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the Socialist

Issue 1390 | 12-18 November 2026 | formerly Militant

JOIN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH STRIKE



A wave of strikes and protests is sweeping Europe and the world. On 20 November, it's your chance to be part of it.

Together with tens and hundreds of thousands of young people across Europe, students from hundreds of schools, colleges and universities in Britain are walking out: 'Fighting for our future, not their wars'.

Now it is the last push, new groups of students are contacting Socialist Students everyday to ask for campaign materials and to inform us of their walkout plans.

Why not add your school, college or uni to the list of those taking part?

SOCIALIST STUDENTS

20 NOVEMBER

Capitalism is burning.
Time for SOCIALISM 2026

14 & 15 NOVEMBER
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Hosted by the Socialist Party

Pre-N20 International youth strike rally
Sunday 15 November 3pm
Hosted by Socialist Students
Featuring international guest speakers from France and Spain

the Socialist
formerly Militant
Issue 1390
12-18 November 2026

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

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

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

France: Movement takes step forward as 1.6 million workers strike and protest

MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES, REPORTING FROM PARIS
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE



A union banner from the strike in Paris MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

The united cross-sector strike on 5 November marked another step forward for the inspiring mass movement of workers and youth in France. The union federations estimate that 1.6 million people took to the streets in demonstrations right across the country, with 300,000 marching in Paris, alongside other huge turnouts in cities like Marseille, Bordeaux and Lille.

For over a month, a series of mass demonstrations, strikes, and school and university walkouts has gripped French society, putting President Macron, and the French capitalist class that he acts for, under increasing pressure. Just to give one example of its effect, on the evening before the strike, the government's budget proposals for another €43 billion of cuts were unanimously rejected by all sides of the French parliament, leaving the possibility that the government needs to resort to using executive powers to force it through.

The support for the 5 November strike shows that Macron's strategy of trying to beat back the movement by throwing riot police at teenagers with truncheons and tear gas grenades, while trying to stigmatise the protests as the work of a violent minority, has failed.

Opinion polls show a majority of the population as a whole are in support of the strike movement, with nine in ten agreeing that its demands for action against the soaring cost of living are a legitimate reason to protest. And that support is strongest amongst the youth, the section of the population that has been driving the protest forward most of all.

School blockades

Many of the high school students started the day with their usual blockades of school gates. At the Lycée Voltaire in Paris, dustbins were piled up outside the doors of the school and, as there had been all week, police lined up outside the school as well. There was one minor scuffle with the police, but nothing serious and, indeed, the level of police intimidation throughout the day was lower than over recent protest days. This time, the 'revolutionary orchestra' was able to play at the start of the march in the Place de la République without being suffocated by clouds of tear gas!

The determination of the youth at the school gates, and on the day's massive demonstrations, was clear. They are angry at the crumbling state of their schools, class sizes of well over 30, and at a highly selective university entrance system that denies most youth places on their preferred courses, particularly working-class students.

But these specific concerns are just part of a wider anger against a system that denies them a future, as well as racism and police repression. For example, at the Lycée Voltaire, a minute's silence was held for those killed and injured by the racist drive-by shooting in Trappes, in the suburbs of Paris, a fortnight ago.

Similarly, while many of the trade unionists were taking action to demand higher wages and lower prices, and to protest against job losses and cuts in public services, this is also part of a more generalised opposition to Macron's government, as well as a wish to show solidarity with the youth, both in their own families and in working-class communities as a whole. This was reflected in a high turnout on the Paris march from the education sector in particular.

The 5 November strike was called, significantly, as a cross-sector strike involving both the public and private sector. Nevertheless, the trade union contingents on the march showed that it was still based mainly on the public sector, with only smaller contingents visible from the private sector. For example, the Paris metro, where the unions have been weakened over recent years, was still running largely unaffected by the action. But the massive Paris demonstration still took four hours before its huge numbers were finally all on the march. Most demonstrators were marching with their families, friends and schoolmates, rather than part of any official contingents.

The French section of the CWI, Gauche Révolutionnaire, intervened successfully with a special strike supplement, calling for an escalation of the action to a three-day strike and for the need to win a government as determined to fight for the working class as Macron is for the super-rich.

Talking to demonstrators, the strength of the movement is clearly raising hopes and confidence that Mélenchon and La France Insoumise (LFI) could defeat populist right Le Pen and the other pro-capitalist candidates in next year's presidential elections, even though Le Pen is at this stage still ahead in the official opinion polls. If LFI is prepared to reach out to the best of the workers and youth driving forward the strike movement, and help build combative local committees to organise and escalate both the industrial and political struggles, then the movement really could go forward to achieve significant victories for the French working class and youth.


A packed rally for Mélenchon held after the strike MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

This movement is far from finished!

Following the big strike in France on 5 November, the government met with the unions, whose leaders hoped they would be offered some meaningful concessions. What they got was a slap in the face – a monthly rise in the minimum wage of just $24 (1.6%).

In the district teachers' union meeting I was invited to attend on 9 November, plans were also made to come out on 20 November, alongside their students on the day of the European-wide youth strike. Proposals included organising a demo that goes from school to school, building numbers from each until they have a mass district contingent of staff, students and parents to join the big demo.

The main issue discussed was not so much wages as the way their students are being treated. One nursery teacher was determined to strike when her ex-pupils came to her to explain what they had faced from riot police. Another high school teacher talked of the outrage of students being forced to their knees with their hands on their heads - for what? For fighting for their future and a decent education!

The meeting divided up the tasks of writing leaflets and posters to build support for the two days of strike action next week. This movement is far from finished!

Europe in revolt
Speakers: Elémiah Beuriot, Gauche Révolutionnaire (CWI France) and Hannah Sell, Socialist Party General Secretary
Come and discuss at
SOCIALISM
14 &15 NOVEMBER
2026
socialism.org.uk

A NEW BALANCE OF CLASS FORCES IS TAKING SHAPE

Socialist Party

WHAT WE THINK

In Europe the working class is striking back. In France on 5 November, an estimated 1.6 million took part in a day-long general strike precipitated by GCSE- and college-age students blockading their schools in protest at austerity conditions (see opposite).

In Ireland, after decades of relative industrial quiet, trade unions took part in a day-long public sector general strike on 14 October - pressured to act by members demanding pay which meets the rising cost of living. After weeks of the unions trying to negotiate with government, another day is set to take place on 12 November.

In the Spanish state, it was the brutal reality of the profit-fuelled housing crisis which triggered the mass movement, and now general strike set to take place on 11 November. As that movement has progressed, another brutal and tragic crime of the profit system has seen at least 69 killed in a rail disaster - a consequence of rail privatisation and cuts. With that backdrop, voters will go to the polls for a snap election on 29 November.

On 30 October, Genova in Italy was the epicentre of a million-strong day of protests and strikes, which included solidarity strikes by dockworkers at 113 ports across 22 countries. In Italy, hundreds of thousands of youth marched too.

In every corner of the continent, youth and workers are rising.

An era of capitalist crisis

Capitalism can offer only grinding austerity, stagnant or declining living standards and no future for young people. And - as evidenced by the volatility on the stock markets as AI shares plunged, wiping out between $2-3 trillion of value in a single day - the system is teetering on the brink of an acute crisis. What would inevitably follow would be even more brutal attempted assaults on living standards.

The capitalist governments attempting to manage this crisis-ridden system are at an impasse. The austerity measures demanded by the capitalist class are utterly unpalatable for the working class and young people. The capitalist parties, including ex-workers' or social democratic parties, which in previous periods have had reserves of social support on which to rest, have had those foundations eroded by people's real experience of the capitalist system - a process accelerated in the period since the Great Recession.

This is epitomised by France. When the 577-strong French National Assembly came to vote on the latest austerity budget on 4 November, 458 voted against and 2 abstained, the rest were absent. In the run-up to the presidential election, no party could be seen to back the austerity budget. It will now go straight to the upper house of the Senate for debate on 20 November. And the government may have to resort to bypassing parliament to get it through - with all the politically inflammatory consequences that come with that, including a possible no-confidence vote precipitating the government's fall.

Where the political crisis for the capitalist class has led it to resort to unreliable and destabilising right-populist forces - for example Donald Trump in the US - that too is being rejected by the working class (See pages 8-9). Bolsonaro Jnr in Brazil has been defeated and now fled to the US. Vučić in Serbia has been defeated electorally by a two-year-long mass movement led by students.

That does not mean the forces of reaction are therefore in terminal decline. The conservative and right-populist combination of the PP and Vox in the Spanish state are ahead in opinion polls (for what they're worth). Polls too suggest populist right Marine Le Pen would win in the second round of the French presidential elections which are scheduled to take place next year, if the administration staggers on that far. In both cases, those governments of the right would come to power in a period of huge turmoil and workers' struggles - and would likely act as a whip to provoke further struggle.


A tent housing protest in Puerta del Sol, Madrid ENEKO TORRES PECO/CC



General strike in Paris MARTIN POWELL-DAVIES

But victory for the right is not at all certain. And in France, with the movement still in the ascent, there is a real possibility of a Jean-Luc Mélenchon presidency, which would electrify Europe.

