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France, Spain, Germany



Protests in France
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We're walking out

International youth strike 20 November

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IN MASS STRUGGLES >>> p2-3

SOCIALIST STUDENTS: FIGHT FOR OUR
FUTURE, NOT THEIR WARS >>> p4-5

Europe erupts in mass struggles

Build the international youth strikes on 20 November



Paris PHOTO: JULES*/CC

HANNAH SELL

SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The slogan of the International Youth Walkout taking place in 12+ countries across Europe on 20 November is 'fight for our future – not their wars'. Across Europe, that fight has already erupted. Many workers and young people in Britain will be inspired by the wave of mass strikes and protests across the continent. Whether it's the tens of thousands of school students striking against militarism in Germany, the hundreds-of-thousands-strong movement over housing costs in the Spanish state – which has now led to a 24-hour general strike demanding wage increases being called for 11 November – the planned public sector strike over pay in the Irish Republic, the biggest for forty years, or the magnificent movement of school students and workers in France, which is also developing in Belgium.

In each country the specific trigger for the movement is different, but the underlying causes are not. Every government offers endless austerity and cuts to public services, stagnating wages, rising housing costs. Everywhere, young people feel that this system – where jobs are low-paid and insecure and education is inadequate and expensive, where halting climate change is impossible but a fortune can be found for weaponry – does not offer them any future worth having.

Britain is no different. Overcrowded classrooms and high pupil-to-teacher ratios are one of the main issues raised by the French students. But according to the OECD, average class sizes are even bigger in Britain. Unbearably hot classrooms during the heatwave affected students in France and Britain alike. The slogans on the banners of the French students, such as 'schools with no money, a country with no future', and 'money for education not for weapons', apply just as much here.

True, renters in Britain do not have to pay quite as much as the eye-watering 47% of their wages that Spaniards have to pay in rent, but many do – average rents in London have reached 41% of income – and nationally they still have to cough up more than a third of their incomes on it. And the rising cost of living that is forcing workers in Ireland to strike is true here, and everywhere. Continent-wide, capitalism is a system in crisis, increasingly incapable of meeting the needs of the majority. Whatever the colour of their rosettes, pro-capitalist governments become hated as a result.

In the Spanish state the prime minister, Pedro Sanchez, is leaning on the mass movement that has erupted over the question of housing to try and win re-election. Having taken no qualitative measures to solve the housing crisis over eight years in office, under the pressure of that movement he belatedly attempted to introduce some limited reforms – including protections against evictions

until 2030 – but they were voted down by the right and far-right. Now he has called a general election on the issue, hoping that workers will lend him their vote on the promise of housing reform and in order to block the right. Such is the pressure from below, however, that the general election being called has not stopped the two biggest trade union federations going ahead with a 24-hour general strike eighteen days before.

Whatever the outcome of the election, a new phase of struggle has begun. If Sanchez's gamble pays off, which is far from certain given his government's record in office, he will face a resurgent working class. If, on the other hand, the right wins, its inevitable stepping up of attacks on living standards will face mass opposition from day one.

Escalating class conflict

It is perhaps in France, however, that the escalating class conflict is most acute. As the Financial Times put it last week, the French capitalist class is caught "between the bond markets and the barricades". Like in Britain, the government is under pressure from the financial markets – and promising to take measures to satisfy the capitalists' demand for austerity. France's debt-to-GDP stood at 115% in 2025, while its budget deficit was 5.1%, compared with 94% and 4.3% for the UK. This year, the cost of French government debt has soared to its highest level in a quarter of a century. Meanwhile, the difference between the cost of French and German government debt – the two biggest economies in the EU – has gone up by two thirds in a month, pointing to the growing pressures on the eurozone.

The prime minister, Sebastian Lecornu, is trying to push a €54 billion-cuts budget through parliament, with only military spending protected. But it is far from clear he can succeed as students protest and, under pressure from below, public sector workers' unions call strike action. Already under Macron's presidency, seven prime ministers have had to resign because they could not force through all the cuts demanded by the capitalist class – including Lecornu, who resigned and then came back! And that was before the working class entered struggle on a bigger scale than for many years. Macron is now more hated than ever before, on just 10% in the polls. The Presidential election is just six months away, if Macron and his prime minister can hang on that long.

The French capitalist class are desperate for a Presidential candidate who will reliably act in their interests but also be popular enough – at first at least – to get elected! It isn't going well for them. At this stage the two candidates who appear most likely to go through to the second round are Marine Le Pen from the populist right, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the populist left. Neither are reliable for French capitalism. There is a desperate scramble to promote

alternatives the elites would prefer. This week, the capitalist politician Raphaël Glucksmann won the so-called 'centre-left' primary and declared a need to break with Jean-Luc Mélenchon's "dominance of the left". Le Monde reports that, as Glucksmann made his way to the primary, local people were hanging out of the windows shouting "Mélenchon President" and throwing rice and flour over him. The next day, 10,000 people attended a rally for Mélenchon.

Mélenchon and his La France Insoumise (LFI – France Unbowed) organisation had majority support among young people before the current movement. Around 60% of 18 to 24-year-olds said they would vote for Mélenchon. Now, having been the only national party to unequivocally back the student movement, including the LFI Mayor of Saint-Denis being tear gassed while joining workers trying to protect students from police brutality, the enthusiasm for LFI is bound to have increased among young people but also many workers.

Le Pen meanwhile, is promising the elites that she would viciously rein in public spending. The capitalist class would rather not have her as president, not so much because of her racism, but because she is populist and, like Reform in Britain, wins votes by demagogically claiming to stand up for the 'little people', promising, for example, to lower the standard retirement age back to 62, compared to Mélenchon's pledge of 60. Above all, the capitalists fear that whenever she tried to attack the working class she would provoke huge opposition. One French

financier told the BBC that her presidency would lead to a 20% chance of France crashing out of the eurozone. The chance of a Mélenchon Presidency leading to that were, he concluded, far higher. Faced with a choice between Mélenchon and Le Pen, the French ruling class would be likely to reluctantly back Le Pen.

If Mélenchon was to win the Presidency the capitalists would set out to sabotage his programme from day one. The French capitalist class have forgotten nothing about how, for example, they brought the 1981 Mitterrand government to heel. That government's programme included a 10% increase in the minimum wage, increasing pensions, and nationalisation of a number of major corporations and banks. Initially a number of these measures were implemented, but the government came under wholesale attack from French and international capitalism. Within months, the government was freezing wages and cutting public spending. There is no doubt similar measures would be taken against Mélenchon trying to implement his programme.

'Cunning plans'

That does not mean that a Mélenchon Presidency would be powerless. But it points to the conclusions that will need be drawn by a new generation of workers and young people in France and internationally. Mélenchon, unfortunately, has not drawn those conclusions. His financial proposals have more than a whiff of the 'cunning plans' of Yanis Varoufakis in 2015 when he was Greek finance minister in the Syriza left

government facing attack from all the institutions of capitalism. Mélenchon is suggesting he could convert nearly €500 billion of government debt into 'zero-interest coupons' that would still exist, but have no interest paid on them. The problem is that there is zero chance of the bond markets accepting that. Immediately when Mélenchon announced the plan, the heads of the Bank of France and the European Central Bank rushed to condemn it.

There is no 'cunning plan' that will allow a left President to sneak through pro-working class measures behind the backs of the capitalist class. Instead it would require mobilising to defeat them. In Greece in 2015, the working class showed its determination to defy the onslaught of the capitalist class. Had the Syriza government been equally determined the outcome would have been different. That would have required acting against the capitalists' sabotage by immediately imposing capital controls and a state monopoly on foreign trade, and nationalising the commanding heights of the economy, under democratic workers' control and management. This could not, of course, have been carried out successfully if the struggle was limited to proclamations by the Greek parliament. It would have needed a mass mobilisation of the Greek working class in support of such a programme, and an appeal for solidarity to the working class continent wide. If the mighty French working class took that road it would electrify the world, as it did in 1968.

Mélenchon, unfortunately, does not see the working class as the key social force in society, instead referring to a more nebulous 'people' (see 'Not a model for workers' politics' – Socialism Today for more). Yet it is the working class – the class which keeps society running, and makes the capitalists' profits – which, because of its collective role in the workplace and therefore collective consciousness, has the potential power to overturn capitalism and build a new democratic socialist order. Through all the current struggles shaking Europe, therefore, the crucial task is for the working class to increase its level of independent organisation – both in coordinating and organising the struggles, and by forging its own parties. LFI in France is unfortunately currently not conceived as a workers' party, or a party at all. A qualitatively different degree of democratic mass organisation, based on the working class, is going to be needed for the battles ahead.

