£1/£2 solidarity price

socialistparty.org.uk

Socialist Party CWI CIT

# the Socialist

Issue 1392 | 26 November - 2 December 2026 | formerly Militant

# YOUTH STRIKE BACK NOW UNIONS MUST ACT

**20 November 2026 will go down in history - a million school, college and university students striking across Europe in coordinated protest against war and for a future. And most importantly – just the beginning.**

For working-class people, young and old, who have suffered crushing austerity as the rich have got ever more obscenely richer; all the young people who struggle to find work, who cannot get a place to live, who are burdened with impossible student debt; the public sector workers who have seen their pay cut and the services they deliver savaged; the workers in industry who face job losses and low pay…

For everyone who watches climate destruction while the representatives of all the capitalist nations fail yet again to do anything about it, completely in hock to the bosses of the big polluting companies; for everyone who fears increasing wars, instability and division; for everyone who has felt 'there's nothing I can do about it' – Friday 20 November was a glimpse of the other side of the picture.

Young people are starting to get organised and to do so internationally. And behind them are the workers organised in trade unions, in some countries also coming out in generalised strike action, in Italy and Portugal on 20 November itself.

While the protests have been going for a while in France, Germany and the Spanish state, in Britain this is just beginning. But present in these developments is the possibility of a force developing that can change things.

In Britain, as well as young people stepping up organisation in student unions, the trade unions need to take a lead. Call the national demonstration against Labour austerity and division that was agreed at TUC Congress in September.

Workers in the civil service and further education, members of PCS and the University and College Union, are balloting for national action, and probation workers in Napo have voted to strike and are already taking action short of strike.

Imagine the impact if that action was co-ordinated, and if the trade unions in schools, the NHS and local government were to do the same. The confidence that would give to young people who have just taken their first protest action.

Andy Burnham's Labour government cannot be allowed to scapegoat young and disabled people and pensioners, using the Milburn and Timms reviews and threats to the pensions triple lock, to cut the welfare bill. It is not 'coaching' and working for no pay that young people need. It's jobs!

Investment in education and training, a genuine programme of council house building, investment in the NHS and all public services, would provide real jobs on decent pay at the same time as raising the living conditions of all of us. Nationalisation of the energy and defence industries with democratic working-class control would enable not only existing jobs and skills to be saved, but massive investment and a democratically discussed transition to production that benefits society.

To get that we need to be organised for action, and we need a political voice to fight for those policies.

Join the Socialist Party in the battle for fighting trade unions, student unions, a new workers' party, and a socialist alternative - to take the wealth and the power out of the hands of the super-rich and democratically run society for the benefit of all instead.

EDITORIAL: N20 YOUTH STRIKE SWEEPS EUROPE - THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING! ▶▶▶ p2-3
WHERE YOU WALKED OUT ▶▶▶ p4-7
BAE REDUNDANCIES: UNIONS MUST FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST STRATEGY ▶▶▶ p10
TECH STOCKS TURMOIL: TREMORS OF COMING ECONOMIC EARTHQUAKE ▶▶▶ p8-9

**the Socialist**
*formerly Militant*

Issue 1392
26 November - 2 December 2026

**DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?**
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.

**CONTACT US**
editors@socialistparty.org.uk
020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

**DEADLINES**
Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.

The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

**SUBSCRIBE**
to the Socialist for weekly working-class news, analysis and fighting strategy
**socialistparty.org.uk/sub**
- Paper subscription £6 a month, or £8.50 including Socialism Today
- E-subscription £4 a month, or £7 including Socialism Today

**SOCIALISM TODAY**
our monthly Marxist magazine
**socialismtoday.org**
Paper sub £3.50 a month, e-sub £3.30

**SOCIALISM: THE PODCAST**
available on all podcast platforms

**FOLLOW US**
Instagram @SocialistPartyCWI
YouTube - Socialist Party
Twitter @Socialist_Party

**SOCIALIST PARTY**
The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International
**socialistparty.org.uk**
**socialistworld.net**

**BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS**
Left Books: Marxist classics and Socialist Party publications available online at
**leftbooks.co.uk**

**OUR NEWSPAPER TEAM**

**Editor of the Socialist**
Josh Asker
**socialistparty.org.uk**
Mark Best
**Circulation manager**
Rachel Cox

**Editorial staff**
Scott Jones
Ian Pattison
Paula Mitchell
Mark Best

ISSN 1366-9621
*Published by Socialist Publications, PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT*
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office
Printed by Newsquest

*Militant issue 1: October 1964*
*The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997*

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

# N20 YOUTH STRIKE SWEEPS EUROPE

Socialist Party
**WHAT WE THINK**


Milan, Italy PHOTO: DISPE/CC




# THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

"A new wind is blowing across the earth." These were the words of a student in Paris, who was among the one million-plus young people who took part in the international youth strike to 'Fight for our future, not their wars' on 20 November 2026.

A full picture of the scale of the movement in different countries is not yet clear, but the International Youth Strike network, which initiated the strike, estimates that it involved 27+ countries, 500+ cities and 5,000+ schools, colleges and universities. In a number of Italian cities, the student protests were many tens of thousands strong, and took place on the same day as a 24-hour general strike by the biggest trade union federation, the CGIL. In total, around 100,000 marched through the streets of Milan. Meanwhile, fifteen thousand were protesting in Berlin. Students in Bologna withstood brutal police repression. Most impressive was the sheer spread of the strike. The list of cities, towns and even villages where hundreds or thousands of students marched is huge and spread across the map of Europe, from Finland in the north, to Serbia and Albania in the east, to Portugal in the west, where a public sector general strike took place on the same day.

The students and young people from some countries, above all France, have already taken part in inspiring mass movements this year. For students in Britain, however, this was just the beginning. But what a beginning! Many hundreds rallied in numerous city centres, including Liverpool, Manchester, Brighton, Bristol, Birmingham, Sheffield, Cardiff and London. But even more impressive than the cities were the 150+ places where groups of students went on strike and held local marches.

The history books will not remember 20 November because of yet another COP conference proving incapable of decisive action on climate change, nor because Andy Burnham, on behalf of British capitalism, chose that day to meet representatives of capitalist governments in the European Union. Instead, N20 will be remembered for the solidarity and internationalism of a new generation: many taking their first steps into the struggle for a different, socialist, world.

## How N20 developed

It was a meeting in June of this year, involving 12 youth organisations from eight different European countries, which launched the call for N20 primarily around opposition to war and militarisation. Socialist Students, in which the Socialist Party's student members participate, was the only organisation from Britain at that meeting, primarily as a result of its role in organising the walkouts against Trump when he visited Britain last year.

At that first meeting, Socialist Students representatives put forward that the slogan for the proposed strike should be, 'fight for our future, not their wars,' successfully arguing that the struggle against war should be connected to the wider fight against the profit-driven capitalist system, which robs young people of a future in all ways - whether through war, climate change, or attacking education and living standards.

As enthusiasm for N20 grew, more organisations came on board, including the National Union of Students and the Young Greens in Britain. The University and College Union (UCU), along with other higher and further education unions, also declared N20 a day of action. Most importantly, the strike slogan chimed with a generation of young people, as did the demands around which Socialist Students mobilised: for free, fully funded education; fund our services, not their wars; a £15-an-hour minimum wage for everyone; arms companies off our campuses; student unions in every school and college to give us a voice; make the super-rich pay; and for a socialist future, run for the needs of all without war, poverty or climate chaos.

Socialist Students has won many new university students over the last month, but it is students from schools and colleges that have flocked to it in the biggest numbers. Some, especially school students, faced threats of disciplinary action from school managements for exercising their democratic right to protest. World Children's Day falls on 20 November, which is the anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 gives young people the right to express their views on matters that affect them and article 15 recognises their right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, but that didn't stop some school managements from threatening detentions or suspensions, plus in some cases calling the police or hiring private security in their desperation to stop students protesting.

> **Socialist Students put forward that the slogan for the proposed strike should be, 'Fight for our future, not their wars'**

As a result, there were certainly many students who wanted to strike, but instead had to show their support in other ways, including petitions and in school sit-downs. Others, however, showed huge determination, including scaling fences and gates and dodging security guards in order to join the action. Many of these were brand new to protesting. On TikTok, wherever groups of school students have posted footage of their own strike, there are countless comments from other school students about how they too walked out.

Some students were able to strike without threats of reprisals because they successfully approached school staff in the National Education Union (NEU) beforehand to intercede with management on their behalf. At the instigation of Socialist Party members on the NEU executive, the union agreed "support for the right of young people" to take "part in the N20 day of action", and 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". Daniel Kebede, NEU general secretary, spoke at the Socialist Students rally in London in solidarity with the protests, as did the general secretary of the UCU.

Many other trade unionists came to show their support to protests around the country, including the Unite Birmingham bin strikers who joined their local demo. The enthusiasm which all the trade union speakers were greeted with showed an understanding of the need for a common struggle of workers and youth, particularly having seen how that is developing over the channel in France.

If school or college students face disciplinary action in the aftermath of the strike, NEU members and other trade unionists will have an important role to play in acting to oppose those threats.