Hot autumn just the start

The events of this hot autumn mark the start of processes. In many ways, they have echoes of the struggles that took place in the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession in response to the first austerity attacks. The events now involve new generations unburdened by those defeats as well as those hardened by the lessons of that first wave.

The historic setback of socialist and class consciousness that corresponded with the collapse of the top-down bureaucratic and brutal Stalinist regimes of the Soviet bloc at the beginning of the 1990s, and the capitalist triumphalism and relative economic boom that followed, has still not been overcome.

But a new wave of events is unfolding, on the basis of which the consciousness of big sections of workers and youth can leap forward - drawing conclusions about what kind of political programme is needed as an alternative to the rotten capitalist system, and crucially how to organise to fight for it.

The Socialist Party is wholeheartedly supporting the united action of youth internationally walking out on 20 November, helping to build those walkouts alongside Socialist Students in Britain. And also supporting the call for the development of a new international youth network to coordinate future youth struggles, fighting for socialist change (see pages 6-7).

In all of the struggles taking place, the question of how the working class and young people can organise collectively most effectively is posed. It is no accident that the youth in France have taken up the methods of strikes and pickets, and appealed to the powerful organised working class for support.

The capitalist classes themselves so clearly face their own crisis of political representation. The working class and youth in struggle are faced with the task of developing their own democratic political organisations and parties.

In all of those struggles, the Socialist Party and the other sections of the Committee for a Workers' International, will fight to hasten and strengthen the development of those organisations. At the same time, we will continue to strengthen and develop our own forces fighting for a programme for the working class to take power and begin the socialist transformation of society.

Join the fightback
JOIN THE SOCIALISTS
- Visit **socialistparty.org.uk/join**
- or call **020 8988 8777**
- or text your name and postcode to **07761 818 206**

to find out more today!

Cornwall school student strike



PHOTO: NICK CLARE

A SCHOOL STUDENT SENT THIS MESSAGE TO SOCIALIST STUDENTS

I'm a year 10 student, organising a strike for people around the Hayle area in Cornwall. I've gotten permission from my mum.

Basically, we're just not attending school on 20 November, as I have worried that my school may be too strict about it.

We have organised a meeting place, and I've gotten many people involved. So far it's over 30.

You have to realise, Hayle is a small town in Cornwall. So we won't have hundreds of people!

I was wondering if there's anything extra I might need to do in order to make sure this protest remains totally peaceful and safe for everyone? Because I'm aware we do NOT want to start a riot like in France(!)

Read the answers to this student's questions in the Socialist Students campaign guide socialiststudents.org.uk

N20 Newham college organisers step up

JAMES IVENS
EAST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISER

We got rid of almost all the leaflets, overprinted with local meetup info, on our first visit to NewVic sixth form in Newham.

Three students took small stacks of leaflets to give to friends. Two of them left contact info. The third took my number.

Two of them are active N20 organisers now. I met them on our second visit with more material – leaflets, posters, stickers, sign-up sheets, campaign packs – and we made plans.

They have decided to call a student walkout from for 11am on Friday 20 November, assembling out in front of the college, before going onto the east London meetup at Canary Wharf, and Parliament Square in central London after.

I suggested a WhatsApp group to organise. They said Snapchat's better! So I'm leaving them to it!

There's a mix of enthusiasm for protesting, and some fear about violence, following the capitalist media coverage of Europe. But we have trade union backing and involvement in our protest. So this should be a big, organised, that takes safety seriously.

The student organisers both say they're interested in socialist ideas, and coming to a local Socialist Party meeting. I've invited them to the Socialist Students Sunday rally at Socialism 2026, and will remind them.

One of the organisers bought Socialist papers for himself and the other organisers. This was after I showed them the interview inside with a previous organiser on the experience of leading a school walkout.

Read 'Interview with a previous striker: 20 November youth walkout at socialistparty.org.uk



Haringey school students organise together



PHOTO: NICK CHAFFEY

HELEN PATTISON
LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY

When we were contacted by a student at a school near Muswell Hill, we arranged to meet them for a coffee with their friends. We talked over some ideas about how to meet more people who might want to build the walkouts.

After half term, a student from a neighbouring school contacted us. So we arranged leafleting, and a coffee to make a joint plan.

Since, we've leafleted in Muswell Hill more. More students from other nearby schools and colleges have contacted us.

When we meet these students, we try to bring along people from schools where we've already made links so that they can share ideas and plan collectively. Sometimes we have organised street meetings.

At one school, students leafleted a bonfire night event. They have plans for a 'ballot,' and banner-making sessions.

In nearby Finchley, a student got four of his friends to help leafleting after school.

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

N20 central rally points so far:

- **Central London: 12pm, Parliament Square**

Local London meeting points (then travel to Parliament Sq):

- **Canary Wharf (east and south-east London): 12pm, Eden Dock (Canary Wharf Jubilee line entrance)**
- **Croydon: 11am, Croydon College**
- **Enfield: 9am Enfield Town**
- **Hackney: 10:30am, Hackney Town Hall**
- **Kingston: 11am, Kingston University, Town House**
- **Law students bloc (all law students): 12pm, outside the Red Lion pub, Parliament Street**
- **Muswell Hill: 9am, East Finchley station**
- **Queen Mary University of London: 11am, Library Sq**
- **SOAS: 12pm, SOAS Library courtyard**
- **Tower Hamlets: 11:30am, outside Tower Hamlets Town Hall, Whitechapel**
- **UAL: 12pm, Chelsea College of Arts courtyard**
- **Waltham Forest: 10am, Walthamstow Town Square (near Walthamstow Central)**

Outside London:

- **Bath: 11:30am, University of Bath Students' Union, Claverton Down**
- **Birmingham: 12pm, University of Birmingham, Green Heart; city demo 2:30pm, High Street (outside Waterstones)**
- **Brighton: 12:30pm, St Peter's Square, Richmond Place**
- **Bristol: 1pm, College Green**
- **Caerphilly: 10am, Coleg y Cymoedd Nantgarw, outside the Training School**
- **Cambridge: 4pm, outside King's Parade, CB2 1ST**
- **Cardiff: 11am, Cardiff University Students' Union, Park Place**
- **Carlisle: 12pm, Market Cross, CA3 8JA**
- **Chelmsford: 4:30pm, The Vineyards, Great Baddow**
- **Cheltenham: 12pm, Imperial Gardens**
- **Coventry: 12pm, outside Coventry Cathedral, Priory Street, CV1 5AB**
- **Doncaster: 12pm to 1:30pm, outside Doncaster railway station**
- **Durham: 1pm, Palace Green, between Durham Cathedral and the Castle**
- **Exeter: 11:30am, The Forum, University of Exeter, Streatham Campus**
- **Glasgow: 2:30pm, Buchanan Steps, top of Buchanan St**
- **Grimsby: 1pm, St James Square, DN31 1EP**
- **Guildford: 12:30pm, Philip Marchant Building, University of Surrey, GU2 7XH**
- **Harlow: 12:30pm, Velizy Avenue, at the pedestrian crossing into Harlow College**
- **Hatfield: 11am, The Forum, University of Hertfordshire**
- **Hull: 12:30pm, Queen's Gardens**
- **Leeds: 12pm, Parkinson Steps, Cavendish Road**
- **Leicester: 1:30pm, the Clock Tower**
- **Liverpool: 1pm, University Square, L69 7ZX**
- **Manchester: 12pm, Whitworth Arch (Queen's Arch), then a march to Lincoln Square, behind No10 North**
- **Newcastle: 12pm, Civic Centre Gardens, next to St Thomas's Church**
- **Northampton: 12:30pm, Angel Square**
- **Nottingham: 12:30pm, Nottingham Trent Students' Union**
- **Paisley: from 11am, UWS Paisley Campus Library**
- **Plymouth: 12pm, the Sundial, Armada Way, PL1 1RJ**
- **Pontypridd: 12pm, outside G Block, University of South Wales, Treforest Campus**
- **Preston: 12pm, outside the University of Lancashire Student Centre, Fylde Road, PR1 2HE**
- **Reading: 12pm, Forbury Gardens, RG1 3EJ**
- **Salford: joins the Manchester protest, 12pm, Whitworth Arch (Queen's Arch)**
- **Sheffield: 1pm, City Hall, Barker's Pool**
- **Southampton: 12pm, Guildhall Square**
- **Stoke-on-Trent: 12pm, Ember Square, ST4 2DE**
- **Swansea: 12pm, Swansea University, Singleton Campus, Fulton House Green; and 12pm, Gower College, Gorseinon Campus, College Gates**
- **Wolverhampton: 12pm, Wulfruna Street, outside the University of Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE**
- **Worcester: 3pm, Sabrina Bridge**
- **York: 2pm, St Helen's Square**