The tasks facing us in Britain are not different. Here, the capitalist class is desperately hoping that the Burnham-led government will be able to drive through austerity – cutting pensions, benefits and more – without mass opposition, because Burnham allegedly knows how to 'connect' with working-class people. It is a vain hope! Like other governments across Europe, Burnham implementing the policies that the bosses demand will result in him, over time, becoming as unpopular as Starmer, or even Macron! The Budget later this month will certainly not be 'branded' as an austerity Budget and will probably include a few minor crumbs to try and show the working-class Burnham is 'on their side'. But, in essence, it will protect military spending while taking no measures



Many of the young people moving into struggle to fight for their futures already consider themselves socialists. The battles ahead are going to necessitate drawing conclusions about how a new democratic socialist society can be won

to seriously tackle the cost-of-living crisis. And beyond the Budget, it is clear that new austerity measures are in the pipeline.

True, right now most of the trade union leaders are fuelling even the faint hopes in Burnham in order to try to avoid strike action this autumn. As a result, we are not yet engulfed in action on the scale of France, Spain or Ireland. However, most workers – even those with a few faint hopes in Burnham – understand that, like in the Spanish state, it is going to take strike action to force anything from this government. And action is planned. The University and College Union, UCU, and the civil servants union, PCS, are among those balloting, with Socialist Party members central to fighting for that to take place. In addition, the TUC Congress passed a PCS resolution for a national autumn demo against austerity: the battle is now on to make it a reality. As industrial action against this government grows, the question of a political alternative based on the trade unions will also be increasingly posed.

And N20 will be a first opportunity for many thousands of students in Britain, inspired by the growing student movement across Europe, to take to the streets. Workers in Britain will also be inspired by the solidarity between the French students and the working class, shown in the images of organised groups of workers including firefighters and teachers protecting the school students' pickets from police violence. Here the trade union movement needs to make clear that it will not tolerate disciplinary action being taken, never mind police brutality, against school, college and university students striking on N20.

In the first half of the 2010s, as a result of the Great Recession, Europe was convulsed by mass movements. New left parties were thrown up in a number of countries, which then failed to act in workers' interests when they were in office. It is clear that we are now at the start of a new phase of mass struggle, as a result of the utter incapacity of capitalism to take society forward. Many of the young people moving into struggle to fight for their futures already consider themselves socialists. The battles ahead are going to necessitate drawing conclusions about how a new democratic socialist society can be successfully won, as the only way to ensure that technology is harnessed to protect the planet and provide good living standards for all, instead of for profit and for war. The Socialist Party, and the international organisation we are part of – the Committee for a Workers' International – has a vital role to play in that process.

Socialist Students, hosted by the Socialist

To assist with its drive to build the biggest possible youth walkouts on 20 November, the Socialist has invited Socialist Students to have regular space in its pages.

This week, Socialist Students is running a two-page feature 'Fight for our futures, not their wars' (pages 4-5).

The invitation is initially open until the Socialist Students national conference on 5 December.



PHOTO: NICK CLARE



20 November international youth strike rally featuring international guest speakers at Socialism 2026

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Socialist Students hosted by the Socialist

FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURES, NOT THEIR WARS!



BECCA BAYMAN
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS



Across the world, young people are beginning to take to the streets expressing anger at the lack of a future being offered to us under capitalism, and in opposition to war and militarisation.

This wave of youth demonstrations is particularly visible in Europe, where the threat of increasing militarisation and military conscription looms. In Germany, nationwide school strikes against conscription have mobilised 55,000 young people. Inspired by these mobilisations, an anti-war youth assembly was formed and met in-person in June, bringing together 20 socialist youth organisations from 8 countries across Europe to organise an international youth strike ‘fighting for our futures, not their wars’, on 20 November. Socialist Students was invited to be part of this.

Students and young people in Britain have been a feature of the mass movement in solidarity with Palestinians and against Israel’s war on Gaza – including through university campus encampments. And in 2025, when Donald Trump was invited by the Labour government for a state visit, Socialist Students led school and college walkouts.

It was the success of this action, and coverage of it in the press internationally, that helped us find other youth groups internationally.

But it is necessary to build on these successes. The growing anger among young people provides an opportunity to build a united fightback of youth internationally, against war and militarisation.

However, to do this we need to understand what is driving the increase in war and why governments across Europe are pouring billions into rearmament, at the expense of our public services and education. The threat of increasing wars and conflict is rooted in the increasing tensions between capitalist powers internationally.

Fighting for an end to war therefore means fighting the rotten capitalist system that produces it and building a socialist alternative.

Capitalism is in crisis. Across the world, economic growth is slowing and productivity has stagnated in many of the major capitalist economies. At the same time, governments face growing debt and are driving down the living standards of the working class in an attempt to protect the profits of the capitalist bosses. International capitalist institutions like the IMF and OECD have warned of a weakening global outlook due to trade tensions and instability.

But crisis is inherent to the capitalist economic system, based on profit and competing capitalist interests and competing capitalist states. When crises happen, competition between capitalist powers sharpens. The struggle for resources and political influence becomes increasingly backed by military power, fuelling further conflict.

The US, China and other powers are competing to protect their economic interests and expand their influence. In doing so, governments and states are not simply choosing to be aggressive but are responding empirically to the pressures created by the unstable capitalist system.

Growing international tensions

One element of this is the growing tensions between the US and China. The US has dominated the global economy and international political system for decades, but China’s rapid economic growth has challenged that dominance, and the US is now in relative decline. China has expanded its trade and investment across the world, while the US is attempting to defend its position. As each power strengthens its position, the other is pushed to respond.

In Europe, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was a turning point. The British government’s 2025 strategic defence review describes the Ukraine war as marking a ‘new era’, with “state-on-state war returning to Europe”.

This is driving increased militarisation across Europe. In Britain, before he left office, Starmer announced the plan to raise annual military spending to £80 billion per year by 2029 – an increase of £25 billion from the previous year. This funding is lifted directly from the pockets of the working class, with the Labour government making cuts in the form of increased taxes, reduced disability benefits, and reduced investment in the NHS, schools, housing, and other public services.

Working-class and young people won’t simply accept cutbacks to our services to pay for weapons and war. Many will however, have anxieties about increasing military threats. These threats are ramped up by the capitalist politicians and the media to try to justify spending on the military in the name of ‘defence’. The whipping up of nationalism by the capitalist class is part of that.

In fact, young people and workers in Britain have more in common with workers and young people in Germany, Italy or China than with a British billionaire.

We all face rising unemployment, unaffordable housing and climate catastrophe, while they live in luxury. And it is us and our friends and relatives who are most likely to be fatalities in wars and conflicts.

Young people across Europe are coming together to take part in the international youth strike on 20 November. The fight against war must be international. A socialist transformation of society would be the basis by which to replace competition between capitalist states with solidarity between the international working class.

However, an international approach begins with understanding and organising against our own governments. In Britain the drive towards militarisation is already having consequences for workers and young people.

We are already seeing militarisation creeping into our education system. 35 UK universities have entered the Defence Universities Alliance, which is a competitive arms research programme partnered with the UK government. Universities receive some income from this alliance. Amid an education funding crisis, this shows

why we need universities and colleges to be fully publicly funded, and under the democratic control of the working class and students.

There are limits to how far governments can go to increase militarisation at the expense of the working class. Economic stagnation means that governments have less to spend. Former Defence Secretary John Healey resigned over Starmer’s reluctance to increase defence spending as far as he wanted. While Burnham has refused to commit to Healey’s target by 2030, he has retained Starmer’s £80 billion spending commitment and appointed Healey as Chancellor.

But pressure from the working class has also limited the government’s power to act. It was working class anger at Starmer’s cut to winter fuel payments for pensioners and disability benefits cuts that forced U-turns.

In 2023 Tory home secretary Suella Braverman was sacked due to her threats to ban protests against the genocide on Palestine. This is the largest and most sustained protest movement in the UK since the historic 2003 protests against the invasion of Iraq.

The fight against war and militarisation is happening across the world as well. Across Europe, governments are using the threat of war to justify increased military spending while workers face austerity and attacks on living standards. The EU has relaxed its fiscal rules to allow increased defence spending, while governments continue to impose restrictions on other areas of public spending. Rearmament is being prioritised as public services are starved of investment.

The German government is planning a dramatic increase in military spending, with an aim to match the combined totals of the UK and France by 2030. Furthermore, they have introduced the deeply unpopular conscription, sending out a survey to young people to which only 0.07% responded in favour of going to war for Germany. Tens of thousands of young people have mobilised against the threat of conscription. School strikes have shown that young people are not prepared to accept a future in which they expected to pay for militarisation, either through cuts to living standards or through being sent to fight.