## We've only just begun

On N20, students showed huge determination and organisational skills. That is now a springboard for qualitatively increasing the level of fighting student organisation in Britain. Over the last decade or more the National Union of Students (NUS) has been hollowed out, having repeatedly failed to lead national struggles on the issues that matter to students – not least in the battle for free education. However, the NUS came on board to support N20, and members of its current leadership, including the National President, spoke at the Socialist Students protest in London. The NUS leadership now has an opportunity to wage a campaign to build fighting student unions in every university, college and sixth form – where they already have the legal right to organise – and to support secondary school students also building their own union, with the same statutory rights that exist in colleges.

The first step in getting organised, however, will be for students to set up Socialist Students groups, and to attend the Socialist Students conference taking place in Manchester on 5 December 2026, which will bring together students from every sector. There, Socialist Students will be democratically debating what the next steps should be to take the fight for a future forward. That will include the question of how to continue to develop the International Youth Network that was initiated to build for N20.

N20 showed beyond doubt that young people understand that the struggle against war, climate change and capitalism – the fight for a future – cannot be fought in one country alone but has to be conducted internationally. The International Youth Network has already discussed holding an in-person conference in Italy in February to work out next steps, and Socialist Students representatives have raised that the conference should look at launching an international socialist youth and student network, building on the manifesto for N20 to explain why fighting against capitalism means fighting for a reorganisation of society based on need, not profit. But whether that is agreed or not, it is clear that the network should continue coordinating concrete international youth actions.

The Socialist Party supported the N20 initiative from day one, including by building support for it in the trade union movement. We will now do all we can to aid students in building on its success. For almost a decade, opinion polls in Britain have shown that at least half of young people consider themselves socialist; N20 was an important step to getting organised to fight for a different system.








Parliament Square PHOTO: SOCIALIST PARTY

> **N20 showed beyond doubt that young people understand that the struggle against war, climate change and capitalism - the fight for a future - has to be conducted internationally**

## The far-right and trade union stewarding

On a very few of the N20 protests individuals or small groups from the far right turned up to intimidate or harass the young people – many in their teens – who had come to protest. In one or two cases, individuals who had initially come to oppose the protests listened to the speeches and decided the students 'had a point'. However, in London there was a national mobilisation of a few dozen, overwhelming male and in their 40s or 50s, who were determined to try and hamper and intimidate the young demonstrators. They didn't achieve their aims, and the Socialist Students rally was successful. Nonetheless, this again raises the need for the trade union movement to begin organising serious stewarding in order to defend our movement from potential far-right attacks.

## Stop the War Coalition's mistaken decision to organise separate London rally

In most parts of the country the different organisations building for N20 agreed common locations for rallies and marches. This also took place in London. On 16 September 2026, a meeting of representatives from Socialist Students, the Young Greens and the Stop the War Coalition took place in which Socialist Students proposed a joint London rally in Parliament Square. A further meeting of these organisations was held on 14 October 2026, with Parliament Square agreed as the location of the London rally. Unfortunately, the Stop the War Coalition then unilaterally announced a separate rally in Trafalgar Square.

# N20 - WHERE YOU PROTESTED AND WALKED OUT

## Manchester – we can't be stopped!



Manchester ALL PHOTOS: SOCIALIST PARTY

**MEREDITH**
MANCHESTER SOCIALIST STUDENTS

On the morning, I met with Socialist Students near my high school to set up a picket line. We held our placards, and were joined by a few of my friends.

A lot of students' parents didn't allow them to protest. So some people just didn't come into school, adding to the number of people striking.

Some teachers looked delighted. One teacher asked what our plan was, taking a leaflet.

In a previous week, we had been threatened by an angry parent while leafleting. But on Friday, we were beeped by parents driving past, supporting us.

The school management approached us, saying that we had to move, because we weren't allowed to encourage people not to go to school. While teachers attempted to convince us to move, I crossed the road to ask other students if they wanted to join us.

Most said that their parents had said no. But three students in Year 7 and Year 8 said that they would join us at the picket, then go in, once school started.

As we gave them placards to hold, we were told by management that we were being "intimidating", even though most students were happy to politely say 'no.'

Once our picket had built up, we took out a banner and megaphone. I shouted "Fight for our futures, not their wars! Join the International Youth Strike today".

Management were now keeping their distance, but did send one teacher to get the names of the younger students who joined in so they could call their parents.

When it was nearly time for school to start, one teacher took the placards out of the younger students' hands – telling them that it was time to go in. I gave the placards back to them, telling the teacher that it was the students' decision. The younger students stayed with us for a bit longer, then went inside.

We set off with seven students and three stewards to catch the bus to Xaverian College. Plus, a brother and sister agreed to meet us at the rally in town.

There weren't as many people at Xaverian as we expected. But we still gave leaflets. One student came with us. Other Xaverian students said that they would join us in town too.

At the student union, we had a room with food, and discussed our plan for the day. At Whitworth Arch, I started off chants through the megaphone: "Money for jobs and education, not for war and exploitation".

Other organisations started to arrive. Socialist Students started the main rally.

In my speech, I highlighted the difference that this day would make. And how amazing it was that people had shown up from schools, colleges, and universities.

School and college students marched at the front. Didsbury High School students held up the Manchester Socialist Students banner. There were lots of press and photographers.

Newcastle



## Newcastle school students stand up

**ELAINE BRUNSKILL**
TYNE AND WEAR SOCIALIST PARTY

Alongside students from both the two unis, where we had put out loads of leaflets, there was a group of Newcastle college students. They had seen stickers where they lived, with a QR code advertising the event.

A school student from North Tyneside came along. Her mam had rung up her school to let them know this was an authorised absence, as she had the right to protest for a decent future.

Another student had leaflets confiscated as she tried to hand them out at her school. She has said that many of her classmates will be curious about why they were taken off her.

We had an open mic, with an array of speakers. The mood was this should just be the beginning of the fightback.

100 students and trade unionists – UCU, Unite, and CWU – joined the strike, organised by Socialist Students. The UCU provided us with a megaphone.

## York – 'no ifs, no buts, no education cuts'

**GRACE WOODS**
YORK SOCIALIST STUDENTS

York Socialist Students led our on-campus demo, with picket signs and our newly made banner: 'Fight for a socialist future.'

100 students and staff chanted: "No ifs, no buts, no education cuts". York Tab and York Student TV took video interviews from Socialist Students.

We were joined by York St John's students. They turned out, despite it being reading week.

York St John's Socialist Students' Anna Beishon led the chants. There were representatives from the University and College Union (UCU).

Speakers highlighted the necessity of N20, and to voice specific grievances. Students from Askham Bryan College and York College signed up to Socialist Students, showing interest in future events.

"It was brilliant. Really meaningful to get to take part in my first protest for something so important. It was lovely to have some friends along, and see the York colleges come together!"
**LEO, ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE**

"I enjoyed it! I think we made quite a bit of noise and got our point through."
**SAM, YORK COLLEGE**

York Uni



Leicester




## 'You heard Leicester march before you saw it'

**BLUE**
DE MONTFORT SOCIALIST STUDENTS

Our crowd marched from University of Leicester to De Montfort uni (DMU), where 200 of us marched to town. I was waiting at DMU.

You could hear the chants before you saw the march. The University and College Union (UCU) joined us after their demo at Leicester uni.

Many people cheered and applauded along the route as we marched. A wide variety of people spoke to us: college and uni students, older people, and a UCU member.



## Brighton – 'If teachers can strike, why can't we?'

**CALLUM JOYCE**
BRIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

300 tried to walk out at Blatchington Mill School, but faced locked gates. A big chunk managed to break out anyway, and came to our demo.

One student, who had taken the lead organising, said: "If teachers are allowed to take strike action, why can't we?" Some Blatchington parents came on the demo in support as well.

At Varndean School and King's School, headteachers sent letters to parents and warned students not to take action or face sanctions. A group from Varndean came anyway, with some climbing over the school fence to escape. At the demo, we promised to organise a campaign against any disciplinary action.

At least two Varndean students want to set up a Socialist Students group at their school. The first meeting will be in the next couple of weeks.

Socialist Party and Socialist Students campaign stalls on the day were swamped. There are now 91 contacts for Socialist Students. Campaign activity is already planned at BHASVIC and Varndean sixth form colleges.

In addition, students protested from Sussex and Brighton unis, Plumpton College, Brighton Met College, BIMM and Waterbear – both small music colleges. Students at Dorothy Stringer and Patcham High schools also contacted us.

As well as college students speaking on the rally, we had reps from Unison, University and College Union (UCU), and the trades union council.

Brighton



Brighton




## Library cuts

**DAVID MAPLES**
BRIGHTON SOCIALIST PARTY

Brighton central library has an extensive study space. This is used so much it is often impossible to get a desk.

Younger teenagers have told us they can't afford to study in a coffee shop. Many find home too noisy and crowded.

This didn't stop the Labour council halving opening hours on Sundays. We campaigned against this.

In the build up to the youth strike, when schools and colleges were closed for half term, we went back to the library. Security told us it was the wrong time to protest. We told them it was exactly the right time. Staff agreed.

- Extend library opening hours
- Increase the number of study spaces, especially in the run-up to exams
- Reintroduce grants for college students to cover the cost of living

## Farnham uni for creative arts

**SERENITY BIDDLE**
FARNHAM STUDENT

At 11am, 20 students walked out from classes, meeting in the main uni square, discussing what this protest means.

Me and another student organiser, Alex, gave speeches, as well as Socialist Party member Huw.