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Askham Bryan College, York
- Barnsley College
- Doncaster College
- Franklin Sixth Form College, Grimsby
- Grimsby Institute
- Hessle High School
- High Storrs School, Sheffield
- Horizon Community College, Barnsley
- King Edward VII School, Sheffield
- University of Leeds
- Leeds Beckett University
- Leeds City College
- Leeds Conservatoire
- Melior Community Academy, Scunthorpe
- New College Doncaster
- New College Pontefract
- Notre Dame Sixth Form, Leeds
- Oasis Academy Wintringham, Grimsby
- Ridgewood School, Doncaster
- Rodillian Academy, Wakefield
- University of Sheffield
- The Sheffield College, City Campus
- The Sheffield College, Hillsborough Campus
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Wakefield College
- Woldgate School, Pocklington
- University of York
- York St John University

Wales

- Aberystwyth University
- Cardiff University
- Carmarthen School of Art (Coleg Sir Gâr)
- Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, Caerphilly
- Gower College Swansea (Gorseinon)
- Llangatwg Community School, Neath
- University of South Wales (Cardiff campus)
- University of South Wales (Treforest), Pontypridd
- Swansea University
- Ysgol Maesydderwen, Ystradgynlais

South West

- Access Creative College, Bristol
- Archway School, Stroud
- Arts University Bournemouth and Bournemouth University
- University of Bath
- Bridgwater College Academy
- University of Bristol
- Cirencester College
- City of Bristol College
- E-ACT Montpelier High School, Bristol
- University of Exeter
- University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham
- Gloucestershire College, Gloucester
- Hartpury University, Gloucester
- Holmleigh Park High School, Gloucester
- King Edward VI Community College, Totnes
- Launceston College
- Penryn Campus (Falmouth University and University of Exeter)
- University of Plymouth
- Plymouth Marjon University
- St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, Bristol
- UWE Bristol
- Wiltshire College

London

- AIM Academy North London
- Ark John Keats Academy
- University of the Arts London (UAL)
- Blackfen School for Girls
- Camden School for Girls
- Capital City College Enfield (CONEL)
- Christ's College Finchley
- Croydon College
- University of East London (UEL)
- Enfield County Upper School
- Fortismere School
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- University of Greenwich
- The Grey Coat Hospital
- Guildhall School of Music and Drama
- Highgate Wood School
- Inns of Court College of Advocacy
- Kingston College
- Kingston University
- King's College London (KCL)
- Lambeth College
- LaSWAP Sixth Form
- Latymer School
- Latymer Upper School
- University of Law (ULaw), Moorgate and Bloomsbury
- London Metropolitan University
- London School of Economics (LSE)
- New City College Hackney (BSix, Clapton)
- New City College Tower Hamlets (Poplar)
- Newham Sixth Form College (NewVic)
- The Norwood School
- Oak Wood School, Hillingdon
- Oaklands School
- Oasis Academy Shirley Park Sixth Form
- Queen Mary University of London
- Ravensbourne University London
- SOAS
- South Bank Colleges
- Stoke Newington School
- Streatham and Clapham High School
- Swanlea School
- University College London (UCL)
- Uxbridge College
- Waltham Forest College
- University of West London (UWL)
- University of Westminster
- William Morris Sixth Form, Hammersmith



East Midlands

- Caistor Grammar School
- Chesterfield College
- Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies, Nottingham
- De Montfort University (DMU), Leicester
- High Pavement Sixth Form (Nottingham College)
- Lady Manners School, Bakewell
- University of Leicester
- Leicester College
- University of Lincoln
- Lincoln College
- Malcolm Arnold Academy, Northampton
- Northampton College
- University of Nottingham
- Nottingham Trent University
- South Nottinghamshire Academy, Radcliffe-on-Trent
- West Notts College, Mansfield
- WQE College, Leicester

Northern

- University of Cumbria, Carlisle
- Trinity Sixth Form, Carlisle
- Darlington College
- Durham University
- Gateshead College
- Grace College, Gateshead
- Northumbria University, Newcastle

Scotland

- University of Dundee
- University of the West of Scotland (Paisley campus)

Southern

- Barton Peverill Sixth Form College, Eastleigh
- University of Brighton
- Brighton Metropolitan College (sixth form)
- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Edgbarrow School, Crowthorne
- Haywards Heath College
- The Judd School, Tonbridge
- King's School, Hove
- University of Law, Reading
- Milton Keynes College
- University of Oxford
- University of Portsmouth
- Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke
- University of Reading
- Richard Taunton Sixth Form College, Southampton
- Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham
- Solent University, Southampton
- University of Southampton
- Southampton City College
- University of Surrey, Guildford
- University of Sussex, Brighton
- University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Farnham
- The Willink School, Burghfield
- Woking College

North West

- Cardinal Newman College, Preston
- University of Chester
- Childwall Sports and Science Academy, Liverpool
- Edge Hill University, Ormskirk
- Gateacre School, Liverpool
- University of Greater Manchester, Bolton
- Haslingden High School
- Holy Cross College, Bury
- University of Lancashire (UCLan), Preston
- University of Liverpool
- Liverpool Hope University
- Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU)
- LMA (Liverpool Media Academy)
- Loreto College, Manchester
- University of Manchester
- The Manchester College
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Runshaw College, Leyland
- University of Salford
- Spirit Studios, Manchester
- St Ambrose Barlow RC High School, Salford
- Turton School, Bolton
- University Academy 92 (UA92), Manchester
- Walton-le-Dale High School, Bamber Bridge
- Xaverian College, Manchester

West Midlands

- University of Birmingham
- Birmingham City University (BCU)
- Bishop Challoner Catholic College, Birmingham
- BOA Sixth Form, Birmingham
- Cadbury Sixth Form College, Birmingham
- City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College
- Colmers School, Birmingham
- Coventry College
- Coventry University
- Heart of Worcestershire College
- Hereford Sixth Form College
- Holyhead School, Birmingham
- Keele University
- King Edward VI College, Nuneaton
- Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG), Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Paget High School and Burton and South Derbyshire College, Burton upon Trent
- Shrewsbury Colleges Group
- South and City College, Longbridge, Birmingham
- University of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent
- Swanshurst School, Birmingham
- The Telford Park School
- University College Birmingham Sixth Form
- University of Warwick, Coventry
- Warwickshire College University Centre (WCUC), Leamington Spa
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of Worcester

Eastern

- Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford
- University of Bedfordshire, Luton
- University of Cambridge
- Harlow College
- The Hemel Hempstead School
- University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield
- Hills Road Sixth Form, Cambridge
- Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge
- Palmer's College, Grays
- Peterborough College

►►► SOCIALIST STUDENTS PAGES CONTINUED ON P6

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.

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

Socialist Students at international youth meetings

Socialist Students was one of the organisations which met in Cologne, Germany in July to draw up plans for the 20 November youth strike. Discussions are underway internationally about what follows. Socialist Students has been invited to send speakers to meetings of youth organisations, at which our members have raised the idea of forming a European-wide socialist youth network.



Socialist Students delegation from Britain to massive mobilisation in France and international youth strike meeting in Paris ADAM POWELL-DAVIES

Spanish school student union conference

***Adam Gillman**, a national organiser for Socialist Students, was invited to attend the conference of Sindicato de Estudiantes, which organises tens of thousands of school students in the Spanish state. We publish Adam's contribution to the discussion:*

Hello comrades, it's an honour to speak at your congress, 40 years after the founding of Sindicato de Estudiantes.

Young people, and the working class alongside them, have erupted in inspiring mass movements across Europe and the world. From the cockroach movement in India, to the movement in France, and of course the movement in the Spanish state against the housing crisis.

Capitalist governments are frightened of the potential. These movements have toppled governments such as in Nepal and Serbia, and won significant concessions. However, the prospect of war, austerity, climate chaos – all a result of the crisis-ridden capitalist system, are felt everywhere.

Underfunded

Of course, we have heard today how this is affecting you in the Spanish state, but in Britain we face similar attacks. Our entire education system is chronically underfunded, with staff being threatened with redundancies, students facing cuts to courses and even entire university campuses being closed down, this is while uni students face thousands in tuition fees.

Colleges and secondary schools, are also underfunded and some FE colleges have had courses cut after students enrolled. In the secondary schools, class sizes are on average over 30 students per class.

Academisation has seen schools be put into the hands of trusts, charities and even in some instances, private education trusts. This has led not only to underfunding being managed even more brutally, but also greater bullying and repression of both staff and students.

Students can be put into isolation/internal exclusion - solitary confinement conditions - forced to stare at a wall with a camera watching them for most or all of the day. They can get this for minor offences such as not having a top button up on a uniform, or even organising a walkout in school.

The level of student organisation in Britain is much lower than in the Spanish state, and hasn't existed in the secondary schools since the 1980s, although there have been walkouts against the Iraq war, the 2010 anti-fees movement and 2019 Fridays for future. With 20 November, this has the potential to change, with students organising walkouts and protests at their schools on the day. Socialist Students is discussing with students and helping to rebuild this tradition in Britain.

N20

On 20 November, we're going to see a huge movement with hundreds of thousands taking action all across Europe (and the world). This could have huge positive effects on consciousness and organisation, but capitalism will still be here on 21 November.

Capitalism is a system in huge crisis, that will be preparing for more attacks. As the attacks ramp up, the capitalist governments will be bolstering more racist and divisive ideas. European governments are divided, not by whether to increase defence spending, but by how much. They are preparing the ground for more austerity.