In Italy, a one-day general strike in solidarity with Palestinians in autumn 2025 showed what the organised working class can achieve, students joined the walkouts and protests too. Workers have taken action at ports, demonstrating the industrial power they have to disrupt the movement of military cargo. This demonstrates that

workers have the power to stop the machinery of war themselves.

We have also seen the power of youth movements outside Europe. In India, the youth-led ‘Cockroach’ movement mobilised hundreds of thousands around leaked examination papers, corruption and the lack of opportunities facing young people. After weeks of protests, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was forced to resign and the government conceded to several of the movement’s demands.

These struggles all point to the fact that pro-capitalist governments have limits to their power. When workers and young people organise, they can disrupt the plans of governments and force them to make concessions. But this also raises a more fundamental question. If workers and young people have the power to force concessions from the government, why shouldn’t they have the power to decide how society is run? Winning individual demands is important, it can boost the confidence of workers and young people to struggle, but it does not bring an end to the rotten capitalist system.

The role of the working class

The working class has a unique position in society. It is workers that produce the wealth and keep society functioning. When organised, workers have the potential not only to resist government’s decisions, but to take democratic control of how that wealth is used.

Capitalism is based on competition between companies for profits and between capitalist states for markets, resources, and economic and political influence. While society is organised around these competing class interests, the pressures that drive militarisation and war will remain.

Working-class and young people therefore need a political organisation that genuinely represents their interests. The Labour government has shown that it is not prepared to challenge the interests of big business, including the arms industry. The Greens have opposed the government’s approach to rearmament and called for greater investment in diplomacy. However, their ideas do not challenge the capitalist system. Officially, they call for Britain to remain in the NATO military alliance with other capitalist powers including the US. The Greens ask how we can make capitalism more peaceful, but we must argue to change the system that produces war.

We need a political alternative that represents the

interests of workers and young people and fights for the socialist transformation of society. A socialist society would mean democratically taking control of the wealth and productive resources of society and using them according to social need rather than private profit.

Workers in the arms industry, for example, have valuable skills and productive capacity. With that industry nationalised under democratic workers’ control, decisions could be made collectively to decide how those skills and resources could be used for socially useful production rather than for the creation of weapons and the generation of profit.

However, this does not mean workers should just accept physical attacks against them. Fighting for demilitarisation does not mean denying people the right to defend themselves. The question is which class controls defence, and in whose interests is it carried out? Workers should be able to organise to defend themselves through their own democratic organisations, rather than being forced to fight in the interests of governments and big businesses. The struggle for working-class self-defence can be connected to the wider struggle for workers’ control.

Ultimately, socialism provides the basis for overcoming the divisions between workers of different countries. The working class has no interest in fighting other workers for the profits of their respective ruling classes, they have directly opposed interests.

Workers and young people need peace, decent living standards, and secure futures, while arms companies want profit from instability and rearmament. An international socialist transformation would replace competition between capitalist states with democratic cooperation between working people, removing the material basis on which nationalism and war are continually reproduced.

This is why the fight against war is inseparable from the fight for socialism. The 20 November youth strike is a step towards building the organisation and solidarity of the international working class, and a chance for young people to demonstrate their need to fight for our futures and not their wars.

• **Becca was a Socialist Students delegate to the June meeting in Cologne, which set the initial plans for the Youth Walkouts on 20 November**

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Build international youth strike 20 November

‘Fight for our futures, not their wars’, a Europe-wide day of youth walkouts is taking place on 20 November. With 20+ other youth organisations from across the continent, Socialist Students is taking part. The strikes are being organised by two youth organisations taking part in the mass movement in Spain, as well as two student organisations in France. The German school strike organisation which led tens of thousands walking out in September have now also announced 20 November as another strike day.



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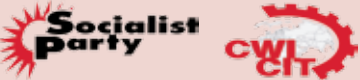
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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."
Karl Marx

After Holborn and St Pancras Labour win sets off frenzied establishment attack on Polanski



It was minutes after the polls closed in the Holborn and St Pancras by-election on 8 November, well before results were announced, that the capitalist establishment's assault on Green Party leader Zack Polanski took a step up. Former Green Party leader Caroline Lucas - who in summer 2019 when Jeremy Corbyn was leader of the Labour Party, was calling for a cross-party, all-woman cabinet of Tories, Lib Dems and Blairites to replace the Boris Johnson government - led the charge.

Lucas refused to say whether or not Polanski should keep his position as Green leader and criticised his lack of leadership. From there, the assault continued.

The capitalist class would have loved for this by-election to be proof of a real and sustained 'Burnham bounce'. Proof of concept that in fact Burnham can shore up a stable base of support for Labour, from which it can govern in big-business interests - including by continuing with the austerity status quo of crumbling underfunded services, and cutting billions from future spending on the state pension.

At this stage there are faint hopes that Burnham might, at least, be 'better than Starmer'. But this by-election revealed how limited those hopes are. Labour won with just 12,292 votes - a loss of 70% of the votes it received in the same constituency with Jeremy Corbyn as leader in 2017. Polanski was second with 8,928.

When Andy Burnham won the Makerfield by-election in June, he did so by cynically posing as standing against Labour prime minister Keir Starmer. In the May local elections six weeks earlier, in the wards which make up the Makerfield constituency, the Greens received around 3,000 votes; by the time of the by-election it was 300. Many who had sought to vote to reject Starmer's Labour in May did so by voting Green then, but did so by backing Burnham in June.

That did not happen this time. In May's local elections, in the seats that make up the Holborn and St Pancras constituency, Labour got about 10,800 votes. So, for all the hype about Burnham's appeal, Labour gained just 1,500 votes. More like a

'hop' than a 'bounce'. Only another 28,000 to go to get to Corbyn levels!

And not just in Holborn and St Pancras, in council by-elections since Burnham became Labour leader, the Greens and Reform have both made net gains.

And so the capitalist establishment is doing its best to assist Burnham by spinning his 'hop' as a 'bounce'. But also by attacking his rivals. Correctly pointing to Reform's sleaze, big-business backing and rule breaking. And by incorrectly painting Polanski and the Greens as antisemitic.

Zionism is Racism motion

The Zionism is Racism motion passed at Green Party conference has been seized on as an opportunity to attack Polanski by equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

After the debate got under way at the Green conference in March, the Socialist's sister publication Socialism Today published an article looking at the historic roots of Zionism, and examining the limitations of arguments from forces on either side of the debate. (See 'Behind the Green's debate on anti-Zionism' at socialism-today.org)

Rightly, many will be angry at the capitalist media's frenzied attacks on the Green motion and will contrast it to the little or no criticism for politicians that support the Israeli capitalist state's genocidal slaughter in Gaza.

Nonetheless, it is not by chance that the capitalist class are using this motion in order to go on the attack, yet again cynically and falsely trying to equate anti-Zionism and antisemitism. The capitalist class will always seize on the weakness of its opponents, and this motion gave them an opening. Many workers and young people who want to see the strongest possible movement in defence of the Palestinians will have opposed the motion from a correct instinct to reject issues that can cause unnecessary divisions, and therefore a desire not to alienate those who want to build the struggle against the Israeli state's war, but interpret the term Zionism as meaning the right of Jewish people to live in safety and security.

The strongest possible answer to the capitalists and their representatives, who try to use the contending rights of different nationalities to divide the working class internationally, is to point to mass working-class struggle and its role - something that the motion, and Zack Polanski in answering questions about it, fails to do.

It is essential the Palestinians' fight for national self-determination is on



Caroline Lucas and Zack Polanski on the campaign trail
PHOTO: PAUL MATTSSON

Are the Greens the type of party we need to change the world?

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the basis of mass struggles, building mass organisations of the working class independent of the capitalists and elites, and fighting to take control out of the hands of the capitalist class. Those struggles would be compelled to appeal to the masses in the region to join them in taking on their own elites, including in Israel. Those mass struggles would pose the question of the working classes in the region taking power and beginning the socialist transformation of society, and of a socialist confederation of states in the Middle East - the only route to end the decades-long conflict.

Historically, our forebears opposed the establishment of the Zionist state of Israel in 1948. It was based from the start on the mass expulsion and oppression of the Palestine people. However, whatever motions are passed at the Green Party conference, it will not change the fact that the Israeli state has existed for almost 80 years, with around 80% of its Jewish population having been born there, with a strong national consciousness.

Over the last three years, the Israeli ruling class has been able to draw the majority of the Israeli population behind its slaughter. Nonetheless, no deep class divisions in Israeli society will come to the fore at a certain stage. The potential power of the working class was partially displayed in the 2024 one-day general strike action against the Netanyahu government. The Israeli capitalist class will never allow a genuine Palestinian state to develop. A workers' government in Israel, however, which broke with capitalism, instead based on a democratic and socialist planned economy, would be an entirely different prospect.