Students took to the uni hallways to recruit more people, before marching through the streets of Farnham.

Our chants caused commotion, with the public showing their support through claps and recordings. We spread the word of what our protest was about by engaging with them, and answering any and all questions they had.

Students and Socialist Party members were interviewed by the Farnham Herald, after we marched past their office. The published article has helped to spread word of our movement even further.

Organising and marching was liberating. It helped me believe that more people can be brought into Socialist Students, the Socialist Party, and our movement. With more action like this, change is possible.

## Carmarthen

I organised a local college strike. We had an opening speech by a more experienced member.

I spoke about how important it was for young people to strike today, and what it was exactly we were fighting for.

People continued talking even after we had finished, expressing a desire to begin a local socialist movement. We have created a new Socialist Students group.

This is the first step in building a larger movement in West Wales. It is a stepping stone to creating something impactful and sustainable for young people. We now have a stronger base to build on.
**JETT HOPKINS**
SWANSEA AND WEST WALES SOCIALIST PARTY

## North London school students win right to walk out



Parliament Square, central London

**EMILY LYNDON**
CAMDEN AND HARINGEY SOCIALIST PARTY

At one school, the deputy head came out to offer words of encouragement to the students, before they set off for central London. He was supportive of students walking out.

Camden and Haringey Socialist Party members joined students from two schools who were walking out. Some had been in contact with us since the Trump walkouts last year.

The deputy head thanked Socialist Party members for supporting the day of action. He said that it was positive for students to be exercising their right to protest in extremely bleak times. Many teachers responded positively.

The school had said that pupils walking out could face detention. In response, students planned a sit-in during the school's upcoming open day.

Any threat of punishment was revoked. Compromises were agreed between the school and students.

Students showed they're aware of the conditions they face, both in casual conversation, and during a rally that we held on our way to the main demonstration.

Many students were speaking publicly for the first time. They referenced extortionate uni fees, poor living conditions, and millions spent on war and destruction, instead of education.

One student was the only one from their school. They said that without taking action, nothing will change, and encouraged other young people to join them.

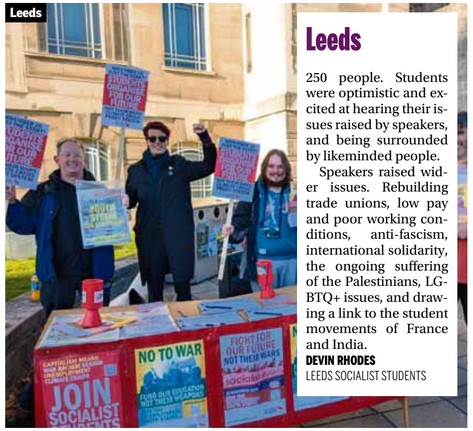
Another student said: "This is so exciting. I love being a part of this, and actually doing something.

"I've learnt a lot for next time we do a protest. And I have some ideas to make people at my school want to come".

## Exeter

Without starting our campaign at the freshers' fair, we would not have seen this result – 400 people protesting. College students flocked towards our Socialist Party stall table, taking bundles of our leaflets to hand out amongst themselves. And a uni student wants to revive the previous Socialist Students society.
**MYLES HATCHER**
DEVON SOCIALIST PARTY

Leeds




## Leeds

250 people. Students were optimistic and excited at hearing their issues raised by speakers, and being surrounded by likeminded people.

Speakers raised wider issues. Rebuilding trade unions, low pay and poor working conditions, anti-fascism, international solidarity, the ongoing suffering of the Palestinians, LGBTQ+ issues, and drawing a link to the student movements of France and India.
**DEVIN RHODES**
LEEDS SOCIALIST STUDENTS



Stevenage SOCIALIST STUDENTS

## Stevenage protesting cold classrooms

Over a dozen sixth-form students walked out at Barclay Academy and Nobel, marching and rallying together. Sixth-form students at Thomas Alleyne Academy were threatened with disciplinary action if they walked out.

Later in the day, cold classrooms and strict school rules led to hundreds of Nobel School students protesting outside. Students wearing 'discontinued' school jumpers are suspended and isolated.

Students held signs: "I'm cold, not defiant", and "We came to learn, not to freeze". SEND (special educational needs and disability) students, in particular, deserve the choice of being comfortable when learning.

## Wigan – I only joined the socialists three days before strike

**KADIE MALLON**
WINSTANLEY COLLEGE

I only met and joined the Socialist Party on Tuesday, three days before helping out with the youth strike.

I wasn't sure what to expect. But it was incredible. Seeing the myriad of people coming together for the same cause was inspiring.

I see the lack of education funding. A few weeks ago, the roof at my friend's college literally collapsed.

So it's not surprising how many students were interested in joining the strike, particularly handing out the leaflets at City of Liverpool college.

More people than I was expecting were interested. And were willing to listen, as we explained what it was for.

It felt surreal to see how many of those people showed up, despite only hearing about it that morning. It was so exciting to be able to say I was part of the youth strike and helped out.

I can't wait to see what happens in the future!



Bristol NICK CLARE

## Cambridge students get organised, and join socialists

25 students at Hills Road and Long Road sixth form colleges walked out. Over 100 attended the rally in Cambridge, mainly uni students.

As the sixth-form students gathered and chanted, encouraging more students to join them, college staff did not stop them. An A-level photography teacher even brought their entire class of 20 students out into the street to document the protest.

Following the strike, Long Road students are now building a new Socialist Students group. Students in Cambridge are getting organised. This will be the third newly affiliated society in the city since we started building for the youth strikes in the summer.

**MORGAN TRITTON**
STEVENAGE SOCIALIST PARTY



Cambridge SOCIALIST STUDENTS

## 'They don't think we matter'

Socialist Party member **Philip Hodgson** is also a member of the Social Action Society at Hills Road, which is affiliated to Socialist Students. He spoke at the rally.

"'Fight for our future, not their wars!' From the standpoint of a college student, no banner could be more appropriate. Over the course of our education, we have watched the UK government fail to make providing for our needs a priority.

"Why should young people have to choose between thousands of pounds of student debt or drowning in an increasingly unstable and demanding job market without a degree? Politicians have repeatedly failed to advocate for us so we, the students, must do it ourselves.

"School, college, and university students must build student unions, with a further objective than just selling a cheap pint. Our student unions should be actively campaigning on the issues that make a difference to young people.

"Whether that's tackling transport costs, combating the presence of the far right on campus, funding free school meals, or simply demanding to have more of a democratic role in the way our institutions are run."

## Bristol – inequality and debt

**TOM BALDWIN**
BRISTOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Hundreds walked out. They came together for the rally organised by Socialist Students, forming a vibrant, noisy, and very political crowd.

Groups arrived en masse. 30 from Access Creative College. 50 each from St Mary Redcliffe sixth form and City of Bristol College. 200 from Bristol uni.

We then marched through the Broadmead shopping area, attracting interest and applause from shoppers.

The rally heard speeches from students at many of these places, and from education unions. Jet, a St Mary Redcliffe student, raised issues such as inequality in the minimum wage and student debt, saying: "We need to come together and support each other", and "The revolution starts with you."

25 young people filled in Socialist Students cards, interested in setting up groups in their place of study.

## Sheffield

Both universities held rallies near their student unions, before marching into the city centre to meet together. Over 200 people, including school students.

Each university had slightly different focuses 'fighting for our futures and not their wars'.

Sheffield uni stood against the insane amounts of funding from the weapons industry, as a founding member of 'Defence University Alliance', at the same time as our lecturers and support staff consistently have their jobs put at risk.

1,370 staff have left Sheffield Hallam since 2023. Those remaining worry that the quality of education cannot stay the same with this level of cuts.

**ROSE DUCKWORTH, SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST STUDENTS**

## Birmingham

It was the first time I've seen so many groups together. Every group had the chance to speak on their view of the problem, and their ideas for change.

The Defence Universities Alliance provides at least £4 million to the University of Birmingham – military research and graduate opportunities. The government is choosing to fund the military, and at the same time NOT funding affordable housing, while raising tuition fees.

Everyone should be able to have a home and education.

**MELANIE MACK, BIRMINGHAM SOCIALIST STUDENTS**

## Swansea

80 students walked out. The uni's attitude was total support for us and our cause. Staff and students were reading thousands of our leaflets.

**RHYS CASTLEY, SWANSEA SOCIALIST PARTY**


Sheffield SOCIALIST STUDENTS

## Build a Socialist Students group where you study

Socialist Students is helping students around the country start groups, even if no one walked out on Friday. There are already more than 50 groups across the country. Every walkout on November 20 started with a handful of people. Talk to other students who agree with you, meet regularly and take action on the issues that affect you. Join and we can help you build a group.

**socialiststudents.org.uk/join**

## Threatened or punished? Tell us

If you've had any sanction for walking out, please reply to this email and tell us what happened and where. That includes a detention, exclusion, a letter home, losing a position or a trip, or a disciplinary at uni. We can help organise to defend you, together with the teachers' and lecturers' unions, like the NEU and UCU, that backed the strike. Nobody should be punished for exercising their right to protest.

# Some of the other places you protested and walked out


Liverpool



Coventry



Cardiff



Oxford

**Read more from the Socialist Students live feed**

- Includes: Carlisle, Lancaster, Wolverhampton, University of South Wales, Staffs, Worcester, Surrey, Preston, Southampton, Nottingham, Nuneaton, Tower Hamlets, and more!