This will not be solved without the socialist transformation of society, where the vast wealth and resources of society are not controlled by the capitalists for profit but instead by the working class for the needs of all.

What next?

It's great we've been able to co-ordinate this huge youth movement through the international anti-war youth network. However, there are still many opportunities for us to coordinate internationally, such as an international mobilisation of solidarity with young people in France if Le Pen wins the presidential election and implements even more repressive measures in France, or in Manchester against the G20 summit next year. But we need to point the way forward to what sort of society replaces capitalism and the governments that defend it.

There is an international conference of the network being planned for February. Socialist Students will be proposing and fighting for the network to become an international revolutionary socialist youth network, that doesn't only coordinate on how to fight against austerity and the rise of militarisation, but actively fights to replace the crisis-ridden capitalist system that causes it with a socialist society.

We would like to invite Sindicato De Estudiantes to join us in fighting for this.

Trade unions backing N20

Socialist Students welcomes the support for N20 from the National Education Union (NEU) – the biggest trade union representing teachers and other school support staff.

The union's leading body - its executive - has agreed to "provide advice, in line with safeguarding requirements, professional responsibilities and legal obligations, to NEU members who wish to volunteer as stewards at local student demonstrations". And also to "oppose disciplinary action against students participating in peaceful protest activity, including detentions or other sanctions, and to support campaigns defending students' rights where required".

The University and College Union (UCU) has called a day of action in higher and further education on 20 November. It is highlighting the funding crisis in both sectors and using the opportunity to build support for the nationwide strike ballot due to take place in FE.

Unison, which represents workers in schools, colleges and university has also expressed support for the action on 20 November.

National Union of Students

The NUS, which bringing together affiliated students unions represents seven million students, has announced it is calling for walkouts on 20 November. It has shared campaign guidance with its affiliates and its Vice President Higher Education Lewis Wilson will speak at the pre-N20 international youth strike rally at Socialism 2026 (see page 16)

Additional backing:

Socialist Students welcomes the support from the Green Party in Leeds for N20, and its statement (below), signed by its ten councillors.

"Student movements have always been at the forefront of the progressive call for a fairer, more democratic society. Here in Leeds, students are staging a walkout in solidarity with student movements around the world, including those in France, India, and Serbia. They are demanding the kind of economic, social and environmental justice that will enable future generations to thrive. From the Leeds Green Party, our members and our councillors, we give our unequivocal support to students exercising their right to protest and oppose any disciplinary action that may be taken against students taking part in the walkout. Solidarity, always."

Anti-militarist meeting in Germany

Socialist Students attended an 'anti-militarist' meeting near Berlin between 30 October and 1 November. We were invited by Die Falken, a German youth organisation which, like Socialist Students, belongs to the network of groups building for the international youth strikes on 20 November.

The discussions coincided with about 100,000 people taking to the streets in Germany "in echo of last month's French riots", in the words of the pro-capitalist Financial Times.

Socialist Students also attended a meeting in Paris a few weeks ago which included 27 organisations from eleven countries and focused on concrete next steps for 20 November. (See 'European youth organisations meet to plan 20 November walkouts' at socialiststudents.org.uk).

The German meeting was smaller. It was attended mainly by German youth organisations, with representatives from Senegal and Peru, but it included workshops and sessions on militarisation in society, war across the world, and how to build on the eruptions seen across Europe.

Our delegation explained that we are living through a period of profound crisis for world capitalism. Economic instability, inequality, environmental destruction and escalating international conflict are shaping millions of lives. Young people face unemployment, unaffordable housing, student debt and declining living standards, while enormous wealth accumulates among a super-rich minority.

Discussing anti-militarism is important at this juncture because the accelerating drive towards militarisation is one of the clearest expressions of this crisis. The decline of US imperialist dominance and the rise of China have intensified competition between capitalist powers over markets, resources and geopolitical influence. Governments are responding with military expenditure and rearmament. The wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran demonstrate the devastating consequences.

Young people are increasingly resisting this future. Across Europe and internationally, demonstrations, school strikes and student movements are developing against conscription, austerity and imperialist war. These struggles demonstrate the potential for international solidarity.

Workers and youth

We emphasised that, while young people can provide the initial spark for mass movements, the organised working class holds the decisive power to transform society. The events of France in May 1968, for example, were only given a potentially revolutionary character when ten million workers entered a general strike following student occupations.

The trade union movement must therefore play a central role in opposing militarisation, because workers can disrupt arms production and transportation through industrial action. Socialist Students led a session on linking the trade union movement to the 20 November international youth strike. Some in Germany are rightly frustrated that the trade union leadership has not supported the German youth strikes against conscription. We explained, however, that right-wing union leaders who defend the arms industry only strengthen the case for socialists to orientate towards the unions' working-class base, rather than abandon workers to pro-capitalist ideas.

An appeal should be made to trade union branches across Europe for joint action against militarism. This approach has succeeded in Britain, where Socialist Students has won the support of the NEU, UCU and Unison, which together represent almost two million workers, for the international youth strike. This is not support on paper alone. The NEU in particular has offered practical support and pledged to back any students facing disciplinary action.

The 20 November strike offers an opportunity to unite students, education workers and the wider trade union movement. Ultimately, ending imperialist competition and war requires an international socialist transformation. By nationalising the banks, utilities and major monopolies, society's wealth can be democratically planned according to human need. Our fight against war must therefore be inseparable from the struggle to replace capitalism with socialism, the only way to secure our futures. That struggle will be led by the working class, which, because of its role in production, has the power to transform society in a socialist direction, beyond capitalist war driven by competition and instability.

JOE WOOLFALL, LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

N20 support from RMT trade unionists

SOFIA PANDOLFI
LONDON SOCIALIST STUDENTS ORGANISER



Socialist Party and Socialist Students supporting RMT tube drivers strike this year. Arnos Grove picket line in the Finsbury Park branch. AUTHOR CREDIT

Socialist Students was invited to speak at a meeting of transport union RMT, the Finsbury Park branch, in the lead up to the International Youth Strike on 20 November.

I spoke to RMT members on the importance of the youth walkouts, as a step towards students getting organised against war and militarisation, and uniting the struggles of students and workers.

Looking to how we can continue to build solidarity between students and workers, we made an appeal to the RMT, asking for support on the day of the walkouts. The RMT has an incredible record in organising and coordinating stewarding to ensure safety on demonstrations.

We asked the branch for volunteers to help steward our demonstration in central London. We want to make this day as safe as possible for students walking out, especially as for many students this is their first time getting organised in this way.

Our appeal had great support from the branch, who agreed that solidarity and unity between workers and students is crucial. In response, they have passed on our request for stewards to the RMT branches in London.

The RMT has also asked Socialist Students to speak at their annual general meeting (AGM) of all London Underground drivers the week after 20 November – talking about how we can build a joint fightback against the austerity attacks, which affect all of us.

Sheffield – international solidarity against capitalist war machine

DANIEL WILLIAMS
SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We carried out a banner drop and held a demonstration in front of the University of Sheffield student union on Friday 30 October – in solidarity with dockworkers striking in over 100 ports across 22 countries to oppose arms exports.

We gave speeches about conflict zones and genocides funded by the capitalist war machine, such as in Palestine, Sudan, and Congo. Speeches highlighted Sheffield uni's complicity, through its receipt of over £500 million from defence partnerships, and its role as a founding member of the Defence University Alliance.

We also promoted the 20 November international youth strike. We called on students to follow the example of the dockworkers, and refuse to accept an education system funded by war and genocide.

Our leafleting efforts are already yielding results. We distributed 150 leaflets at a local college, leading several of them to join the N20 Sheffield WhatsApp group, and express their intention to walk out.

5,000 Sheffield-specific N20 leaflets, funded by the coalition of groups supporting the walkout in Sheffield, have been printed.

We held a 'speed door-knocking' session, and leafleted the Endcliffe Student Village. We have plans to cover other student accommodations, university buildings, and lectures.

Socialist Students are working alongside other student and anti-war groups in Sheffield to make N20 as big as possible, while continuing to keep our socialist message at its heart.

Capitalism has driven this descent into militarism and climate catastrophe, and socialist change is required to save our futures.

US MIDTERMS: VOTERS WOUND TRUMP AS REPUBLICANS ROUTED



FRANK MERRITT
COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL

"When Trump's on the ballot, they win," said the US president to Fox News in August. But the Republicans were routed in the midterms despite Trump's pleas to remember that he was on the ballot. Or rather, many voted against the Republicans precisely because of Trump, rising prices, the smell of corruption and profiteering around the White House, and the war on Iran.

Preliminary figures indicated that the number of people voting was at least 124 million, 12 million more than in the 2022 midterms. The New York Times estimates that the Democrats have recorded their largest increase in the national House of Representatives popular vote since the Watergate era. The numbers reflect the anti-Trump mood that shook the nation, while it is likely that significant numbers of previous Trump voters did not vote this time.

The day after the elections, Trump complained that people didn't realise that the rise in fuel prices caused by the attack on Iran was worth it. This was because, Trump argued, otherwise the Iranians would develop nuclear weapons that could destroy Washington, DC.