Weakening the reactionary Israeli state, with the most powerful military in the region, by splitting it on class lines would enormously strengthen the struggle for socialism in the Middle East. To do so successfully, however, will mean recognising the right of the Israeli working class to live in peace and security. This is ruled out, of course, on the basis of the continued oppression of the Palestinians.

Tasks in Britain

For socialists, the anti-war and workers' movements in Britain, the central task assisting the struggles of the Palestinian masses is to develop and strengthen the struggle against our own capitalist class and its political representatives. Including, as part of

that, the developing of a new mass party of the working class, fighting for socialist change.

The Green Party as currently constituted, however, does not represent a step in that direction. The fact that the motion was passed with the votes of 1,022 self-selected in-person and online conference 'attendees' - less than 0.5% of the Green Party's total membership of 220,000 - is being used by establishment Greens to raise a ludicrous bogeyman of 'en-trism' by extremists. It does, however, point to the relatively limited involvement in the party's structures, by new members who can join for as little as £6 a year.

The conference also neglected the opportunity to discuss a motion calling for the party to be 'eco-socialist'. It was on the agenda, but dropped, apparently without protest from attendees.

And there was no motion to conference dealing with how Green-led councils could use their positions to help mobilise struggles against austerity. So far, despite local authorities being in deep financial crisis, and many Green councils winning power on the basis of attracting support from those expecting to see a change from Labour austerity, no group of Green councillors has acted in defiance.

Had the Green-led Hackney council near the Holborn and St Pancras constituency used its first months in office to begin to implement the policy of the main local government trade unions - mobilising residents in a fight against austerity by preparing a no-cuts needs-based budget - the result of the by-election could have been entirely different.

Instead, so far, Polanski and others have accepted the lies from the capitalist establishment that their hands are tied and there is nothing that can be done.

The latest attack on Polanski, including from the capitalist establishment's figures inside the Greens, will provoke sympathies for the Green leader from many who see the establishment's attack for what it is. Tensions are clear for all to see between establishment Greens and a layer of young people and others, who have joined or are looking to the Greens under Polanski.

A central priority for the Socialist Party until 20 November, is to help to organise young people walking out to fight for their futures in the international youth strike, pointing to the need for socialist change and the role a new mass workers' party can play in the struggle for it.

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Privatised water companies profiting from pollution – we need nationalisation!



PHOTO: THOMAS NOUËT

CLEO SHARP

LIVERPOOL NORTH SOCIALIST PARTY

One consequences of privatisation of utilities, started by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, is massively inflated utility bills, which are becoming utterly unaffordable for many working-class households. All the while, profits soar.

Another consequence is deregulation, crumbling infrastructure and pollution. Despite his talk of 'greater public control' over the water industry, Burnham is backtracking on renationalisation, a policy supported by the overwhelming majority of the population.

An independent investigation from Watershed Investigations, the Guardian and the campaigning organisation River Action has revealed that negligence in the oversight of wastewater treatment has led to it being improperly cleaned.

Profit-seeking companies are allowing industrial chemicals into our rivers, seas and farmland at a rate of 608 billion litres per year. For the water companies, this has brought in £340 million through giving out permits to businesses to get their industrial wastewater treated. The 'treatment', however, leaves in toxic chemicals such as flame retardants, solvents and pharmaceuticals.

Pollution in the UK is already out of control, with every river in the UK already containing forever chemicals and now industrial chemicals potentially ending up in farmland.

We are denied democratic control over the utility companies because they remain in the hands of the profiteering bosses.

As the first catastrophic symptoms of climate collapse begin rearing their heads across the world, we can no longer wait to get pollution under control. The Socialist Party fights for nationalisation of utilities, to be put under direct democratic control of the working class, so that such dangerous disregard can never be allowed to happen again.

Rather than companies competing for profit, nationalised water would be able to be planned, with investment to stop pollution and waste, and to lower bills.

Programme is subject to change

Saturday 11am-1pm	Saturday 2pm-4pm	Sunday 10am-12pm	Sunday 1pm-2:45pm
There is a free crèche which runs throughout the event - email socialism@socialistparty.org.uk to book your place by 5pm 6th November	With Burnham as PM - how can the trade union movement achieve its own political voice? Speaker: Hannah Sell	Can councils refuse to implement austerity? Debate speakers: Clive Heemskerk and Michael Chessum	Is a progressive alliance what we need to stop Reform? Speaker: Josh Asker
Are the Greens the type of party we need to transform the world? Speaker: Sarah Sachs Eldridge	Do socialists say 'nationalise the entire economy'? Speaker: Helen Pattison	Does the UK face break-up under Burnham? Speaker: Sinead Daly	Where is Cuba heading? Speaker: Tony Saunois
Can capitalism achieve a genuine Palestinian state? Speaker: Judy Belshon	Can the Chinese Communist Party escape the world capitalist crisis? Speakers: Oscar Parry and Clive Heemskerk	Re-armament, conscription and war - how can it be halted? Speaker: Adam Powell Davies	The lessons of the Battle of Cable Street for today Speakers: Martin Powell Davies and Onay Kasab
The lessons of the 1936 Spanish Revolution Speaker: Scott Jones	What fate for Trump and the Republican party after the mid-term elections? Speaker: Nick Chaffey	One year since Mamdani's victory – what does the DSA represent? Speaker: Callum Joyce	Does the working class still matter in the struggle for socialism? Speakers: Ali Mansfield and Alistair Tice
25 years since 9/11 – from US world domination to decline Speaker: Tessa Warrington	4 years on from the invasion of Ukraine - what way out of the war? Speaker: Bob Labl	If you have any accessibility issues that you need assistance with regarding the weekend or hostel, please email socialism@socialistparty.org.uk and every effort will be made to accommodate your needs within the limits imposed	The coming cost-of-living storm of struggle – and lessons from the 22-23 strike wave Speakers: Pippa Evans and Hugo Pierre
250 years since the founding of the United States - the USA's revolutionary roots Speaker: Chris Thomas	The Soviet Union and the National Question Speaker: Niall Mulholland	Does AI mean the end of the working class? Speaker: Theo Sharleff	Was Russia state capitalist? Speaker: Steve Score
The 100th anniversary of the 1926 General Strike – when workers tasted power Speakers: Reece Lawton and Rob Williams	What way out of sectarian division in Northern Ireland? Speaker: Padraig Mulholland	The early Communist Party and the Minority Movement Speaker: Paula Mitchell	Is there a fascist threat across the globe? Speaker: James Collett
Is there a way out of the environmental crisis under capitalism? Speaker: Pete Dickinson	Tariffs and turmoil– Marxist economics in today's world Speaker: Philip Stott	The October 1917 revolution - what really happened? Speaker: Mark Best	Forum: The left after 'Your Party' Hosted by: Dave Nellist
What did Leon Trotsky really stand for? Speaker: Berkay Kartav	The collapse of Stalinism: what was it, and what were its causes and consequences? Speaker: Tom Baldwin	The 70th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution Speaker: Alex Smith	Marx, Engels and the foundations of scientific socialism Speaker: Dean Young
What role for direct action in the struggle for socialism? Speaker: Isal Marijerla	What is the role of the trade unions in fighting for trans rights? Speakers: Amy Sage and Sarah Sachs Eldridge	Social attitudes: is there a gender divide? Speakers: Isis Smyth and Bea Gardner	Kashmir - the struggle against oppression and for democratic rights Speaker: TU Senan and Hamza Khan
The fight against racism today Speaker from Socialist Party Black and Asian group	Rising ticket prices, falling wages - what is a socialist programme for the entertainment industry? Speaker: Nick Hart	The social media ban and the case for social media nationalisation Speaker: Ian Pattison	What next after the Timms Review? Speaker: David Maples

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- **Tony Saunois** - Secretary of the Committee for a Workers' International
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BUILDING FOR COORDINATED PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKE ACTION AND A NATIONAL TRADE UNION DEMO

Napo: Fight pay erosion, restore public sector funding

Vote to strike in probation and to reject 3.23% in Cafcass

ADAM HARMSWORTH

NAPO NATIONAL VICE CHAIR, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The AGM of Napo (the union of probation officers and workers in family courts) begins on 15 October with our union in a strong position to fight back against low pay and high workloads in probation. A national ballot of members in probation opens on 19 October.

Membership has soared - as the ballot starts, it is around 7,000.

We have more and more activists coming through, and the very successful indicative ballot on industrial action was followed by over 800 members attending an online pre-ballot meeting.

Probation workers have shown they want real change.

We should never have been in this position. But successive governments, including Keir Starmer's and now Andy Burnham's Labour, have refused to give probation the support it urgently needs.

For years, Napo has explained the crisis in the service. If the Labour government were on our side, they would have listened when we explained that sentence management was revealed to be short of 10,000 staff, or when we raised the alarm over early release of prisoners. The Rademaker Report showed a horrendous culture of bullying.