Go to socialiststudents.org.uk


Germany

# Austria – 3,000 demonstrate in Vienna

The international day of youth protest against rearmament and war also took place in Austria, with a demonstration in Vienna of 3,000 people. At another morning demonstration of 400, school students participated in a school strike. Demos also took place in other parts of Austria, including Linz and Graz.

There were young and old people, and people from different Austrian states. They approached the protests from different starting points, whether the climate catastrophe, cuts to social services or the situation in Palestine. But virtually everyone recognised that this was about our future, not their wars. Among the slogans was "Youth, Future, Socialism".

The media used the morning mobilisation to portray the demonstrators as violent. After sections of the demonstration peacefully blockaded the entrance to the university and then staged a sit-in, the police responded with massive repression and pepper spray, as can be seen in videos. When the demonstration moved to Parliament, the police ordered it to disperse and kettled the remaining demonstrators. Even protesters who were on the fringes of the demonstration and/or were already leaving were caught in the kettle.

Sozialistische Offensive (Socialist Offensive) participated and helped mobilise for them. What was particularly striking at both demonstrations was the interest in socialist ideas. Our newspaper attracted considerable interest, and young people were especially interested in its international perspective.

In discussions with young people, we emphasised the need to get organised. We also pointed out that it was strikes and general strikes in different countries that have exerted, and continue to exert, economic pressure. The larger the mobilisations and the stronger the involvement of trade unions, the harder it becomes for the media to vilify the movement, the more difficult it is to divide and isolate it, and the safer the demonstrations become.

Today has demonstrated that it is not enough to take to the streets on just one day of the year, or even on several days. It is also necessary to come together in an organisation committed to changing the world — towards a socialist world that puts an end to the misery of capitalism and gives young people a genuine future.

And that is precisely what we are fighting for.

## France

In France, N20 took place when the youth movement has been ongoing for almost 2 months. The rhythm of events was such that N20 fell between big strike days on 17 November and 5 December. Nevertheless, we held a lively demonstration of roughly 1,000 people in Paris.

Gauche Révolutionnaire distributed leaflets calling on students to continue building the movement and link together with the workers to fight Macron's dirty capitalist policies, and our material was well received.

## Germany

An estimated 90,000 participated in youth walkouts in Germany; days before over 100,000 had participated in youth protests under the banner 'Gen Z has got this'.

Committee for a Workers' International
FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD
socialistworld.net
CWI CIT

# TECH STOCKS TURMOIL - TREMORS OF COMING ECONOMIC EARTHQUAKE

**PHILIP STOTT**
SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Trillions of dollars were wiped from the value of tech stocks in the US and across the world in late October and early November. The Nasdaq - the US tech-dominated stock exchange - fell by around $1 trillion on 29-30 October. It ended the month with its worst performance since March 2025.

And worse was to come. On 5 November, the sell-off in US stocks meant the so-called 'Magnificent Seven' - Amazon, Apple, Alphabet, Oracle, Nvidia, Meta and Tesla - shed a trillion dollars in value in a single trading day, amid an overall $2.5 trillion write-down.

While there has been a certain stabilisation since, some analysts saw it as the first tremors of a coming economic earthquake. Indeed, increased volatility in stock values - market highs followed by huge losses and then a rapid recovery - is a traditional indication of a coming crash.

There is increasing fear over the huge amounts being invested in AI hardware, from data centres to advanced semiconductors. The capital being invested bears no relation to the likely profits to be garnered from it.

As Martin Wolf, the chief economic commentator of the Financial Times (FT), wrote in July 2026: "Over-investment, destructive competition, waves of bankruptcies and then painful consolidation are standard features of such episodes, from the railway booms of the 19th century to the internet boom of the 1990s. This is the classic capitalist story of booms and busts."

Socialist Party Scotland has been warning about the inevitability of a major shock to the world economy when, and not if, a major disruptive event takes place. And it is the massively overvalued AI sector that is one of the most likely triggers for a new world economic crisis.

The proximate factor for the tech sell-off in early November was the outcome of the midterm elections in the US, where opposition to the build-out of data centres was a major factor in the defeat of Trump's Republicans.

In short, it is the growing fear that the huge investments in AI technology infrastructure can never achieve a profitable return that is driving the increasing volatility in the markets.

When that sentiment becomes widespread, the valuation of big tech companies will fall, and the cost of the debt being increasingly mobilised for their capital investments will rise, which will have a devastating impact on the world economy. There are signs that both are beginning to happen.

## Speculative investments

A recent paper, 'Financing the AI Buildout,' by Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh from the Columbia Business School, predicted that spending on AI investments is the biggest sector-specific investment boom in US history.

Averaging an estimated 3.6% of GDP from 2025 to 2032, it would be larger than the 2.2% of GDP spent on railways between 1870 and 1890. That investment boom provoked the 1873 crisis, when the New York Stock Exchange closed for ten days, scores of railroad companies went bankrupt and thousands of businesses failed, triggering a severe economic depression that lasted through the late 1870s.

The orgy of capital investment in AI infrastructure is unprecedented. As Van Nieuwerburgh points out, in the initial period, from 2020, investment was overwhelmingly drawn from the capital of the tech companies themselves.

Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and Oracle had "a surplus of operating cash flow over capital spending at $155 billion". By 2026, according to the companies' forecasts, capital spending will exceed cash flow by $93 billion, and the ratio of spending to cash flow will hit 113%.

However, this is not the end of the matter. According to the analysis:

"Publicly rated debt represents only a relatively small share of the data centre financing; much larger volumes are provided through syndicated bank loans and private-credit facilities, for which little information is publicly available."

Indeed, the Wall Street Journal has reported that the nine top tech companies have over "$3 trillion of off-balance-sheet commitments, mostly related to AI". That's around 300% above what the companies owe under their outstanding leases and long-term borrowings.

The rash of hyperscale data centre applications in Scotland, for example, are most often not in the names of the big tech companies. Instead, they are proposed to be built by entities using private equity or venture capital, most likely to be leased or rented to the hyperscalers for use once constructed.

As Van Nieuwerburgh points out:

"The central issue is not simply that AI infrastructure is exposed to technological and operating risks, but that the sector's financing structure can transmit and amplify those risks."

In effect, huge bets are being laid based on assumptions about what the demand for AI - and the availability of AI hardware - will be in the coming years.

Against the backdrop of this speculative bubble, AI corporate bankruptcies are therefore a certainty. Moreover, and even more serious for capitalist interests, is the impact on the stock market, where major falls would wipe out billions of dollars off US household investments.

A former chief economist of the IMF, Gita Gopinath, has calculated that a fall in stock markets equivalent to that of the dotcom bubble in 2000 would remove $20 trillion in American household wealth and another $15 trillion from wealth internationally.

Private equity markets that have invested heavily in AI would also be hit, as would the bond markets. As it is, big AI companies are increasingly issuing bonds (corporate debt) to fund their investments. Yet that is becoming more expensive, with the hyperscalers paying notably more than just a few months ago.

The FT reported that: "The cost to insure Alphabet's dollar debt against a default in the next five years has risen to just under 1% of principal, about the same as for Mexico, a government rated at the lowest levels of investment grade. Mark Zuckerberg has great hopes for Muse, Meta's new personal AI agent. But in case he is wrong, investors are now pricing credit default swaps... at 1.2%, in line with junk-rated South Africa."

US AI company Anthropic has released shares to the public in order to raise $150 billion, making the company's market value equivalent to $1.5 trillion - a staggering valuation for a company that makes no profit yet.

As Anthropic put it in the prospectus to potential shareholders: "Our historical growth rates are not indicative of future performance or our ability to sustain or forecast future revenue growth. We do not expect our revenue will continue to grow at comparable rates, and we cannot assure you that it will continue to grow at all."

In other words, prepare to lose your money!

**"The only way out of stagnation and economic crisis is through bringing into public ownership the major sections of the economy and the banking system, under the democratic control and management of the working class**



PHOTO: RAFAEL MATSUNAGA/CC

**"While it is true that AI technology is being rapidly rolled, there are real limits and huge obstacles as to how far it can go**

## Opposition to data centres

While it is true that AI technology is being rapidly rolled out in parts of the economy, there are real limits and huge obstacles as to how far it can go.

There is already mass opposition to the building of data centres in many communities across the US. Trump's championing of the technology - "Whoever wins AI, wins" - while deriding those who oppose data centres as wanting to "remain backward and poor", has gone down like a lead balloon among big sections of the working and middle classes in the US.

NBC's 3 November exit poll found that more than half of voters said AI and data centres were "a major factor" in their vote for Congress. Approximately 76% of respondents said that they would oppose the construction of a data centre in their community.

There were also 41 ballots in ten states on 3 November. The majority were to restrict or stop the building of data centres. More than half were in one state alone - Ohio. They were overwhelmingly passed.

There are also major fears internationally about the impact of the use of AI under capitalism on jobs and the livelihoods of millions of workers.

Barclays' recent decision to shed 5,000 jobs, an increasing feature across the banking and telecommunications sectors, shows how AI is being used to cut corporate costs and boost profits.

Virgin Media's £22 billion debt pile has created one of the most troubled groups in the market. Its response was to threaten to sack one quarter of its workforce.