The Democrats have so far flipped seven seats to win the Senate. There are close votes still being counted in Mississippi and Alaska, Republican 'red' states for decades, where the Democratic 'blue wave' has crashed deep. They flipped five governorships, all in states Trump won in 2024.

Beyond anti-Trump

But it was not just opposition to Trump and his policies. The voting also reflected, in a small way, the growing support for the idea of socialism, particularly, but not only, among Gen Z. There are now seven self-declared socialists in the House of Representatives who should use their positions to campaign against capitalism, for socialist policies and to help build a genuine socialist movement.

Trump's defeat is also a major blow to right-wing populism globally. It comes immediately after the defeat of Trump's allies Bolsonaro in Brazil and Vučić in Serbia, alongside the earlier defeat of Orbán in Hungary. There is a growing popular mood of opposition to the right, to the growing wealth of the rich while living standards stagnate or fall, and to corruption. Many leaders of right-wing populist parties in Europe who rode on the back of Trumpism now seek to distance themselves.

Many working- and middle-class people and young people will be celebrating. While the CWI welcomes the rejection of right-wing populism and the partial expression of rage that this result represents, we warn clearly and firmly that there can be no trust in the liberal-capitalist Democratic Party leadership and machine to meet the hopes of the millions who voted. Real transformation for workers and young people can come only through independent mass struggle, not only against Trumpism but also against the corporate Democratic Party leadership, which fundamentally supports the same system.

Democratic Party candidates talked about "dark money" during the campaign, referring to the likes of Elon Musk, who poured hundreds of millions of dollars into losing candidates. But the Democrats take money from billionaires and corporations too, such as Bloomberg, who topped up his $80 million in blue donations by another $36 million in the final days. No wonder Wall Street stocks rallied after the results: the capitalists fully trust the Democratic leaders.

Political crisis

Both parties now face potential crises arising from this election and from the fact that campaigning is now beginning to win the presidential nomination for 2028.

The Republicans will face a battle over who controls the party. Before the results, Steve Bannon, a MAGA architect, spoke of a coming civil war in the Republican Party. "Monster battles" are about to begin in the "lame duck" season, over the debt ceiling, the government spending bill, the war with Iran and AI regulation.

Vice President JD Vance was the first to break with his fealty to Trump, with his own rambling post on social media saying that Republican/MAGA voters did turn out but voted for the Democrats. His uneasy acceptance of the war has now become open opposition to the party: "If you like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next six years was worth it, then do so".



Abdul El Sayed, in Michigan, successfully faced down racist attacks. His campaign generated the most attention of all the races from radical layers and young people. The Michigan campaign slogan was "Money out of politics and in your pocket", with a focus on issues like Medicare for All. However, when asked, "Were you ever a socialist?", El-Sayed replied, "No. I'm a capitalist." The same would be true of most of the others who talk 'left' but are not socialist. CONLAN HOUSTON/CC

Bannon also wants an 'America First' defence against other elements in the Republican Party who want an end to MAGA: "The donor class and the apparatchiks, including at the state level, want their party back." Outgoing Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has come out against the Trump administration again, railing for the release of the Epstein files and a ban on congressional stock trading, and saying that this election was a "close to extinction-level event" for the party. The battle for control could be very sharp.

Trump has claimed that he can now be "Mr Veto", blocking new laws with his personal power of veto, which can be overridden only by two-thirds majorities in both houses of Congress. So how are the Democrats going to fulfil the promises made by their corporate leaders, Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer, who said, "America is back!" – promising to lower prices and make America more affordable? They also claim that they will not approve more funding for the Iran war and the immigration crackdown if Trump wields his presidential executive powers.

Plans have been mooted to legally challenge and attempt to regulate industries that have lobbied Trump, including fossil fuels and AI. The Democrats, while now having veto power over presidential nominees and the possibility of investigating the financial dealings of the Trump family and their associates, will be reluctant to use their position to mobilise a genuine popular movement, for fear that they could not control it.

Partly, this is justified by claiming that the Republicans and MAGA were punished rather than that there was increased support for the Democrats' actual political platform. But calls for something different were popular. As Talarico, the winning Democratic Senate candidate in Texas, says: "There is something broken in America, people across the political spectrum are hungry for a different kind of politics". The volatile swings since 2024 show the breakdown of loyalty to the two corporate parties and a desire for independence from big-business politicians.

Both parties face a crisis of legitimacy among the working class, young people and big sections of the middle class, as the 'American dream' no longer delivers. There are also demographic changes and shifts being reflected in election results. In previously MAGA areas, voters switched from the Republicans because of data centres and the pressures on farmers caused by tariffs and prices.

If the Democrats do not deliver, they may, as they have done historically, claim that their hands are tied by Trump's vetoes and filibustering. There could then be a backlash, which may even find expressions as soon as the 2028 presidential election.

Democrats and populism

Already, we can see the different wings. The ravages of the cost of living faced by the working and middle classes forced the Democrats to engage in 'economic populism,' in many cases of a left-wing variety, in some critical swing contests. Commentators have pointed to a shift away from the approach in the Kamela Harris 2024 presidential campaign, which focused on identity-based issues and attacking Trumpism without an economic case.

This time, many Democrats attacked the polarisation of wealth, including the effect of Trump's tax changes, which mean that the richest 400 US families now have lower tax rates than the bottom 50% of Americans. But the Democratic leaders are careful not to attack the system itself; at best, they are left populists who do not challenge capitalism, despite the growing support for, or openness to, 'socialism' within the US.

Abdul El Sayed, in Michigan, successfully faced down racist attacks from Trump and Vance. His campaign has generated the most attention of all the races from radical layers and young people. The Michigan campaign slogan was "Money out of politics and in your pocket", with a focus on issues like 'Medicare for All.' However, when asked, "Were you ever a socialist?" El-Sayed replied, "No. I'm a capitalist." The same would be true of most of the others who talk 'left' but are not socialist.

Troy Jackson, in Maine, used his background in union organising in his rhetoric, alongside demands like 'Medicare for All.' In Texas, Talarico and Hinojosa, who won a Senate seat and the state governorship respectively, talked about "not left versus right but top versus bottom" and "we must unrig this economic system that only benefits the top 1%".

While left populism is a trend among the Democrats, which some use to win over the disenchanted and angry, even from MAGA, the corporate party machine is much larger and dominates the apparatus. This election also saw the Blue Dog Coalition of 'moderates' increase its numbers in the House by 14.

Thus, Hakeem Jeffries, now celebrated in the liberal press as likely to become the first Black Speaker of the House, is an out-and-out corporate opponent of any attempt at 'democratic socialism' in the party.

DSA candidates

The contradictions within the Democrats are likely to deepen. They will be judged by what they actually do, both in policies and in combating Trump. This squeeze will inevitably pose the question to the populists of whether they will capitulate to the demands of big business or fight. This will also be true for members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) who ran as Democratic candidates.

These DSA-associated candidates have raised the hopes of many by raising the ideas of universal healthcare, public housing and opposition to the Gaza genocide. The DSA's number in Congress is now up to seven, all elected on the Democratic Party ballot line. A DSA member won the mayoral contest in Washington, DC. However, the DSA itself is engulfed in battles around the accountability of its candidates and representatives and their relations with the Democrats, something that includes Nithya Raman, who has just won the election for LA mayor.

> **By breaking with the Democrats, a party that has been pro-capitalist since its birth, DSA members could play a central part in pulling together opponents of both established parties and those who are looking towards socialism**

A real 'democratic socialist' bloc in Congress could be a major reference point for fighting Trumpism and the pro-capitalist Democratic Party leadership, and for mobilising mass movements of workers and young people. Imagine fighting to raise the federal minimum wage to $30 an hour, bringing energy into public ownership, fighting for union rights or against data centres, fighting for rent controls and public housing, and opposing war. Such a bloc could also lead a struggle to abolish ICE, to set up committees of workers and unions to control prices, and to fight against the divisive attacks on democratic rights and the oppression of the Trump administration.

However, such necessary steps would immediately open up a confrontation not just with Trump but with those like the pro-capitalist Jeffries and the Democratic Party machine.

These DSA elements seem to be firmly rooted in the strategy of working in the Democrats, at a time when nearly half of registered voters are either 'independent' or 'non-party', something that shows the potential for a new party that challenges the system. The labour movement and young people should mobilise to demand that the DSA follows the opposite course to the 'Squad' of DSA House members under Trump 1.0 and Biden, who worked with the then Pelosi-led Democratic Party and, for example, assisted Biden in shutting down the 2022 national railroad strike and failed to oppose funding for Israel's 'Iron Dome.'

The weakness of DSA's public representatives and their current position of trying to reform the Democratic Party was shown by the statement of New York Mayor Mamdani as the results came in, saying: "We have begun the work of transforming our party and making it belong to the working people once again…" This was said while standing at New York Governor corporate Democrat Kathy Hochul's victory party, the same politician who organised the undermining of a nurses' strike in 2026. Given that the Democrats are not a truly democratically run political party, hopes that the working class can take it over are utopian, to say the least.