They haven't listened! In August, the Napo National Executive Committee declared no confidence in HMPPS (the prison and probation service). Then the indicative ballot showed 90.76% backing for industrial action.

The 'best and final' offer of a 5% pay increase with conditions is insulting - but it is proof that fighting back will win more for our members, as just the threat of action forced them to concede a little more than they first intended. To win more, to restore pay in probation and fight the workloads crisis, Napo must strike back.

Cafcass

It is equally important we oppose the pay offer from Cafcass (family



PAUL MATTISON



AMY SAGE
UNISON POLICE, PROBATION AND CAFCASS
SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL
CAPACITY

As our conference meets on 15-16 October, the Probation Service is running on empty. Andy Burnham is now prime minister, but so far his policies hold out little hope that he will improve things. Unison cannot sit on the sidelines.

The employer and the government have made deliberate choices that leave staff underpaid, overstretched and exposed to risk, and they will not change course unless the we force them to.

Pay, workloads and staffing are national issues created by national

political decisions, and they need a national fight. Napo has already recognised this by balloting for national strike action. Unison should be standing alongside them.

Members should reject

Members should reject the 5% pay offer in the ballot currently taking place, despite the Probation Sector Committee unfortunately recommending acceptance.

Branches know exactly what's happening on the ground. Staff are exhausted, services are unsafe. Staff are leaving because the job has become impossible, and probation can't bring new people in fast enough to replace them.

Prison overcrowding hasn't been resolved, it's just been shifted by pushing thousands more people

courts) of 3.23%, the most available under the civil service pay remit.

Napo members in Cafcass have suffered rising workloads, with many staff working well over their hours every single week. This combined with uncompetitive pay has led to rising turnover and increasing recruitment difficulties. A 3.23% pay rise will only make the situation worse for Cafcass workers. The Family Court Section Executive is recommending rejection, and the Section must now be prepared to build an industrial campaign for much better pay and against the restrictive Pay Remit.

The task facing all members during and immediately after this AGM is to vote against poor pay, vote to strike, show this union's strength, and put this 'Labour' government on notice that we will not accept things getting worse any more.

Napo is not alone in balloting this autumn and should seek to coordinate

campaigning and striking with others - especially PCS in the civil service.

The TUC Congress in September passed a resolution from PCS calling for a national demonstration on a Saturday in the autumn, to protest against austerity and in support of pro-worker policies. Napo must push for this decision to be implemented.

At Napo's 2025 AGM, 37% voted for a motion for Napo to begin discussions with sister unions on building a new political voice for the working class. Since then, Starmer was boot-ed out by his own MPs due to his unpopularity and Andy Burnham has said nothing to indicate he will move away from the same programme. It is vital that unions discuss how we build an independent workers' political voice that fights on pro-worker policies to take on the bosses' austerity offensive put forward by the main parties.



Unison Police, Probation and Cafcass conference: Unison must put up a fight!

GMB school support staff strike in South London

BERKAY KARTAV

More than 1,000 GMB union members working as school support staff in Greenwich and Merton went on strike on Friday 9 October.

Over 500 strikers gathered outside parliament in a magnificent show of strength, sending a clear message to Burnham's Labour government that support staff will fight for their

demands. The rally outside parliament was then followed by a march to the Department for Education.

They are on strike because teachers in Greenwich and Merton receive the Inner London weighting, whereas support staff working in the same schools receive the lower Outer London weighting - a difference of up to £1,400 per year.

They were previously on strike in May, but their demands for fair, equal weighting haven't been met yet by Merton and Greenwich councils.

There was a lot of anger directed against the Labour government, with many telling us they expect Andy Burnham to actually deliver funding

for schools and increase support staff pay.

Both Merton and Greenwich councils are led by Labour. The union has said that both councils have been 'kicking the can down the road' and dodging their responsibility. They should pay up now and demand the money from Burnham!

Schools are crumbling after years of underfunding. Both teachers and school support staff are expected to pick up the slack while facing the same cost-of-living crisis and funding crisis. Joint action is crucial for a united campaign to fight for a fully funded pay rise for all school staff and properly funded schools!



BERKAY KARTAV



Unite Executive starts serious discussions on strategy



The heroic Birmingham bin strike against a vicious union-busting Labour council was the trigger for Unite to vote to debate its relationship with Labour DAVE ELLIS

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS ON UNITE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Unite Executive Council meeting in October was the first since Sharon Graham was re-elected general secretary, and now there is also a majority of supporters of her manifesto on the EC, including members of the Socialist Party and Unite Broad Left.

That means a big shift, and the EC has been able to focus on important issues, including industrial and political strategy.

The Unite Executive sent messages of solidarity to the public sector-wide strikes in Ireland on 14 and 21 October, which will include Unite members, as well as the mass strikes and struggles of trade unionists and young people in France and Spain.

At the next EC, Unite will start the discussion on its relationship with the Labour Party, as agreed in a motion at the policy conference in 2025 in solidarity with the Birmingham bin strikers.

Another focus will be on developing the structures in Unite, including cross-sector combines to coordinate campaigns across multiple employers. This will help bring more members into participation in the union.

Relationship with Labour

The EC agreed to separate out the rules and policy conferences next year. The rules conference will be in July, where a discussion will happen about the union's relationship with the Labour Party. Socialist Party members and others had argued to hold that before the May 2027 elections to enable a discussion to take place more urgently about anti-austerity workers' candidates.

One option being considered is to run a consultation of the entirety of

the Unite membership on the issue of the Labour Party and political affiliation, ahead of the rules conference.

While among EC members there were some hopes in Andy Burnham - a Burnham 'hop!' - when one EC member raised that now we've got Burnham instead of Starmer should we up our affiliation to the Labour Party, no one argued in support of that idea.

Whatever happens with the union's rules, Unite will look at how Unite holds sponsored MPs to account. Up till now it's effectively been that you've got to be in the Labour Party to be in the discussions, but those MPs should be responsible to the whole union.

Unite will be campaigning to defend the pensions triple lock and for a wealth tax of 1% on those earning over £4 million. If all the Unite-supported MPs voted for that, Burnham would lose his majority.

Unite should be arguing to go further - for nationalisation of energy, and to bring privatised health services back into the NHS, for example.

Since the economic collapse in 2008, the only 'solution' to the crisis of capitalism has been austerity. Now workers are demanding change. There's a demand now for pay restoration, not just keeping up with inflation. Unite has seen a 17% growth of young members, and new reps. We can see the rise of action.

There was general agreement at the EC that the Unite reps on the TUC General Council should vote for the PCS motion to be enacted, that the TUC "urgently call a national Saturday demonstration" against Labour austerity. If we don't get that by the end of the year then we need a coalition of those unions that are willing to fight to act together, and Unite should be part of that.

Left majority on PCS executive resists attempts to limit the fightback

Get ready to ballot on 20 October

KATRINE WILLIAMS

PCS NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

With our PCS national campaign ballot on pay, jobs and conditions opening on Tuesday 20 October, it is imperative that all efforts are concentrated on smashing the anti-union 50% strike threshold.

We will be among the first unions to use the new legislation for electronic balloting for a national strike ballot. All members will receive an email on 20 October, apart from those where the union does not hold a home email address, and members in Northern Ireland who will be sent a postal ballot paper.

The chronic underfunding of the civil service has a huge impact on our members in the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Members have had enough of job insecurity and the pressure of ever-increasing workloads as staffing levels are squeezed, all for pay that has been held down for years. As we head into winter, when our fuel bills and other costs will be soaring, we have no choice but to fight on pay, jobs and conditions.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) met on 9 October to check progress on the campaign and what we need to put in place to deliver effective strike action.

In another attempt by the misnamed 'Left Unity' grouping (which includes general secretary Fran Heathcote) to derail the national character of the ballot, the NEC had to deal with a number of submissions from areas influenced by Left Unity to take groups out of the ballot, including the biggest group in

the union, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). However, the left majority on the NEC argued that a national ballot uniting all civil service members is the best way to win.

A national ballot means all groups fight together

In DWP, our pay has stagnated so disgracefully that three-quarters of our members would benefit from our demand for an £18-an-hour minimum. The national minimum wage has been going up faster than our pay and so tens of thousands of our members keep ending up back on the minimum wage. This includes the vast majority of workers on the coalface of delivering primary benefits to the public, with impossible workloads and pressure, and massive staff shortages.

We also face office closures in some cases, with no alternative or workable location to move to, and constant reorganisation and cuts.

Nothing that comes out of the delegated pay talks, which rigidly confine negotiators to staying within the paltry 3.5% civil service pay remit, can deliver what our members need. The government is intent on tying our lowest-paid members to the minimum wage forever, recalculating how the hours we work are defined.