As we have consistently pointed out, AI, under the control of multinational capitalism, is a jobs killer. Moreover, its use is arousing mass anger among workers and young people amid fears over the environmental impact, growing income inequality and the billions of dollars tech trillionaires stand to make from AI.

The opposition to the way AI is being used by the capitalist elite is a limiting factor in how far such technology can be introduced into the economy.

In contrast, under a socialist planned economy, technological advances could be integrated into the economy to make work easier, for example, by cutting the working week, not to boost the profitability of multinational corporations.

Throwing tens of millions out of work internationally - which is the logic of AI under the profit system - would provoke mass struggles and threaten a revolutionary challenge to capitalism. This is another factor that limits how far the bosses can utilise these technologies.

## Stagnation

The impact on the world economy in the wake of a crisis in the AI sector would be significant. The IMF is already predicting a global slowdown, despite the boost in US growth from AI investments.

As they reported recently: "Technology-related investment, while an important boon against the energy shock, is concentrating risks - making the global expansion heavily reliant on a small number of firms, sectors, and economies."

In the wake of a crisis in AI, they go on to say: "Global growth in 2027 would be materially lower than in the baseline projections, with inflation significantly higher."

Whereas world real GDP growth (minus inflationary impacts) averaged an annual 4.4% before the Great Recession, in the 2010s it managed only 3%. Since 2020, annual average growth has slowed to 2.7%.

Meanwhile, inflation in the world economy has increased markedly this year. This factor is playing a key role in the mass protests sweeping Europe.

Our assessment that the world economy is in a period of organic stagflation remains accurate.

Unprecedented debt levels - for example, US public debt was 60% of GDP prior to the Great Recession and now stands at a record-breaking 127% - also have a depressive impact on growth rates.

Higher interest rates, a tool used by governments to tackle the post-Covid inflationary spiral, and which are rising globally as a consequence of the shock of the Iran war and rising inflation, mean government debt is more expensive to pay back.

The impact on corporate debt, and on those companies seeking to borrow for investments, is also growing significantly.

It is those fears that are driving capitalist 'theoreticians' into a frenzy of contemplation, seeking a road out of the situation that their system is in.

Recent books include 'The Crisis of Democratic Capitalism' by Martin Wolf, in which he describes capitalism as the "least bad" economic system available but in urgent need of reform.

'What Went Wrong with Capitalism' by Ruchir Sharma is another, in which he proposes a better balance between state support and free markets.

Driving these existential contemplations is the spectre of the mass opposition to their system that is growing internationally.

As we have seen in Europe recently, mass youth and workers' actions are an inspiring response to the failures of capitalism to provide a sustainable future.

The urgent task is the building of mass political organisations of the working class with a socialist programme to help those struggles develop a route through which to challenge the capitalist system itself.

The only way out of stagnation and economic crisis is through bringing into public ownership the major sections of the economy and the banking system, under the democratic control and management of the working class.

To end the rule of the billionaires and the system that they defend. And to build a democratic socialist world that would end crisis capitalism once and for all.

**SOCIALISM TODAY**
**Monthly magazine of the Socialist Party**
*November issue includes...*
- Europe rises up
- Burnham and the unions
- Is the UK on the road to break up?

**socialismtoday.org/subscribe / 020 8988 8777**
- Paper subscription £3.50 a month, e-subscription £3.30




**Committee for a Workers' International**
**FIGHTING FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD**
CWI CIT
**socialistworld.net**

# BAE redundancies: Unions must fight for a socialist strategy

**ROB WILLIAMS**
SOCIALIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FORMER UNITE CONVENOR

Unions have been reacting to news of more than 1,000 jobs being cut at defence and aerospace company BAE Systems.

Senior management claim that the redundancies will be voluntary and will be outside of manufacturing, instead concentrated in its London head office and its air business.

However, union leaders such as Unite general secretary Sharon Graham are raising longstanding concerns about jobs in the manufacturing section of the company if the government doesn't award defence contacts to it, such as the replacement for Typhoon fighter jets, which are assembled in the BAE plant in Samlesbury in Lancashire.

This situation raises a multitude of issues for the trade union movement to contend with, as Burnham's Labour government looks to ramp up defence spending at a time when the wider economy is weakening amid the continuing de-industrialisation of the British economy.

Faced by this, defence workers rightly demand that their unions commit to defending their jobs and communities.

The Socialist Party supported Sharon Graham for Unite general secretary, and our members stood on the 'Workers Unite – Back to the Workplace' slate. Many militant reps saw this as essential to maintain Unite's industrial militancy. But we did so with our own industrial and political programme.

## Militant action and political strategy

It is essential, as with all other sectors of industry, that the unions couple militant action with a political strategy to combat closures and mass redundancies.

And with regard to jobs in the defence industries, it is particularly important that unions fight for every job, but at the same time adopt an independent class position, giving absolutely no trust and confidence to the pro-big business and imperialist foreign policy of the Labour government.

If we can't trust them at home to stand up for workers against the employers, how can we have any confidence in their foreign policy, which is governed by the same class interests? This has been shown by successive Tory and Labour governments, including with regard to Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, and acting as back-up to Trump and Netanyahu's attack on Iran.

In fact, leading Unite reps in the defence industry put forward a strategy to begin building opposition to the war on Gaza. Key demands, such as union defence of members who refused to work on goods that could reach Israel, were carried in the Executive Council statement at 2025 Unite policy conference.

And defence workers have already shown recently that they are prepared to take strike action to defend their living standards. Last year, workers at Leonardo won a bigger pay rise across five sites by taking determined strike action. Through that experience, the workers have shown that they can be open to the broader issues of their industry.


BAE on the Clyde STEVEN BROWN/CC

## Workers' transition

Therefore, there is no contradiction in the unions defending every job and pay, pensions, terms and conditions, while emblazoning on their banners that they stand for a 'Just Workers' Transition' to socially useful production.

It is apt that just as these job losses are announced, there was an event in Manchester to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Lucas Plan (see box). This was the publication by leading union reps in the Lucas defence manufacturer, in six volumes, of a programme of over 150 ideas for socially useful products, all with detailed technical plans for production. Lucas Aerospace had 17 factories in the UK at that time, with 18,000 workers.

The trigger for the plan was the prospect of a fifth of the jobs being lost. Left-winger Tony Benn was the industry minister in the Labour government elected in 1974. When the Lucas shop stewards appealed to the government to intervene, particularly with nationalisation, Benn suggested that they put a plan together.

Despite this being a period when Labour is looking to increase defence spending, the Lucas Plan still has major relevance for workers and union reps, particularly as the Plan puts forward the independent class interests of the workforce.

And as the decision over the Typhoons shows, in this as with all sectors of the UK economy, manufacturing is still an endangered species in British capitalism. The plight of industrial workers and their communities, as with all workers, is at the very bottom of the concerns of the bosses and their political representatives, including Burnham's Labour.

## Socialist nationalisation

Nationalising these industries and taking them into socialist public ownership, as the basis to draw up a socialist plan of production in the interests of the workers in the respective industries and the wider working class in general, is the prerequisite for defending jobs, skills and communities in a sustainable environment.

This should be a key element in the programme for the unions, but it's clear that Labour under Andy Burnham, as was the case under Keir Starmer, is tied hand and foot to the defence manufacturers and the class interests of the British capitalist establishment.

In this period of war, climate change and capitalist economic crisis, the building of a new workers' party with a socialist programme is a fundamental task facing the union movement.

Unite is committed to open up a debate about its relationship with Labour by virtue of passing an emergency motion at last year's Unite Policy Conference, that was drafted by Socialist Party members and our close allies in the union. The issue of the BAE jobs, and the debate on defence spending and the fight for jobs, all make this debate more necessary.

> **Unions should fight for every job, but at the same time adopt an independent class position giving absolutely no trust and confidence to the pro-big business and imperialist foreign policy of the Labour government**

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

## 50 years since the Lucas Plan: A workers' alternative for social production

**DAVE NELLIST**
COVENTRY TUC

Over 200 people, including three original members of the Lucas Combine Committee, gathered in Manchester on Saturday 21 November to mark the 50th anniversary of the Lucas Plan, a pioneering workers' alternative for social production.

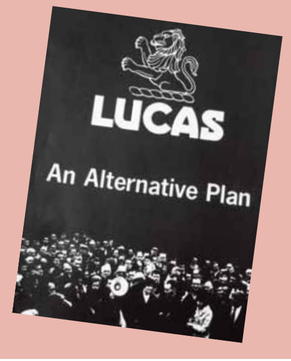
In 1974, Lucas Aerospace announced job cuts. The Combine Committee, representing shop stewards from 17 factories, consulted workers on products they could make instead of facing redundancies and closures. They sought control over their work and production, challenging management's 'right to manage'.

Workers developed 150 proposals, documented in nearly 1,200 pages of blueprints, costings and market analyses. Ideas ahead of their time included portable kidney dialysis machines, gas-engine heat pumps, wind turbines, solar panels, hybrid petrol-electric power packs, and early precursors to modern robotics and drones.

Several prototypes - including a road-rail bus, a hybrid power pack, and a heat pump - were built and tested at North East London Polytechnic and at what is now Coventry University.