Notwithstanding this 'blue wave,' the key issues facing the US working class and sections of its middle class will not be resolved even if a Democrat wins the presidency in 2028. As increasing numbers in the US are understanding, the fundamental issue is capitalism itself. By breaking with the Democrats, a party that has been pro-capitalist since its birth, DSA members could play a central part in pulling together opponents of both established parties and those who are looking towards socialism, thereby establishing a strong basis for an organised socialist workers' movement that can work to fundamentally change society.

This is why the CWI and our co-thinkers in the US, the Independent Socialist Group, supported independent candidates in the midterms who stood for the interests of the working class. The votes of these candidates were squeezed but credible. We agree with Rhode Island DSA, whose candidate, Kubicek, stood as an "independent socialist" against the Democrats, won 23% of the vote in a State House district. She said in the post-election statement from the DSA chapter: "The struggle for a workers' party continues". Andrea James, a left independent, also got 85,000 votes across the state of Massachusetts against the Democratic machine: 3.3%. This provides a basis on which to build further support by campaigning and standing in future elections.

These campaigns can be steps towards fighting for a mass workers' party, one that builds support within the potentially powerful labour unions, and can organise and fight for the interests of workers and young people, independently of the corporate parties.

The midterms were clearly a rejection of, and an expression of rage against, Trumpism and MAGA, but only a partial one. Anger was also seen in the mass movement in Minnesota against ICE early in the year and in some major strikes. As the results came in, nurses in Boston were preparing indefinite strike action. Socialist ideas and traditions are also being enthusiastically taken up by a new generation. The only way out of the cost-of-living nightmare is through a socialist transformation led by the working class, bringing wealth, resources and technology into public ownership to be democratically planned, nationally and internationally, for the needs of all.



Liverpool uni – 'before long, everyone wants a leaflet'...

RUBY WHITEHEAD
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

University of Liverpool Socialist Students leafletted outside busier lecture halls, during transitional times when lectures were starting and ending. We were at two separate lecture halls to get a wider reach.

One person would take a leaflet, before multiple others followed their lead. Staff were also interested in learning about the strike. We had new signups, donations, and a couple of new people coming to the Socialist Students meeting we held later that day.



LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Campus security questioned who we were (Socialist Students), and if we were allowed to be leafletting on campus (yes we are). But this did not impact our leafletting. We still made a massive push towards spreading information about our demonstration on N20.

...college students know the system is rigged

AMY BIRNIE
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST STUDENTS

We have been campaigning at the City of Liverpool College, raising awareness about the upcoming International Youth Strike on 20 November. We had a positive response from staff and students.

We sold the Socialist paper, and people left their numbers to be contacted to find out more. People were eager to attend future meetings.

Issues raised included the jobs market, poor learning conditions, and the cost of living. These concerns mimic the sentiment we've heard throughout our campaign.

Students are aware that the system isn't working for them. And they're keen to act.

Young people are aware of the issues facing society. These issues do not exist in a vacuum. Capitalism's drive for profit has undermined the workers it depends on for too long.

We are campaigning every day in the buildup to 20 November. It is essential to harness the support of students who agree that funding should be focused on students, rather than war.

Socialist Students is campaigning alongside over 25 other youth organisations across Europe, to demand that our governments prioritise our future.

I've joined Socialist Students and the Socialist Party to champion this. And I call on anyone reading this to do the same. It's vital that we unite against war and austerity on 20 November.

...school students made more curious by heads trying to stop us


LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

DEAN YOUNG
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISER

We leafleted outside Alsop High School for the start of the school day. We ran out of leaflets!

School students were curious about what was going on. Many were eager to read what Socialist Students stands for, and what the international youth strike is.

Some security/management at the school came out and attempted to intimidate us, taking leaflets out of the hands of students. It didn't stop students. Some were made more curious by such over-the-top tactics.

One 15-year-old, after being told not to take a leaflet, came up to me and asked: "Are you guys Trotskyists or Marxists Leninists?" He took a leaflet.

Farnham: Uni for Creative Arts sit-in protest wins

ALEX WRIGHT
UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT

Me and fellow students staged a sit protest in our uni library.

Further cuts to our library hours, budget cuts, the closure of the student bar and student supply shop, and other budget cuts, had been leaked over the summer.

This and continued support of Generative AI angered students. With no communication or consultation, there was no way for us to voice our concerns.

We weren't heard. So we resorted to protest.

Last year, we had a 'chalk the grid' protest. Over 98% voted against AI usage in a student union poll. Forums and petitions galore. But still they ignored us.

Rightly pissed, I set up a group chat for the protest. Quickly it had well over 100 members, and others helping organise.

Over 60 showed up on the day. Management were forced to meet us, attending our protest. Students asked them questions, and demanded change.

We demanded:

- 24/7 library times
- Bring back student bar, with better and less frequent events
- Gen AI banned across the whole uni and teaching
- Better communication and transparency of where money is spent

We were told it would cost £100,000 a year to maintain the current library hours. But the vice-chancellors make £250,000 each!

They were greatly offended! But low-paid staff have faced pay and job cuts.

We stayed until 9pm. In the end, we agreed to student forums being set up.

We've only had once since. In that, they announced weekday opening would extended to 8pm, after previously being reduced to 5pm.

The library will now also be open on Saturdays. But unfortunately unstaffed. I can now say it's open more than the public library... just.

The uni is still allowing Gen AI. The bar has no alcohol license still.

So there is much more to do and push for. But we did cause change and make an impact!



Campaigning to save a Brighton library in spring 2026 GLENN KELLY

Join the student fightback: join...

socialist students

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


COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY

Coventry – 'its hard to argue for war!'

JACK
COVENTRY SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Leafleting outside a university building has led to way more people picking up fliers than in the town centre. Over a few weeks, we handed out 1,000 leaflets. A lot of people left thinking of how to get more involved.

Students that stopped to chat with us tended to support the idea. Being against war is hard to argue after all!

It was helpful to tell those who were interested that they could sign up to be sent more information. And a couple of people did that.

I joined Socialist Students this September. It's good to see that there is interest in the walkout.

Workers and youth rising

Now is the time for you to join the Socialist Party!

TESSA WARRINGTON
SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP ORGANISER

Splashed across the pages of the Socialist each week is news from the four corners of the world's working class. Dock workers striking across 22 countries against militarisation. French students taking to the streets in their hundreds of thousands protesting chronic classroom underfunding. The mass movement in Spain against corporate landlordism and student-led demonstrations in Serbia, which saw the ousting of right populist politicians and election of the Student List of candidates, general strikes in Spain and France. A storm is brewing across Europe.

In Britain, we carry reports of workers striking for the first time. Unions balloting for national action under pressure from their membership. The TUC discussing plans for a national demo against austerity. At the same time, students are organising to walk out of their schools, colleges and universities together on 20 November (N20) to 'Fight for our futures, not their wars'. At each stage, Socialist Party members have been there, fighting in their unions and on campuses to advance the organisation, programme and ideas of struggle that workers and young people need. We link the fight for victories today to the necessity to struggle for socialist change.



PHOTO: NICK CLARE

At Socialism 2026 (14-15 November) the ideas we talk about in the pages of the Socialist will come to life through discussion and debate about what is urgently needed to kick this rotten, decaying system into the dustbin of history. Not a talking shop, but a plan of action rooted in a material understanding of the world. That too many missed meals have consequences. That the cancellation of surgeries due to NHS funding cuts has a human cost. That the piling up of pressures on the backs of the working class, as wages stagnate and wallets are squeezed, is becoming unbearable. That workers and young people have had enough and want to fight back!

What we fight for

The Socialist Party fights for a society where production is owned, democratically controlled and managed by the working class. Not because it's a nice thought, but because workers are already the producers. We do all the work - build all the roads, clean all the toilets, deliver all the services - we just don't get to make decisions over it. Instead, our labour is used to hyper-enrich a tiny few while we face war, climate change and economic insecurity.

The potential power the working class has when united in action is just now beginning to be felt. N20 and the movements across Europe are the mood music of the future. Even so, there is no straight path to transforming society. Without democratic organisation, mass movements don't have organs to discuss and decide a programme of demands and action together.

Trade unions organise millions of workers in Britain. We argue for these mass workers' organisations to put up a political challenge to the Tories, Labour and all the capitalists' parties at the ballot box, and to form a mass party of the working class.

It's clear working-class and young people are grasping for a political voice, a response to the conditions created by capitalism. We can hasten that process by putting forward a clear, fighting plan of what is needed and how it can be achieved. In the trade unions, and in the process of the working class creating new democratic organisations and parties of struggle, the Socialist Party engages clearly putting forward the programme needed for the socialist transformation of society.

Come and participate in discussion with us at Socialism 2026 and take action alongside us on 20 November. If you are convinced by the ideas you read in this paper and see the need to get organised to fight for socialism, then come to the Socialism 2026 recruitment sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Join a party of working-class people with a proven history of leading mass struggles and winning for workers, such as to defeat Thatcher's poll tax in the late 1980s/early 1990s and the battles leading Liverpool's socialist council in the 1980s.

The reports and articles in the Socialist show an organisation full of serious and fighting members. We are ordinary people taking up the challenge of fighting for revolutionary change; for ourselves and our class, together. Join us in that struggle.