Reintroducing national pay bargaining would address the total waste of having to hold over 200 separate pay negotiations, and would remove the scandal of members getting different pay and conditions for doing the same or similar jobs.

Now that we have a left majority on our NEC, we are seriously tackling attacks that affect us across the many

departments and workplaces all together, rather than leaving areas to fight on their own. This is despite the role of Left Unity and their supporters in the union machinery doing all they can to undermine and sabotage the ballot.

We have just consulted branches about how we can raise the extra funds needed to deliver targeted strike action to hit the government where it most hurts, alongside national action. 90% of the branches who responded had given serious consideration to how we can implement a levy on members, recognising the differences in pay and tailoring the levy to raise funds fairly.

The NEC also agreed to send solidarity to the Irish unions about to start public sector-wide strike action this week in the Republic of Ireland, and to the French school students facing the full force of the riot police for protesting against cuts to education.

Enact the PCS motion to TUC

It is clear that we are not alone in fighting the cuts. It is positive to see that other unions are also balloting - probation workers in Napo and University and College Union members in further education.

It is also clear the Burnham government will not address the cost-of-living crisis or underfunding unless it is forced to. It is imperative that the TUC General Council implements the policy submitted by our union to last month's Congress to organise a Saturday demo against austerity, with the trade union movement leading the fight against cuts to mobilise everyone together.



LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

The 42 workshops at Socialistism 2026 include:

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From marching for Gaza to joining the walkout

SAAD H
HACKNEY SOCIALIST PARTY

The Israeli state's genocidal slaughter in Gaza has reached its fourth year, backed by Britain and Western powers. So far, it has been responsible for 74,000 deaths, the displacement of 97% of Palestinians, and the destruction of 80% of buildings in the Strip.

Recognising its importance, we attended the national demonstration in central London on 10 October. We spoke to protesters about their motivations for coming.

Socialist Party members said how war is not an accident, but an inevitability under an expansionary capitalist system that constantly requires more land, more people, and more avenues to exploit and colonise. The working class internationally – horrified by endless war, and shattered by austerity – can oppose this system through mobilisation.

Europe youthquake

A particular discussion point was the inspiring youth-led movements taking place across Europe. In France, 500,000 students, teachers, and parents across 40 cities have taken to the streets to fight back against €54 billion cuts to public services, proposed by the Emmanuel Macron government.

In the Spanish state, mass marches erupted after Maricarmen Abascal, 87 years old, was evicted from her Madrid home by a hedge fund that raised her rent from €500 to €2,650. She tragically died shortly after, following hospitalisation for severe anxiety and exhaustion.

Over 500,000 marched in Madrid alone, demanding housing be treated as a human right, rather than an asset controlled by international financiers. The movement won Maricarmen the right to return home on her old rent, before her death.

In Germany, over 50,000 school students walked out against proposed military conscription. Students realise that the same government mismanaging dilapidated German schools is pouring €784

billion into its war machine by 2030, expecting young people to fight and die for capitalists.

Genocide, cuts to public services, housing crises, and mass militarisation – these are the same issues fueling anger among youth in Britain. The average graduate leaves university crushed under £47,000 in debt, competing with 140 applicants for every entry-level role, while spending over half their income lining the pockets of landlords.

Yet while the government claims it has no money to invest in our futures, multibillion-pound pledges have been promised for so-called 'defence'.

This contradiction cannot hold. We encourage youth in Britain to follow Europe's inspiration, and mobilise against a system that creates war abroad and implements austerity at home. We said this at the demonstration, ahead of the International Youth Walkouts on 20 November.

War and austerity

At the protest, students from Ravensbourne University in London expressed interest in organising and printing posters. They recognised the links between international wars and domestic crises.

The students agreed that to oppose war and genocide, and to make gains for the youth at home, the same mobilisation was needed. They wanted to know more about socialism, and what we do.

When asked about new Labour prime minister Andy Burnham, they were sceptical: "He presents himself as coming from a working-class background, but the policies don't match", as we discussed the attacks on the triple lock for pensioners.

We also spoke about tuition fees, and graduates hit by changes to 'Plan 5' loans. The repayment term has been extended to 40 years, sentencing youth to an extra 10 years of debt.

Socialist Students is campaigning and meetings across UK universities. If you want to join the walkouts, reach out to us!

York students join socialists to oppose war and racism

LOUIE NARDINI
YORK SOCIALIST STUDENTS

At our first York Socialist Students meetings this term, 16 attended our pre-freshers meeting. Then, post-freshers, 36 at the University of York, and 11 at York St John's.

Some students were sceptical that a student fightback can succeed. We explained that the 20 November walkout is only the beginning. A student fightback would be boosted by the trade unions taking their own independent stand.

York St John's ratified the first

'Restore Britain' society in the UK last year. Naturally, discussion turned to how we cut across right-populist division.

Andy Burnham raising tuition fees will only fuel more anger among students. We need a concrete alternative that tackles the deep problems in higher education and directs that anger productively.

At the University of York, the closure of 24-hour campus security and of individual receptions alarmed new students, many of whom had not been told.

Our new interim vice-chancellor,

Ken Badcock, has co-authored numerous academic papers used to develop experimental fighter jets, including weapons research on the Lockheed Martin F-35 – a jet used in Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

Cisco and Israeli army

Universities use the Duo verification system to register students for class, owned by Cisco. Cisco has a 20-year history of investing in the Israeli army, and has tried to clamp down on opposition to this.

This issue is connected to the uni funding crisis. Socialist Students fights for fully funded education. Staff and students should have democratic control over how universities are funded and run, including decisions on divesting from these companies.

Students should not pay for a crisis we did not create. Force Andy Burnham's Labour government to make the super-rich fund our education.



Sheffield students worry about Gaza, climate, and unemployment

OWEN POTTER
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST STUDENTS

I had limited experience of participating in freshers fairs with Socialist Students. So I was initially unsure of where student political consciousness would stand.

However, after extremely busy daily stalls, and then tirelessly driving our advantage home in the following weeks with more campaign activity, this became clear.

The struggle for Palestine liberation remained the biggest issue among students. Consciousness on the issue has not at all dwindled.

The capitalist class simply cannot hide its complicity in an ongoing genocide, which is being livestreamed. Many of our discussions with students reflected that.

Climate change also ranked high on the list of student concerns. Many are fearful of increasingly violent weather patterns and natural disasters, such as Nepal, where over 10,000 people lost their lives to flash flooding. Students see that

capitalism is destroying the world that they live in.

We're actively and directly squeezed by an unprecedented youth unemployment crisis, which, when piled on top of ever-increasing tuition fees, puts us in a desperately untenable position. We've heard this all too often from students, further driving the need for them to get involved.

It was up to us to listen to students, and put our programme across. We did so by highlighting that the link between all of these issues was capitalism. And that we can only tackle these problems collectively via organised working-class struggle.

Many students who approached us already seemed aware of the link. It was simply a case of reinforcing that fact, and explaining how we can organise as student activists to drive real societal change.

We met 140 people interested in Socialist Students. We now have a solid base consistently attending our student meetings each week.

Key to this was putting the time and

effort into reaching out to these people, which we did via phone banking. But also getting to know them individually after our meetings, having informal political discussions, where we could further address their individual concerns.

This Socialist Students success also relies on the growing visceral hatred of capitalism, which is in abundance.

A significant number of students have had enough. Capitalism is pushing youth to the edge. They are rejecting capitalist politics, and they are rejecting the neoliberal capitalist regimes, which are destroying the world we live in.

Build the N20 international youth walkout

- bit.ly/4d7GR12

Join Socialist Students

- socialiststudents.org.uk

Come to Socialism 2026

- socialism.org.uk

Sheffield socialists push Greens on rent control and council homes

ISABELLE FRANCE
SHEFFIELD NORTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY

The Greens and Labour jointly run Sheffield council. People voted for them expecting them to be on the side of the working class, and take action to solve the housing crisis.

I stood as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in a council by-election in Walkley in August. TUSC stood 26 candidates in May's local elections in Sheffield, including in Walkley again too.

We used our election campaigns – stalls, public meetings, canvassing – to call for rent caps and a no-cuts budget. After the election, Socialist Party campaigners delivered this petition to Sheffield City Council:

- Encourage all private tenants to complain to the council about substandard conditions, and for the council to send inspectors to enforce improvements, under the threat of substantial fines
- Encourage mass challenges of rent increases
- License the whole city, forcing landlords to require a license to operate
- Begin a mass council house building programme to keep rents down – send the bill to new Labour prime minister Andy Burnham

I presented our petition, saying: "The UK is suffering a housing crisis. Two years ago, Keir Starmer's

government promised a 'council housing revolution'.