Management refused to give support. The struggle showed a hard lesson for working people: real decision-making power remains tied to ownership. Without democratic public ownership, workers were unable to compel management to adopt their plan or stop the cuts. As Brian Salisbury, Combine Committee chair (1979–1982), said at the conference: "An opportunity was lost to bring about a shifting of power to working-class people."

Alongside opening and closing plenaries, ten workshops explored socially useful alternatives for food production, housing, education and defence. At the close, BFAWU bakers' union general secretary Sarah Woolley said: "The best way to honour the work of those pioneers 50 years ago is to develop a programme that shows how the knowledge and labour of working people could be used to meet the needs, not of profit, but of society".






# Local government unions must mount serious fight now on pay

**ANGIE WALLER**
KIRKLEES UNISON, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Unison, GMB and Unite trade unions have submitted a joint pay claim on behalf of 1.4 million council and school staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, calling for a substantial two-year rise to meet climbing household bills.

The 2027-29 claim seeks an increase of 8% or £3,000, whichever is greater, in the first year, with a minimum hourly rate of £15. In the second year, the unions want at least 3.6% above RPI inflation or £3,000, whichever is greater.

They are also asking for an extra day of annual leave and a two-hour cut in the working week with no loss of pay.

Last year's pay award of 3.3% has already been outstripped by inflation, with RPI at 3.9% in the year to September 2026. Add to this the projected rise in household energy bills by more than £400 a year in January, then workers are going to be worse off. 8% is too low and doesn't address years of below-inflation pay rises.

Once more, it is unlikely that the employers will agree to this modest claim and therefore Unison has to start a serious campaign among the members now for action to win it, and not leave it to a potential ballot in the spring or summer. Unison general secretary Andrea Egan said: "Council and school staff keep this country running. We're the librarians, social workers, cleaners and bin collectors every community relies on, and the school support staff who are there for our kids and grandkids every day.

"It's shameful so many are struggling to make ends meet. I've seen it myself, with members in full-time jobs asking their own union for food vouchers. Staff working flat-out to support others and then not having enough money to put the heating on.'

If our union leaders commit to this fight this year, just as with civil service union PCS, University and College Union in further education, and probation workers in NAPO, where already 200,000 workers are involved in ballots, we could see hundreds of thousands more taking coordinated strike action together.

On top of this, the TUC (Trades Union Congress) should also commit to its pledge, agreed at Congress in September, of calling a demo against austerity, to help harness the mood of workers. That would help regain members' confidence to win all our full pay claim, fight to meet our funding needs and end poverty for many.



ESSEX SOCIALIST PARTY

## School staff in NEU want to be part of the fight

Tens of thousands of school support staff are members of the National Education Union (NEU), with many joining as a result of having seen the union stand up for its members in recent years and call them out on strike for better pay and conditions.

Just like support staff organised in other unions, we need pay rises and are willing and ready to fight for them. NEU support staff returned a big vote in favour of taking action in an indicative ballot earlier this year, but our union's leadership has paused support staff recruitment and decided not to ballot support staff for national action following complaints from other support staff unions. This decision was opposed by Socialist Party members on the NEU National Executive.

What members want and expect is for the unions representing us to work together to maximise the effectiveness of action. We want to be part of the fight!

**JOE WATERS**
SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER OF THE NEU

# Labour only wants to give us 2.4% - Prepare for strike action for NHS pay

**ADRIAN O'MALLEY**
UNISON HEALTH SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE MEMBER, PERSONAL CAPACITY

Unison's Health Service Group Executive (SGE) met on 3 November, expecting to discuss a pay offer from the pay review body (PRB).

Workers in the NHS – nurses, porters, domestics, health care assistants and many more jobs - do not have pay negotiations with the employer. As with teachers and doctors, a pay award is imposed by a supposedly independent body, following recommendations from the government.

But there is currently no pay offer for 2027-28. The PRB is still sitting.

The unions haven't put a joint claim in to the PRB. They are calling for direct negotiations with the government.

Andy Burnham's Labour government isn't responding at the moment. But they have told the PRB that they can only afford 2.4%!

We are waiting for an emergency SGE to be called. All the NHS unions should approach the 2.4% in the same way we would if direct negotiations were taking place: lodge a dispute, put in an agreed above-inflation pay claim, and prepare for strike action in April.

Other public sector unions are gearing up for action on pay and funding – we should be too.



NCA UNISON

## Glasgow Unison members reject pay and grading scheme

**SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND**

The 70% vote by Unison members to reject the Glasgow City Council pay and grading scheme is significant and welcome.

It was, to a great extent, a vote of solidarity with those who are either being threatened with pay cuts – around 1 in 10 of the workforce – or the 20% who have no idea what their pay and grading will be. The vote reflects the culture that has been built in the branch over many years: no one gets left behind.

The size of the rejection is also a verdict on the SNP-led authority who threatened to fire and rehire 20,000 workers in an attempt to intimidate its own employees into accepting the scheme. Their actions have backfired spectacularly.

● **See full article at socialistpartyscotland.org**

Committee for a Workers' International
socialistworld.net

## Unite strikers at Forest School say: 'We can show the school how wrong they are'



WALTHAM FOREST SOCIALIST PARTY

Caterers and cleaners at prestigious independent Forest School in Waltham Forest, east London, are continuing their fight against drastic pay cuts. Strike action by Unite the Union members begins again from 30 November to 13 December.

Workers say they have no choice but to continue to strike, as employer Compass and the school management "continue to act as if they have done nothing wrong. With the continued support of colleagues, many parents, teachers, students, Unite and the Socialist Party, we can show them how wrong they actually are."

When they see the workers in school on non-strike days, teachers wish them good luck. The strikers are frequently told by students that what the school is doing is not fair. But management are digging in, even looking for excuses to victimise union members.

## North West NHS theatre staff refuse to pay for NHS cuts through their wages

**MANCHESTER SOCIALIST PARTY**

Theatre staff at the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) Trust in Greater Manchester are continuing strike action on 23, 24 and 25 November, marching to the Integrated Care Board's (ICB) offices in the city centre and demanding it intervenes to ensure the Trust has the resources to pay its staff in line with national terms and conditions.

Staff reported to us that once again the Trust has failed to restart negotiations following the ballot on the employer's first offer. That offer was rejected on a 82% turnout and a 99.4% reject vote! The Trust still proposed to pay overtime via a private agency and not via the workers' wages.

The ICB meeting wouldn't answer questions from the public and did not discuss the issue, despite it originally being on the agenda. NCA workers who attended walked out in disgust.

On Monday, the empty negotiation chair was returned to the picket line. Strikers reported that Unison has repeatedly requested negotiations to be reopened.

They are very aware of what their dispute means, not just for them but for all NHS workers. If one Trust attempts to trash agreed terms and conditions to deliver the cuts demanded from the government and applied by the ICBs, then it is a threat to all NHS workers.

The defence of NHS terms and conditions is a national one, for all trade unions in the NHS. These attacks on wages must be stopped now, together with action to significantly improve the pathetic proposed 2.4% pay rise. A start to this national fightback would be for the TUC to call the national demonstration delegates agreed at this September's TUC conference.

# Workers decide how to organise, not the employer

**DARA FITZGERALD**
WEST LONDON SOCIALIST PARTY AND UNITE DIGITAL AND TECH BRANCH MEMBER

Long-needed regulations have come into effect on 30 October which give new rights to unions to be allowed access to workplaces and communicate with employees. Further regulations coming in February 2027 will require employers to notify their staff in writing of their right to join a union. These are welcome measures which could be used to increase levels of trade union organisation.

Unsurprisingly however, bosses have been trying to get ahead of these measures. Google and Prospect have recently announced that they have come to an agreement regarding employee access. This is despite the unions Unite and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) requesting access months ago and forming a joint campaign for recognition over two years ago. Google DeepMind are separate from this, having voted overwhelmingly months ago to allow recognition for CWU and Unite.

This is par for the course for most companies, especially the tech giants who, if they can't slow or stop regulation or laws from being implemented, will attempt to reduce risk by agreeing deals with unions who they perceive to have a more 'collaborative' model, rather than those with a record of industrial militancy. A report to Novara Media from a UTAW and Google rep states that Google UK hired an ex-Prospect national officer who brokered the agreement. Prospect has already agreed a deal with Meta a couple of months ago.

Is it clearly welcome that tech workers are finding easier access to unions and being given the support to struggle around their pay, conditions and rights, but it's not down to the bosses to decide on what union they get to join, or if they decide to form a union themselves. It's down to those workers themselves to decide and, if necessary, fight industrially for their union to be recognised.



HUGO PIERRE

## We did it! Socialism 2026 appeal raises £54,253

Thanks to the enthusiasm and determination of Socialist Party members and supporters, the target to raise £50,000 has been reached!

This will go a long way to help fund the fantastic campaigning the Socialist Party has been doing to build for the N20 youth strike, and beyond. Special thanks to those who donated or increased their pledges to help us get over the £50,000 line in the week since the Socialism rally.

So far, £36,706 of pledges have been paid in. Pledges can be redeemed by 31 December.






Enfield primary schools on strike BEA GARDNER

# Tories backed by Greens in closing Enfield schools

**JOHN DOLAN**
ENFIELD AND LEA VALLEY SOCIALIST PARTY, AND ENFIELD TRADES UNION COUNCIL SECRETARY

80 NEU members, teachers, parents, and children protested outside a committee meeting of Enfield Council. Enfield Tory-led administration is launching a consultation to close three schools: Suffolks, Starks Field and Bishop Stopfords.