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Socialism 2026 Financial Appeal

Donate to build the international struggle for socialism

ISAI MARIJERLA
SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL TREASURER

It is becoming clear to many that this system is rigged against us. The rich are getting richer and their profits are increasing while the majority of us are struggling to make ends meet.

In country after country, workers and young people are coming out on the streets to say enough is enough. Including school, college and uni students walking out as part of the international youth strike on 20 November.

Karl Marx began The Communist Manifesto with the famous words: "A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism." Today, the ruling class are spooked, and they are right to be. Their system can be ended by the mighty working class moving into the scene of struggle.

In the last few weeks we have seen protests, mass movements and general strikes take place in France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Albania, Portugal, Serbia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Colombia, Greece, Argentina. And this is not the full list.

Movements are demanding higher wages and funded public services, against the rising cost of living and increased military spending.

Capitalism is a global system, and so the fight against it is also global. The Socialist Party is fighting for socialism worldwide. We are part of a world socialist organisation, the Committee for a Workers' International, CWI. Our sister organisations have been involved in the struggles that are taking place.

Socialist Party members have travelled to the continent too, taking solidarity and intervening in these mass events. Our members have visited France, Italy, Ireland and Spain in the last few weeks.

As part of the Saturday evening rally at Socialism 2026, there will be a financial appeal. This year we have set a target to raise £50,000. A quarter of what is raised will go to the CWI.

Taking on the capitalist system, and fighting to transform society requires resources. Donations made will be used to fund the struggle for socialism, help build and organise workers' and student organisations, to challenge the status quo and to mobilise the mighty force of the working class to get rid of capitalism and all of it's rottenness.

- **Donate today: socialistparty.org.uk/donations/socialism-2026 or make a pledge by emailing finance@socialistparty.org.uk to be redeemed by 20 December**



PHOTO: ISAI MARIJERLA



Forest School strike: 'You pay more – We get less!'

Caterers and cleaners in Unite the Union at prestigious independent Forest School in Waltham Forest, east London, are taking two weeks of strike action against drastic pay cuts, following a week of strike action before half term. A petition in support of the strikers signed by over 100 parents is still growing. See socialistparty.org.uk for reports and interviews with strikers

WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

British Library workers fight funding crisis and privatisation



Members of PCS and Prospect unions held a protest on Monday 9 November. See 'British Library: Workers expected to bail out government failure' at socialistparty.org.uk for more, including steps towards potential strike action LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY

Barnsley nursery workers: 'We have to stand up for ourselves'

ALISTAIR TICE

Over 30 Barnsley nursery workers, all women, all members of the GMB trade union, took strike action on 9 November to oppose the Reform-led council's plans to outsource six nurseries to a private provider and take them out of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

GMB organiser Vicky Austen said that this will "significantly lower payout in their retirement and remove their Death in Service entitlement." One worker said it would cost her £10,000 a year in reduced pension.

Reform took over Barnsley council in May. Council leader William Brown says they are doing this to protect jobs and retain these services. Well, one nursery, at Grimethorpe in his council ward, has already closed due to another private provider pulling out and de-registering the nursery, leaving some children, including some with special needs, without nursery provision. So much for Reform as a party for the working class!

The Labour council leader attended the picket in Grimethorpe. But it was the Labour council which proposed privatisation of the nurseries in the first place two years ago! They said that the nurseries were losing money. They would have known that private providers would run it for a profit at the expense of workers and the service.

The nursery staff came forward with their own proposals to expand the service into wraparound and non-term time provision, but these were refused. So they voted unanimously for strike action.

They held a town centre rally on 29 October and have more strikes planned on 18 and 26 November, when they will lobby the council meeting.

One worker told me: "I don't know if we'll change anything, but there are times when you've just got to stand up for yourselves!"



BUILDING FOR COORDINATED PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKE ACTION AND A NATIONAL TRADE UNION DEMO

The fight in post-16 education presses on despite UCU NEC-majority evasion

MARCO TESEI
UCU NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the University and College Union (UCU) met on 7 November. It had not met since 19 June.

In the interim, the crisis engulfing post-16 education has remained unchanged, despite the arrival of a new Labour prime minister promising radical change. Dozens of universities are either facing or at risk of insolvency, thousands of jobs and courses are being axed, and vital support services, pastoral care and campus facilities are being slashed. In short, both higher and further education institutions (HE and FE) are suffering the combined effects of chronic government underfunding and the 'wild west' of corporate, profit-driven decision-making.

It is already very clear. Andy Burnham has no answers to the crisis in post-16 education. Moreover, his regional devolution plans now cast more fears than hopes over further and adult education. Industrially, will they land us in legal quagmires that make collective bargaining even harder than it is already?

Members in FE and HE want to fight

Serious discussion and decision-making around these issues, and the kind of fightback needed, should have characterised the NEC meeting, especially given the strong appetite for a determined response among both HE and FE UCU members.

At both sector conferences, members have consistently voted for a coordinated, sector-wide fightback. Instead, they have faced determined efforts to evade implementing those decisions by Jo Grady's supporters in both sector committees, including by members of the 'UCU Commons' grouping.

An aggregated ballot of FE England colleges and adult education institutions – called for in a motion moved by a Socialist Party member, and the very first in FE in UCU's 20-year history – is now about to be launched. This is happening despite efforts of the FE Committee majority and the general secretary, and also UCU's top unelected FE official, to undermine the membership's decision.

Unfortunately, instead of harnessing members' fighting energy to take policy forward and unify all our battles into a single bold strategy, the overstuffed agenda at the NEC meeting did everything it could to avoid discussing the most urgent issues. Changes to UCU's standing orders and to the disciplinary procedure for members were given priority over a discussion about the fighting fund, which the president (a Grady ally) cut short before it could reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Two motions submitted by Socialist Party NEC members – one instructing the general secretary to pressure the TUC to implement PCS Congress Motion 34 for a Saturday demonstration against austerity, the other promoting maximum coordination with and support for students on 20 November – remained unheard, as motions were relegated to the final agenda item.



UCU HE members on strike in 2023 PAUL MATTSSON

UCU members are faced with a vicious struggle against austerity and the devastation of the sector, and must fight also to apply pressure to a union leadership that wants to avoid a confrontation with Burnham's government.

It is clear that in the upcoming NEC elections we need to elect a fighting leadership that will back members in action.

FE national ballot

Even in FE, where we are on the verge of a national ballot, it has been the work of fighting reps - with Socialist Party members to the fore – which has doggedly got us to this point. As reps, our cross-branch networks must work to overcome excuses the leadership may seize upon, to ensure as many branches stay in the ballot as possible.

In HE, Socialist Party members in UCU will continue to argue for a sector-wide struggle. Local branches cannot sustain the onslaught of job cuts indefinitely. Only a collective fightback can hope to reverse the tide and bring the government to heel.

Last but definitely not least, we have 20 November. On this day, thousands of university, college and school students could take to the streets in protest, inspired also by the role their counterparts have been playing across Europe. This must be a true 'day of action' for UCU too, helping student events and protests, and adding our own voices to the chorus of 'Fight for our future, not their wars'.

- This is an edited version of a longer article at socialistparty.org.uk

Get all the latest union news
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NSSN bulletin: shopstewards.net

PCS executive meets mid-ballot campaign
Keep on fighting for maximum turnout and 'Yes/Yes' vote!

PIPPA EVANS
PCS NEC MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Members of the civil service union PCS are balloting nationally over pay, pensions, job security and terms and conditions. The National Executive Committee (NEC) met on 5 November, nearly halfway through the ballot, with just three weeks left to build the highest possible turnout and a 'Yes/Yes' vote – 'yes' for strike action and 'yes' for action short of strike.

The national campaign dominated the NEC agenda. Fran Heathcote, general secretary, reported on progress. It was clear that where reps and activists have been building the campaign, including Socialist Party members, turnout is strong, with several branches close to or above the 50% threshold for industrial action.

The report also showed that unfortunately some are lagging behind – where the Democracy Alliance, including the misnamed 'Left Unity' (LU) grouping, supporters of the general secretary, has a strong leadership presence. BLN NEC members gave examples of workplaces where LU reps had not spoken to members or shown a serious effort to build the ballot.

This comes after LU has repeatedly used its positions in the union, both through the union apparatus and its lay positions, to postpone, delay and undermine the national campaign. Unlike most of the reps and members who face the brunt of low pay and cuts, there are those in the leadership of our union who want to avoid a fight with the Labour government.



PCS members campaigning for a 'yes' vote in the ballot BROAD LEFT NETWORK

Members want to fight

But the good response to the ballot shows that members do want to fight for their jobs, pay and to solve the crisis facing civil service pensions. There is widespread anger over inadequate pay rises, thousands of job cuts, office closures and attacks on conditions. In DWP, for example, the interim payment of 1.75% is another reason to fight. Despite LU's attempts to use this measly amount to argue that we should have waited for talks (ie delay the campaign further), we made it clear at the NEC that rather than 'wait and see' (the obvious!), the offer should be used to mobilise members. With inflation above 4% and energy bills set to rise by over 10% in January, it shows the need to fight.