"This summer, Andy Burnham promised the biggest council house building programme since the post-war period. For many private renters here, none of that has meant anything yet.

"I'm here today to ask this council to act."

Dire conditions

Green councillor Douglas Jones, chair of the council's housing policy committee, replied. He had recently been challenged by Acorn Sheffield, who said his office had left a woman living in dire conditions for years.

Douglas Jones said: "Setting up rent controls for the private-rented sector is simply not within the legal powers of the council... The Renters' Rights Act gives [councils] a degree of control on rent increases, but nothing to control rents themselves...

"Sheffield has a pretty good record on dealing with repair issues and on prosecuting landlords. We were actually the most effective in the country for taking serious action on landlords who don't come up to scratch..."

"You mentioned council house building, which I think pretty well all of us support. Doing it isn't quite straightforward.

"You're right that there isn't a legal obstacle to council building. But there is a financial one..."

"Technically [new housing in Shirecliffe] is not being built by the



council. But the houses will become part of the council's housing stock when they're done. So at least something is happening."

Working-class people do not expect these excuses. We need action to end the housing crisis now. And I'd already explained what the

council could do when I presented the petition.

"Last year, Labour's Renters' Rights Act passed. It also gave councils new powers to enact much-needed and very popular measures that would push back against private rent increases – rent control.



"As it stands, the Act deliberately leaves rent at the market rate, and doesn't commit to building a single home. With an estimated 100,000 private renters in Sheffield, who've seen rents rise 25% on average over five years, the case for change is clear.

"But the best way to control rents is to build. There is no legal obstacle to this council building at massive scale, far beyond what's in the Sheffield Plan.

"And if the money isn't there, this council should reject the pressure to cut. And instead build what our communities need and send the bill to Burnham's government. That political will would be hugely welcomed by this city."

We can't wait

When it comes to building houses, the council cannot wait for the blessing of the government. Each successive capitalist government has talked about building houses. But what happened is well below what we need.

1,000 homes planned by the council by 2029 is a drop in the ocean. Sheffield has a waitlist of over 20,000.

Burnham has spoken about ending rough sleeping, and the biggest council house building programme since post-war. To be blunt, if Burnham's such a big fan of council housing, then I say Sheffield Council should get cracking, and send Burnham the bill!

- Read more from TUSC: 'Housing campaigning possibilities after the Renters' Rights Act' at tusc.org.uk

Eye on the Greens

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

- editors@socialistparty.org.uk





WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- A trade union struggle for the immediate implementation of the TUC demand for a £15-an-hour minimum wage for all as a step towards a real living wage, without exemptions. For the minimum wage to automatically increase linked to average earnings or inflation, whichever is higher.

- Share out the work. A maximum 32-hour working week with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions. The right to flexible working, under the control of workers not employers. An end to insecure working, for the right to full-time work for all who want it; ban zero-hour contracts.

- All workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness, parental and holiday rights from day one of employment. End bosses using bogus 'self-employment' as a means to avoid giving workers rights.
- No to austerity through inflation. For all wage rates to be automatically increased at least in line with price rises.
- Open the books of all companies cutting jobs or claiming they can't afford to pay a real living wage. State subsidies, where genuinely needed, for socially-useful small businesses.

- For trade unions independent of the capitalist state, with members having democratic control over their own policies, constitutions and democratic procedures. For all trade union officials to be regularly elected, subject to recall by their members and paid a worker's wage.

- Reduce the state retirement and pension age to 55. For decent living pensions.
- Replace universal credit and the punitive benefit system with living benefits for all who need them.

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

- For local councillors who are committed to opposing austerity and all cuts to local services, jobs, pay and conditions.
- For a socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs, including dental and eye care – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private companies! Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.

- Renationalise privatised utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – under democratic workers' control and management.
- Free, publicly funded and democratically run, good-quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees and write off student debt, end marketisation, and introduce a living grant. No to academisation. For all schools to be under the genuine democratic control of local education authorities, school staff, parents and student organisations.

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

- For a major, publicly funded, insulation and energy transition plan for existing housing stock.
- Agribusiness to be taken into democratic public ownership. For a food processing and retail industry under workers' control to ensure that standards

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- For united working-class struggle to end discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice and oppression.
- Repeal the anti-trade union laws and all others that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest and to strike! End police harassment. For the police to be accountable to local committees, made up of democratically elected representatives of trade unions, local community organisations and local authorities.
- For the right to choose when and whether to have children – for the right to access abortion, contraception and fertility treatment for all who need it.
- For the right to asylum – with democratic community control and oversight of emergency funding resources. No to racist immigration laws.
- Expand democracy. For the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. For all MPs to be subject to the right of recall by their constituents at any time, and to only receive a worker's wage. For proportional representation and the right to vote at 16.

- For the right of nations to self-determination. For an independent socialist Scotland and for a socialist Wales, both part of a voluntary socialist confederation of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland.

- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control, with political parties' coverage being allocated in proportion to the popular vote at elections.
- For a new mass workers' party, based on the trade unions, and drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplaces, and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, socialist political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars & occupations!
- Take the wealth off the super-rich!

For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need, not to the fat cats.

- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the EU bosses' club. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the talks on post-Brexit relations to tear up the EU pro-capitalist rules. For a real collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis as a step towards a socialist world.

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

- Visit socialistparty.org.uk/join
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Hammersmith and Fulham Labour council 150% council tax hike after drastic Labour government cuts

Hammersmith and Fulham Council PHOTO: DAVID ANSTISS/CC



HAMZA KHAN

WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Hammersmith and Fulham Labour council has warned that it needs to raise council tax by up to 150% in order to maintain existing services. The council is losing more than half its government grant, under Labour's new funding formula.

Some households could see yearly increases of £1,514. This isn't to improve services, but simply to keep them in their current state of collapse.

The Labour government claims that the 'fair funding' review redirects money from affluent areas to those hit hardest by austerity. In reality, Hammersmith and Fulham's grant will fall from £151 million to £72 million, over the next four years.

The council says it has followed Labour policy – cuttings costs and investing. Labour council cabinet member Rowan Ree has written to residents to say that the council is "ruthlessly cutting costs".

But this has not protected it from more austerity. Hammersmith and Fulham has already had a 54% funding cut since 2010.

The Labour government has given some councils permission to raise bills above the usual 5% – replacing national funding with higher charges

on local residents. This is austerity continued through local taxation.

Hammersmith and Fulham already has significant deprivation. It's one of the poorer councils in England.

The A&E at Hammersmith hospital was closed during austerity, while we had to fight to keep the Charing Cross A&E open. Now residents are stuck between huge tax rises and further cuts to services, while the super-rich get richer.

The Labour government insists that councils should put taxpayers first. Yet, it is withdrawing the very funding that keeps services running. Working-class communities pay more, while services continue to shrink.

Hammersmith and Fulham Labour council should refuse to pass on cuts. Instead, it should set a budget based on the needs of the community, and demand that central government restores the funding taken from local authorities over the past 16 years.

Austerity is a political choice. It will only be reversed through an organised fightback.

Trade unions, community organisations, and residents should come together to fight for a budget that guarantees jobs, homes, and services. It's clear Labour won't do that, we need to build a new political voice that will.

Indian cockroach youth movement is here to stay! Thousands defy detentions as the youth revolt broadens to Modi's repressive regime

MILA HUGHES

When India's Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned in July, the government hoped the 'cockroach' would scuttle back into the walls. Three months on, they are still on the streets. On 10 October, thousands gathered in Delhi to demand the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. This is due to the turn of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), attempting to go further than addressing the crisis in education, extending to the crisis in the system that young people face.

The immediate trigger is a revision of the electoral rolls under which more than 130 million names have been removed since last year. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Election Commission deny any manipulation and say the exercise is only clearing out duplicate and ineligible entries. For millions of young people who already see a system rigged against them, from exam papers to jobs to the ballot box, the denial carries little weight.

It's clear that the shaking up of the ministers including Pradhan ignited a further anger among young people. They moved from "sack the minister" towards a challenge to the Prime Minister and the system he presides over. The fight over the voter lists is a continuation of that process and it has broadened the campaign

from rigged exams to the potential to question who rules and how.

While the CJP issued ultimatums and called people onto the streets, the establishment opposition Indian National Congress Party offered signature drives, online portals and marches to state election offices. The Congress-led 'Vote Chori' campaign (which means 'stealing of votes') has its place, however it does not challenge the root causes or point towards the need for broader struggles.

Repression

The BJP government's answer has been one of fear and repression. On 10 October, police boarded a flight carrying CJP leaders Abhijeet Dipke, Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka as it landed in Delhi and took them into police custody. More than 2,000 protesters were detained, including several opposition MPs. Ahead of this planned protest, train services into the capital were cancelled, metro stations closed and mobile internet suspended in parts of the city.