Labour lost control of Enfield Council in May. No party has overall control. But due to no opposition from the first five Green councillors elected in Enfield, the Tories, as the largest party, now comprise the cabinet and lead the council.

Enfield, an outer London borough, is experiencing the effects that inner London boroughs have been experiencing for years. Due to the high cost of living, and lack of affordable, available family-sized housing, the number of families with children is falling.

In 2016, in Enfield there were 5,000 school starters. In 2026, 3,500.

Enfield Tory cabinet announced the consultation on their website, before informing the three schools, blaming financial debts and projected falling student numbers.

Some councillors say the council's report "contained serious flaws and inaccuracies". Even the council's education director acknowledged some information was out of date.

The schools have emphasised the high demand for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions that they provide. Suffolks Primary School has two specialist autism units, alongside mainstream classes. When have Tories ever put people's needs over money?

The schools demanded that the committee halt the planned consultation, and that the issue be debated at a full council meeting. As the Tories are in a minority on the council, they could be outvoted by Labour and Green councillors combined.

The committee is comprised of four Tories, four Labour, and one Green. The Green councillor, Sarah Jons, is the Green leader on Enfield Council. She is also the committee chair.

Astonishingly, Sarah Jons opposed the request to refer the debate to full council, voting with Tory councillors to send the matter back to the Tory cabinet.

Sarah Jons didn't have to wait long to find out the Tory decision. The cabinet met the following evening, voting to proceed with launching the closures consultation. The Green Party in Enfield should rightly be condemned for siding with Tory attacks.

Rather than automatically looking at school closures when enrolment numbers decline, opportunities to cut class sizes and teacher workloads, while increasing the quality of educational provision, should be looked at.

If resources are needed, but are unavailable for local authorities, demand the money back that has been stolen during the austerity years by Westminster governments.

Greens aren't demanding this in Enfield. And Labour is no better.

Labour ran Enfield Council for 16 years, passing on Tory central government cuts, including closing half the borough's libraries.

Judging by the protest at Enfield Council, teachers, parents, and students won't give up the fight to save their much-needed schools.

> **Enrolment numbers declining should be seen as an opportunity to cut class sizes and teacher workloads, increasing the quality of educational provision**

## Eye on the Greens

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

- **editors@socialistparty.org.uk**



# COP31 ends with nothing to show for it

## We need socialist change

**JOE FATHALLAH**
CARDIFF EAST SOCIALIST PARTY

According to the 2026 State of the Climate Update published by the World Meteorological Organisation, the twelve warmest years on record have been the last twelve. And the warmest four, the last four. Sea levels are the highest ever recorded. Against this disturbing backdrop, the 2026 UN Climate Change Conference, or COP31, met in Antalya, Turkey, 9-22 November. Over 100 fossil fuel companies and associated groups sent their own delegations to Turkey - determined to protect the profits of their industry.

At the opening of COP31, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declared the objective was to 'organise, finance and deliver' a move away from fossil fuels. And yet the outcome text contained no reference at all to this and the summit ended with no deal, despite the longest talks in its history.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump, Xi Xinping and Vladimir Putin, all absent from the COP31 event, met thousands of miles away in Shenzhen, China. The leaders of the world's three biggest powers - and major polluting nations - agreed to a joint statement which, among other things, committed to an increase in oil production! In other words, the COP paper commitment to avoiding a critical 1.5oC increase in global temperatures is abstract and meaningless.

### Burnham hypocrisy

Andy Burnham spoke at COP31 on 12 November, largely boasting about keeping to existing climate commitments. The problem is that these commitments are things like the 2050 net zero emissions target - far too late to make a difference. And Burnham's speech was conspicuous for what it omitted. The Rosebank oil and gas field in the North Sea is currently having its licence reviewed by the UK government, with a decision expected by the end of the year. There has been no commitment by Burnham to transition this production to renewable energy, utilising existing skilled workers and technology.

The rapid development of AI technologies in the last few years has created a new requirement for large data centres, which consume huge amounts of electricity and generate significant heat. This can only accelerate the warming of the planet. And yet, right when we most need decisive action, the major capitalist leaders are apparently giving up on their system ever being able to get a handle on the problem.

In one sense, they're right. Getting climate change under control, and mitigating its worst effects, would require international planning and cooperation. Capitalism, a system driven by short-term profit and administered by governments in the pockets of large fossil fuel companies, has long shown that it is incapable of this. Now more than ever, we need democratic socialist planning on a world scale to implement the transition to renewable energy, invest in massive research and development of new technologies, and deploy flood defences to vulnerable coastal areas. The clock is ticking on our planet, and the struggle to put an end to the profit system ever more urgent.



SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND



MARY FINCH

# Milburn Review on youth unemployment

## 'Same old deal: we pay, they profit'

"Alan Milburn's plan would cut the benefits of young people who are ill or disabled, while handing tax cuts and £3,000 hiring payments to big business and holding down young workers' pay. The biggest companies make billions in profit, yet they would be paid to take young people on, while young people are threatened with losing their benefits if they say no. That is not a new deal for our generation. It is the same old deal: we pay, they profit.

"They tell us there is no money for young people, while they plan to spend close to £80 billion a year on the military by 2029. There is no shortage of money. The richest 50 families hold more wealth than half the population. Take that wealth and use it to build council homes, renewable energy and decent public services, and we could create millions of jobs on trade union rates of pay. That is what we are walking out for on Friday 20 November: a fight for our future, not their wars," Socialist Students national chair Adam Powell-Davies said.

The walkouts came three days after the government published Alan Milburn's review of young people and work, which would make young people pay for a crisis they did not cause.

Milburn's final report, From a Welfare State to a Working State, was published by the Department for Work and Pensions on 17 November. It proposes replacing young people's sickness and disability benefits with a single youth allowance that pays considerably less than some young people can claim now, and ending Personal Independence Payment for 18-to-24 year olds, with a narrower allowance only for those whose conditions are "well established, significant and ongoing". Young people who do not take up what they are offered could lose benefits. The report relies on £3.6 billion a year of savings from welfare reform by 2036-37 to pay for its plans.

At the same time, Milburn calls for tax cuts for business. He proposes lowering employers' National Insurance on workers aged 21 to 24, starting in retail and hospitality, a £3,000 payment to employers for each young person they take on after six months out of work or education, and work placements of up to 12 weeks. He also urges ministers to slow the rise in the youth rates of the minimum wage and to apply a "cautionary principle" to abolishing exploitative zero-hour contracts.

Socialist Students points out that there is no shortage of money in Britain. According to the Equality Trust, Britain's 157 billionaires now hold just under £670 billion. Yet the government is planning to raise military spending to close to £80 billion a year by 2029. Socialist Students is calling to take the wealth off the super-rich to fund a mass programme of public works: building council homes, renewable energy and public services, and creating millions of jobs on trade union rates of pay.

- Extract from Socialist Students press release, 18 November

## Timms Review

As the Socialist goes to press, the government released its Timms Review into existing working-age disability benefits, a week after its Milburn Review suggested restricting disability benefits for under-25s.

Reacting to the publication, Ben Golightly, from DPAC Cymru, explained how participants in the Wales consultation unanimously voted to reject cuts to young people's benefits, insisting this was included in the report. "Its omission is a scandal."

The government has said it will consider the recommendations of both reports together, and remains under significant pressure from the capitalist class to cut spending on benefits.

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!**

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

*to find out more today!*



**Help fund the fightback!**

## DONATE TODAY

**socialistparty.org.uk/donate**

# Israel-Palestine: Stop the political arrests and the Shin Bet's campaign of intimidation

**SOCIALIST STRUGGLE MOVEMENT (ISRAEL-PALESTINE)**

Mahdi Tounsi, a sociology and criminology student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has been held by the police and the Shin Bet since 8 November, while his family, friends and lawyers have been kept entirely in the dark regarding the suspicions, evidence or allegations against him, and even his whereabouts. He was severely beaten by the police.

Mahdi, 26, grew up in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem amid house demolitions and the economic strangulation imposed on local Palestinian residents by the government and state authorities, in cooperation with settler organisations. These measures, as part of a broader policy of occupation and dispossession, have intensified over recent years against the backdrop of the war crisis. Mahdi has worked alongside various left-wing organisations on campaigns concerning the situation in the neighbourhood.

According to a report by *Haaretz* journalist Nir Hasson, the arrest took place in the Hebrew University's student halls of residence, in coordination with the university administration. Only after contacting the police did Mahdi's friends discover he had been detained by the Shin Bet and was being held under administrative detention. As the report states: "When the police realised they did not have sufficient evidence, they abandoned the criminal procedure and turned to an administrative one."

## Violation of democratic rights

Hearings on the issuance of an administrative detention order are conducted behind closed doors, without media access and without presenting suspicions, evidence or charges to the detainee, his family members or his legal representatives. This constitutes a blatant violation of every basic democratic right to a fair trial. Thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank and East Jerusalem are currently held in administrative detention without trial.