We also raised the need to implement conference policy on extending access to membership data, giving elected representatives wider access to members' contact details. This is essential to reaching members, organising effectively and building the ballot.

The NEC discussed Capita (the private company that administers civil service pensions and has presided over a debacle) and the pensions crisis. The general secretary reported on conversations with ministers about bringing the work back in-house. But we argued that, as with all our demands, discussions alone will not secure this. The government must feel the pressure from members to be forced to act.

The organising report showed membership at a three-year high, backing up what we have consistently argued: workers join and build their union when they see it fighting.

We need the biggest possible 'Yes/Yes' vote: a mandate for coordinated action, uniting members' struggles and giving PCS the strength to fight on every front. BLN members on the NEC continue to fight to ensure the union's leadership is focused on building that campaign, providing a clear strategy and mobilising our members to win.

Important items not reached

Socialist Party and BLN supporters had tabled a motion for PCS to support the International Youth Strike on 20 November. School, college and university students fighting for a future dovetails with the fight of all of our members, including our young members, for decent pay and jobs, and against austerity. It is especially important that trade unions offer not just backing in name but practical support such as stewarding.

BLN supporters also wanted to ask the general secretary what had happened at the executive meeting of the TUC General Council, where a discussion was due to take place about implementing the decision from TUC Congress to call a trade union demonstration against austerity – a motion put to TUC by the PCS. NEC members will be writing to Fran Heathcote to ask if she pushed for this and what the outcome was.

- The ballot runs till 1 December

Support staff members tell NEU leaders: We still want to fight

ANNABEL GRIFFITHS
DELEGATE FROM BRISTOL AT SUPPORT STAFF CONFERENCE

I attended the National Education Union (NEU) support staff conference. It was the most well-attended of its kind and an empowering weekend to attend.

In March, 1,200 delegates at a special NEU conference voted to begin recruiting unorganised school support staff. An indicative ballot of 70,000 support staff members returned a big vote for action on pay and funding. But following complaints from other support staff unions, the NEU National Executive voted to pause recruitment and to not ballot support staff on a national basis. Socialist Party members opposed this.

General secretary Daniel Kebede stopped by the conference and I was able to ask him when we would be able to link the 70% increase in local support staff action to a national struggle, and have a national support staff ballot to win on pay, funding and to push back on job creep - issues that we are all at the forefront of!

He replied that this was unrealistic as we need to continue improving our relationship with other unions so we can build numbers. Unfortunately this shows his lack of confidence in the power of collective support staff action. Putting up a strong fight and appealing to other unions to work together at all levels is the best way to strengthen all of our fights. The rest of the weekend, however, showed this potential power.

Conference voted to take a motion on recruitment of support staff to annual conference. The motion called for the union to "promote local organising and ballots involving support staff", and "commence national campaigns". Yet again, support staff members have proved that we want and need to continue to build and grow our membership in order to fight and win on the issues that affect us every day.



PHOTO: HUGO PIERRE

The 42 workshops at Socialism 2026 include:
The 100th anniversary of the General Strike - when workers tasted power
The early Communist Party and the Minority Movement
The coming cost-of-living storm of struggle and lessons from the 2022-23 strike wave
Does the working class still matter in the struggle for socialism?
Come and discuss at
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Socialist Party

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

WORK, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

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

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Inflation on the way and the banks and bosses expect us to be poorer

ALEX SAMPSON
PLYMOUTH SOCIALIST PARTY

The Bank of England announced that it will be increasing its base interest rate from 3.75% to 4%, the first rate rise in three years. The reason given for the increase is the growing cost of oil due to the US's disastrous war with Iran and the shutting of the Strait of Hormuz, which normally would handle around 25% of the world's crude oil. The shutting of the Strait had an immediate effect on oil prices, with prices peaking at over $120 a barrel, although it has dropped since.

The Bank of England believes this inflation can only be slowed by increasing the cost of borrowing - the interest rate - so that we have less to spend on, typically, luxury items in an effort to bring the cost of those items down, ultimately bringing inflation down. This may have worked in the past when higher wages meant that ordinary families did have extra money to spend on luxuries, but the concept is laughable for so many in Britain today.

The constant eating away of the standard of living for most families in Britain since the banking crisis of 2007-08 and the 18 years of austerity that followed has meant that for a large part of the population. Luxury spending is a thing of distant memory. It is not us splashing our cash that is causing inflation, it is the billionaire owners of corporations, such as the power and water industries and supermarket owners, who are hiking prices and have continued to rake in enormous profits on essential items while the rest of us ration those essentials.

Food budget cuts

These interest rates will just squeeze the working class further while doing nothing to impact inflation - how will cutting the food budget of the average family bring down the cost of oil?

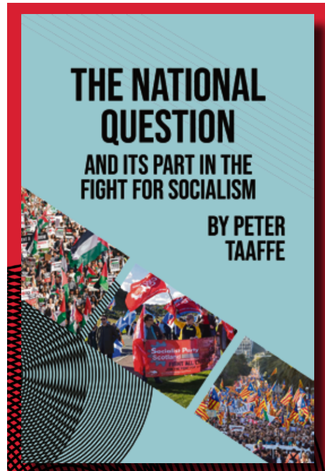
But the members of the Bank of England are wealthy themselves. These decisions they take do not impact them. They are not struggling with bills, rent, or food costs, and have no understanding of how much their decisions will increase hardship for the rest of us. They are fully invested in managing and maintaining the capitalist system, which works so well for them, and so they will continue to inflict cruel policies on the rest of us. Which is why this system of wars for resources, of grasping for maximum profit for a tiny minority, must be replaced with a system that works for us all, that allows us all a dignified standard of living. We must fight for a socialist future.

The coming cost-of-living storm of struggle – and lessons from the 22-23 strike wave

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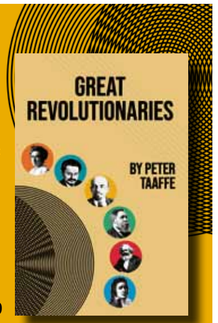
In a capitalist world in crisis, where only a socialist approach can offer a resolution to its many unresolved national questions, this book provides much needed answers.

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The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, and in the other Stalinist states of Europe, marked an important turning point in history. The triumphalist optimism that the fall of 'the Wall' would usher in a period of global peace and prosperity has long been shattered. However, the accompanying ideological offensive - that 'socialism' had supposedly failed - still hangs heavily on the workers' movement today. This compilation of articles, arranged in three sections, provides clear answers to those false claims.

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Poundland - Nationalise to save jobs

IAIN DALTON
USDAW BROAD LEFT SECRETARY

Discount retail chain Poundland is facing administration, with a threat to around 600 stores and 11,000 jobs. This follows the company's purchase last year, for a token figure of £1, by Gordon Brothers - a firm with a specialism in 'restructuring', taking on the company's £30 million debts.

Gordon Brothers is seeking the maximum return for its investors, regardless of the impact on Poundland's workers. To that end, it rejected a bid for the entire company from the Northern Ireland-based Martin Property Group (MPG). Three of Poundland's independent directors who had been overseeing the potential sale resigned in protest. The deal would have meant MPG taking on only £15 million of the debts, with only a portion paid off upfront.

Gordon Brothers clearly believes it can extract more money by going into administration and breaking up the company, with a number of chains allegedly interested in taking on some stores. However, an anonymous 'industry insider' quoted in the Guardian suggests as many as 500 of the 600 stores could be left without a buyer. This follows the 130 stores and two distribution centres that closed as a result of Gordon Brothers' takeover. Usdaw is recognised in two of Poundland's distribution centres. The last figures given in Usdaw's annual report for the 2025 Poundland pay review showed pay tracking 25p-an-hour above the basic adult minimum wage.

Usdaw should be organising meetings for members in Poundland to discuss how to save their jobs and protect their pay and conditions in any takeover. As an anonymous source said in the Guardian's report about Gordon Brothers' position: "The only thing that can change this is if they feel the moral or public relations duty". Usdaw members in Poundland and beyond should make their voices heard.

In an Usdaw press release, general secretary Joanne Thomas said: "I am calling on the government to do everything it can to save 11,000 jobs… I urge the government to grant the retail sector the same priority and strategic support it provides to other vital industries."

She should be more specific. The government must step in, and it shouldn't bail out the profits of companies at our members' expense. Unfortunately, Andy Burnham has said there's a limit on what he can do. He's only the prime minister! But there is a clear path he needs to take. If nationalisation is good enough for British Steel in Scunthorpe, it should be good enough to protect our members' jobs too.

> **"In 2017, Usdaw conference passed a proposition calling "upon the Executive Council to raise the question of nationalisation of companies who go into administration"**

Usdaw passed a proposition calling "upon the Executive Council to raise the question of nationalisation of companies who go into administration or other situations where the jobs of our members and other retail, distributive and allied workers are under threat" at its 2017 ADM.

As that successful proposition went on to state: "Such nationalisations should not be of a top-down nature, but of one run on a democratic basis to allow staff representatives and the wider trade union movement to be involved in the revitalisation of these companies."



PHOTO: MUTNEY/CC

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PRE-N20 INTERNATIONAL YOUTH STRIKE RALLY



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

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