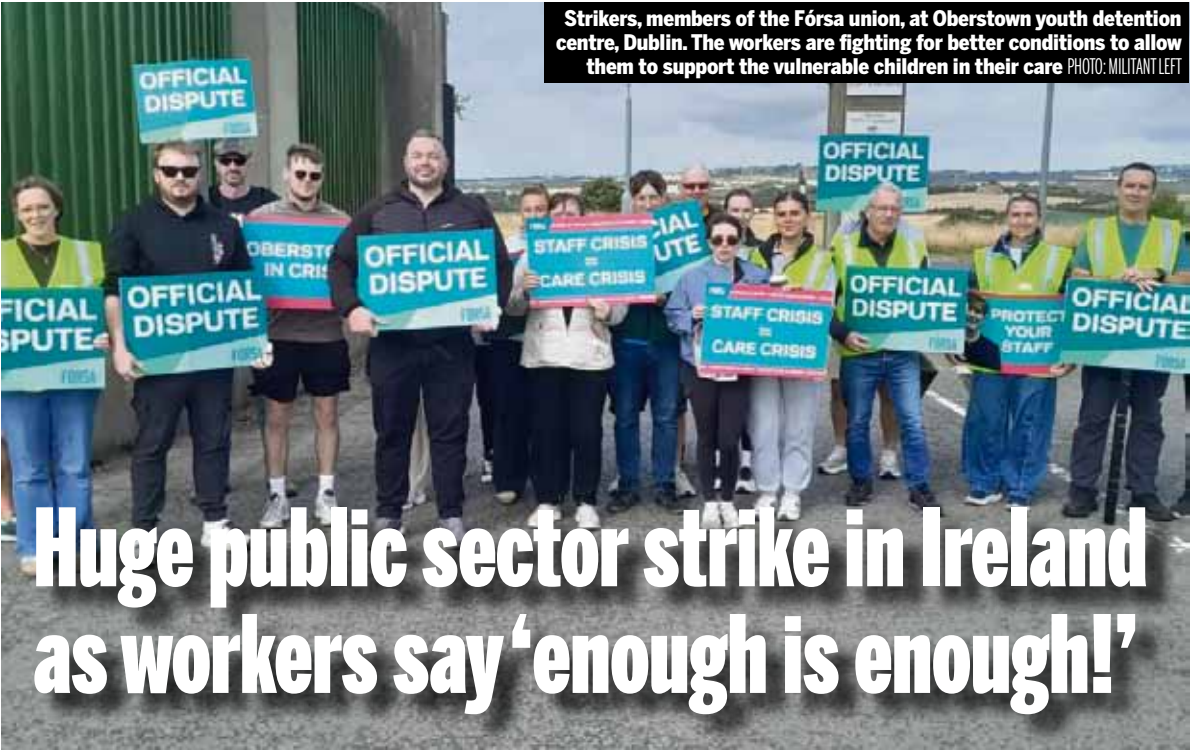
The leaders were released the next day, on condition of "no breach of peace for one year" which is clearly as vague as possible to scare off any action. Dipke called Modi "an embarrassment to India" and Das said the state was effectively at war with its own citizens. Small groups still marched, and police detained some of them again.

None of this is new. In May the

CJP's account on X was withheld inside India. It was back within minutes under a new handle. A movement whose organising happens on global platforms is harder to switch off than one tied to a single office or newspaper. But, as members of the CWI in India New Socialist Alternative have pointed out, a movement that lives mainly online is also a movement without democratic structures to decide its direction.

These events also show that police detentions and scare tactics can empty a city square for a day, however this cannot remove the causes as to why young people remain furious. Graduate unemployment is at an all-time high, wages can't cover the cost of living, there is a workforce squeezed by Trump's tariffs, and a government that answers protest with internet blackouts. All are still there.

New Socialist Alternative has been campaigning throughout. It's clear that the movement needs democratically elected action committees controlled by the majority taking part, which can survive the arrest of any leader. It needs to link up with the already striking workers and trade unionists, because the power to stop the economy lies in the majority working class. This needs to be armed with a socialist programme that goes beyond the resignation of one official but to fight for jobs, decent pay, democratic rights and a society run in the interests of the many.



Huge public sector strike in Ireland as workers say 'enough is enough!'

On 14 October, public sector trade unions in Ireland are striking with more than 300,000 public sector workers, including teachers, nurses and doctors, taking action in the biggest day of national strike action since the aftermath of the 2008 economic crash. The following is a leaflet by Militant Left (CWI Ireland) before the strike. See next week's Socialist for reports.

Militant Left brings our message of support to our fellow strikers taking part in this magnificent action.

The mass public sector strike marks a decisive turning point for workers in Ireland. We are moving into action to defend our living standards from an out-of-control and chaotic cost-of-living crisis.

Every one of us on the picket line today is part of a much wider labour

movement. One based on the collective power of workers.

Collective power

We are using that collective power to say 'No' to the erosion of our wages by inflation. We are shouting 'Stop' to pointless 'reforms' that only lead to more work, more uncertainty and more control over us in our workplaces.

We are sending a blunt message to the government: the days of scapegoating us are over. We are never going back to the days of austerity and the decimation of our incomes and conditions.

The massive votes for strike action reflect the deep anger in Irish society at how the multiple crises in housing, transport and the cost of living are being allowed to get out of control.

Since 2022 there has been a wage standstill across the economy for 90% of workers. This has to end. Inflation for this month is predicted to reach 3.9% - average inflation for 2026 is running at 3.5%.

Even an immediate 3.5% pay rise will not protect living standards. It will just leave us running to stand still! We need more. All workers need more. All this at a time when record profits are being made every single year - €225 billion in 2025 alone.

Our action will prepare us to meet whatever challenges are thrown at us during a very uncertain time. We won't be made the scapegoats again!

Next steps

It would be a foolish government that thinks it can ignore our demands. But we all know that foolishness is not in short supply with this government!

The €1.2 billion promised in the budget for public sector pay will fund a modest pay increase - but it is not near enough. We can win more. We need to be prepared to act again to defend our living standards.

We should set up joint trade union strike committees to co-ordinate action in every workplace.

This would assist us to continue with our industrial action and escalating to more strike days until the government pays up. We can strike to win!

Build a political voice

Every one of us on strike today knows we can't trust the parties of the political establishment. They rule for big business and the rich and powerful. What our strike proves is that a new power is rising.

How much more effective would our struggles be if the trade union movement had a political voice?

Militant Left argues for the trade unions to help lead the building of a new party to represent us.

Socialism

By taking the wealth off the billionaires and big business, we can invest in affordable housing, a decent health service and a living wage for all workers. It's called socialism and it's worth fighting for.

Militant Left says:

- Escalate strike action if the government doesn't deliver on pay
- For an inflation-plus pay rise from June 2026. Wages to be 'inflation-proofed' for the duration of the next public sector agreement
- Demand a living minimum wage of €20 an hour now!

£1/£2 solidarity price

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SOCIALISM 2026

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SCOTT HUNTER

SOCIALISM 2026 ORGANISING TEAM

There are mass movements rising all over Europe.

In France, hundreds of thousands of school students have walked out in protest over lack of teachers, crumbling buildings, and ridiculous timetables. In Germany, young people have protested against conscription and militarisation. In Spain, mass demonstrations against evictions have forced a general election.

Here in Britain, three trade unions are balloting for nationwide strike action. Socialist Students is building for an International Youth Walkout on 20 November, when students and youth will join across Europe under the slogan, "Fight for our futures, not their wars".

What next?

Mass protests, youth walkouts, national strikes – where next? How can these movements coordinate to fight and win? And what's needed now to fight for socialist change, and build a society where everyone

has a decent future – where no one goes cold, hungry, or homeless?

Socialism 2026 will be a weekend of discussion and debate on these key questions, taking place over 14 and 15 November at the Institute of Education in central London. There will be over 40 workshops on youth movements, trade unions and strike action, working-class political representation, history, socialist theory, and more.

There will be two rallies. On Saturday, we'll hear from leading members of trade unions preparing for strike action, and Socialist Party general

secretary Hannah Sell presenting our ideas on how to change the world.

On Sunday, the rally is hosted by Socialist Students, a founding organisation of the 20 November youth strike, with speakers from youth organisations participating in France, Germany, Spain, and Italy.

Buying a 'golden ticket' gets you accommodation overnight in a nearby hostel. Everyone can get a 10% discount up to 5pm on Friday 13 November, with special offers for school, college, and university students. And a free crèche runs throughout the weekend.

● **Turn to pages 8-9 of this issue of the Socialist to see the full programme of workshops, and plan your weekend.**

● Head to socialism.org.uk or scan the QR code, and get your ticket now.

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



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