This is taking place as further details emerge concerning a web of falsehoods emanating from the Likud party and the Prime Minister's Office, which led to politically motivated false arrests of activists and journalists by the police and the Shin Bet within the Green Line on and after election day. These arrests form part of the campaign of intimidation being waged by Netanyahu and the Shin Bet against the Arab-Palestinian public, as well as the broader campaign to delegitimise the election results.

The Shin Bet is now seeking to hold Mahdi in administrative detention - without him having been tried or even suspected of any criminal offence - for a period of six months.

SSM's Jerusalem branch calls for action to secure Mahdi Tounsi's immediate release and demands an end to false arrests, administrative detention and political persecution.

A petition is being advanced (at-zuma.co.il/sign/15BHYS-1) calling on the administration of the Hebrew University to act publicly and immediately to secure Mahdi's release, or alternatively to allow him to stand trial so that he may defend himself against any allegations.

We call on supporters to help publicise Mahdi's detention both locally and internationally, including drawing attention to the role of the Hebrew University administration, and to prepare further protest actions as necessary.

Stop the criminalisation of the struggle against national oppression, the occupation, the settlements, house demolitions and the expulsion of families from their homes.

**Send protest letters to:**

- President of the Hebrew University, Prof. Tamir Shefer – tamir.sheafer@mail.huji.ac.il
- Rector, Prof. Oron Shagrir – orons@savion.huji.ac.il
- Dean of Students, Prof. Zohar Kampf – Zohar.kampf@mail.huji.ac.il
- Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Raanan Sulitzeanu-Kenan – raanan.s-k@mail.huji.ac.il
- Dean of the Faculty of Law, Prof. Benny Porat – benny.porat@mail.huji.ac.il
- Copy messages to: yasha.marmer@gmail.com (Socialist Struggle Movement, Israel-Palestine)



SOCIALIST STRUGGLE MOVEMENT



# Obituary
# Ronnie Stevenson - A dedicated socialist and a life well lived

**SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND**

The death of Ronnie Stevenson, aged 81, is a huge loss to so many – first and foremost among them are his family to whom we send our love and condolences. For his comrades in Socialist Party Scotland, we remember a dedicated trade union and socialist fighter who left an indelible mark on the working-class movement in Scotland and beyond.

Ronnie's contribution to the development of Militant – the Marxist tendency in the Labour and trade union movement – and its successor organisation, Socialist Party Scotland, was immense. For more than 50 years, Ronnie Stevenson was an ever-present participant in the struggle to rid the world of the horrors of capitalism and the horrific brutality it brings in its wake.

## Trade unionism and Militant

In 1974, Ronnie began his career as a social worker. He was an active member of Nalgo, the local government trade union, and soon became a shop steward. In those days, Nalgo was seen as a staff association rather than a trade union, where managers were often the trade union reps. Ronnie went about changing that.

By the end of 1974, the Nalgo shop stewards committee was founded – with Ronnie the main driving force. That body played a vital role in not only transforming the union in the social work department. It was in 1975 that he met Clare, his future partner, who was also a shop steward.

Ronnie told the story about how he joined with Militant: "One of the shop stewards sold me a copy of the Militant newspaper and explained how he had come across Bolsheviks in the Labour Party, and you should be part of it." And he did, throwing himself into the work of helping to transform the work of Militant in the west of Scotland.

In 1976, Ronnie attended the second world congress of the Committee for a Workers' International in Germany – of which Militant was the British section – and was hugely inspired by the comrades that he met.

As the influence of Militant grew in the Labour Party and the trade unions in Glasgow, Ronnie twice stood to become a prospective parliamentary candidate for Labour – only narrowly losing out.

It was in 1983 that Ronnie started work as the west of Scotland industrial correspondent for the Militant newspaper. He threw himself into the work, and when the miners' strike began in March 1984, Ronnie spent a year in the coalfields, helping to build support and solidarity and working with those miners who were joining Militant .



SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

He played a critical role in developing the trade union work and the caucuses of Militant supporters in the various unions we were active in. Ronnie was, during this time, elected onto the national leadership body of Militant in Britain, which he served on for a decade.

## Poll tax battle

The poll tax battle was, for Militant, one of the greatest tests and, alongside the struggle of Liverpool City Council between 1983-87, one of our greatest victories. The mass non-payment strategy was put forward by Militant as the best tactic to defeat Thatcher's poll tax, which was being introduced in Scotland a year before England and Wales. Ronnie was the secretary of Mount Florida anti-poll tax union.

Both the Liverpool council struggle and the poll tax enraged the capitalist class and their agents inside the Labour Party. The witch-hunt was stepped up, and by the late 1980s/early 1990s hundreds of socialists had been expelled – including Ronnie Stevenson.

However, that did not mean Militant was defeated. On the contrary, our support continued to grow. Scottish Militant Labour, in which Ronnie played a leading role, was launched in late 1991. The run-up to the general election of 1992 saw Tommy Sheridan – a leader of the anti-poll tax campaign and SML member – jailed. Yet, SML won over 6,000 votes, coming second in the Pollok constituency, despite the candidate being in prison.

The council elections a few weeks later saw SML end up with four councillors – and Ronnie played a key role in helping to organise this new council group.

## Glasgow Unison

Ronnie finished his full-time political work in 1995 and returned to social work in Glasgow. Before long, he returned as a shop steward for the successor union of Nalgo – Unison – becoming the convener for social work in 2000 until he retired from work in 2013.

Over that time, he led various disputes and negotiations, including the three-week-long successful strike of 600 Glasgow fieldwork social care workers in 2007.

As Glasgow City Unison social work shop stewards convenor, he helped pioneer the influence of Marxism in the branch – and that influence continues today, in no small measure thanks to Ronnie.

Every Glasgow City Unison AGM, he would ensure a motion committing the branch to support socialism and the nationalisation of the banks and major industries was moved. It was always passed – and still is. It became known among union activists as the Ronnie motion.

## Marxism

Ronnie was nothing if not a Marxist to his core. When the debate opened up in SML in 1998 over the launching of the Scottish Socialist Party – with a proposal by a majority of the SML leadership to dissolve itself into the SSP – Ronnie and his brother Eric understood immediately what was at stake.

The very existence of the revolutionary party that Ronnie had himself dedicated his life to building was threatened. He did a great service to Marxism by taking the stand he did, thereby contributing to ensuring the ideas and programme of Militant and the CWI continued in Scotland.

Ronnie, like the comrades who went on to form Socialist Party Scotland, participated fully in the SSP, but sought to maintain a revolutionary Marxist core. Ronnie also continued to stand in elections, first for the SSP and then the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

## Family

Above all, Ronnie was a loving and caring human being. His family meant everything to him. He delighted in seeing the arrival of his grandchildren, who he doted on. Nobody gave a cuddle like Ronnie Stevenson.

Socialist Party Scotland and the Committee for a Workers' International salutes the contribution of our comrade.

Our loss is great, but it pales compared to that weighing on his family. Our condolences and love go to his partner, Clare; his daughters, Sara and Helen; his son, David and their partners; Ronnie's brothers, Eric and Alistair; as well as Ronnie's grandchildren and all family, comrades and friends of Ronnie Stevenson.

A dedicated fighter for the working class and for socialism is gone. But he has left us with an inspiring legacy – which we will use to carry on the struggle in his memory.

A celebration of the life of Ronnie Stevenson will take place on Thursday 26 November, 12 noon in the Linn Crematorium, Glasgow.

- **Read obituary in full online at socialistparty.org.uk**

SOCIALIST PARTY



£1/£2 solidarity price
socialistparty.org.uk
Socialist Party CWI CIT
the Socialist
Issue 1392 | 26 November - 2 December 2026 | formerly Militant

# STUDENTS GET ORGANISED!

## Come to Socialist Students conference

The 20 November International Youth Strike was a huge success. Thousands of students in Britain joined up to one million internationally protesting under the banner: 'Fight for our future, not their wars!'

But that was just the beginning. We are still forced to study in crumbling schools with overcrowded classes. Uni fees are still set to rise to over £10,000 a year next year, while thousands of courses are on the chopping block. The capitalist bosses and their politicians continue to fuel war and climate change, while whipping up racism and division to try to stop us from fighting back against their system.

The capitalist class is organised every day of the year, through things like their own political parties and media organisations. Our side - young people and the working class - has to do the same.

For students, that means building student unions where we meet with our classmates and take action over the issues that affect us. Individually we can be angry, but collectively we can make an impact. By coordinating with other students getting organised across Britain and internationally, our campaigning can have an even bigger impact.

Let's make the international youth strike the start of an international youth movement for a socialist society that meets the needs of all people and our planet, not the profits of a tiny few.




**Socialist Students conference 2026, Manchester, 5 December, 12noon – 5pm**

**Registration opens 9am**

**University Place, University of Manchester, 176 Oxford Road, M13 9PL**

Socialist Students is a democratic organisation of students fighting for a socialist transformation of society. We are active in universities, colleges and schools across the UK.

As a member of Socialist Students, you can join one of our 50+ existing student groups (societies) across the UK, or set up your own society in your school, college or university.

All societies have the right to send a representative to meetings of the national steering committee which meets regularly to plan national campaigns and events.

This year's Socialist Students conference takes place in Manchester on 5 December. It will discuss what next to build on N20, and national officers will be elected to serve until the next conference.

- **Register online: socialiststudents.org.uk/socialist-students-conference-2026-27**

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

9 771366 962103 ISSN 1366-9621