hackney Green Mayor Zoe Garbett said that "cuts would have to be made" to make a balanced budget, otherwise unelected "commissioners" would be sent in to seize control of the council. It is not true that Hackney Greens must follow in Labour's footsteps and make cuts to set a balanced budget (see 'Green anti-austerity Hackney summit: What strategy to fight the cuts?' at socialistparty.org.uk). When Highgate Wood School in Haringey was struggling under mounting debt, the newly elected Green council initially said they couldn't help because it would set a 'precedent'. What 'precedent'? That underfunded schools in the borough would be supported by the council?

Against the backdrop of London Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan reducing the affordable homes quota on builds in London, Garbett and others have launched a legal challenge. But

there is no reason why these mayors should wait for a legal challenge when people are struggling now. Green councils and mayors should launch serious campaigns to build public support for government funding to enable them to take control of the housing situation in their areas by building council homes.

Are newly elected Green councils going to buck the trend of accepting the building unaffordable 'affordable' homes, challenge central government support for speculators and fight for the right to build council ones on a mass scale instead?

To do this may mean challenging unelected council officers to produce a balanced budget using borrowing to fund investment. This immediate solution should be linked to building a campaign with other boroughs, trade unions and activists against the government to demand back the money cut from local authority funding.

striking Pilgrims workers in Enniskillen had their names taken by the police and were told their picket was an illegal procession under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

The Orange Order has said it is willing to engage with residents and the Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition has called for an international facilitator to be brought in to try to resolve the dispute. Both organisations are also talking with the Secretary of State and various 'mediation processes' and possible 'march compromises' are in the air.

The decision over who can walk where cannot be left in the hands of unelected quangos, judges and pro-capitalist governments rather than in the hands of the communities affected. The only way out of this stand-off is through face-to-face meetings and genuine negotiation, not through legal rulings and police blockades.

All the parties involved will feel, to one degree or another, the strong desire from the broader community, from working-class people on both sides, to reach an agreement and to not allow the situation to engulf society as it did in the 1990s.

Local community organisations, alongside trade union workplace representatives from the Portadown area, backed up by the wider union movement, can take initiatives to cut across sectarian tensions and intimidation.

Garvaghy resident and Militant Left activist, Frank, comments: "I have been calling for workers' unity but only about 10% of people are listening at the moment."

"As time goes by, that will change. People know we can't rely on the government or establishment politicians; any long-term solution has to come from working-class people, Protestant and Catholic, agreeing the way forward."

The task of socialists is to build a united working-class movement that transcends sectarianism and challenges the capitalist system that thrives on division.

MILITANT LEFT (CWI IRELAND) REPORTERS



PHOTO: PAUL MATTISSON

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Scrolling online, it doesn't take long to see the horror of war, climate change and racist ideas being stoked. Meanwhile, we are being forced to pay for increasing rents, tuition fees and the cost of living.

But we refuse to accept that future. That's why we will be joining the international youth strike on 20 November - walking out and protesting to fight for our future, not their wars.

If you are preparing to be a youth striker, or a socialist campaigner at your school, college or uni, you can't miss Socialism 2026, taking place less than a week before N20.

A thousand socialists, students and young people will be meeting in London 14-15 November. On Sunday 15 November, Socialist Students has been invited to host a youth rally. It will invite youth strikers from across Europe to speak, including from Germany where on 25 September 40,000-plus walked out of lessons to protest. Socialism 2026 will be the best possible preparation for the big day - N20.

Across the weekend of discussion and debate, there will be the chance to meet and discuss with hundreds of other students building the youth strike at their school, college or uni.

Buy your tickets now!

ADAM GILLMAN
SOCIALIST STUDENTS

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



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