

Socialist Student

socialist
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ORGANISE TO END THEIR SYSTEM



HOW CAN WE FIGHT AGAINST



Adam Gillman
Socialist Students
national organiser

What future do young people have today?

As students, we face the soaring cost of living, terrible housing, and more and more debt – all on top of the stress of studying. The prospect of one day having a good job and a decent home that we can afford seems further away than ever.

Last year, the Labour government increased tuition fees for the first time in a decade, and our courses are still being cut. According to the University and College Union (UCU) university bosses have slashed 10,000 jobs this past year. University maintenance loans aren't enough to make ends meet, and many students have to work full-time jobs alongside studying.

At the same time, the world around us is getting more unstable and chaotic. It's been almost two years since the Israeli state unleashed its genocidal onslaught on the people of Gaza, with tens of thousands dying, and even children being starved to death. What's happening in Gaza isn't the only violent slaughter going on, as many wars and conflicts erupt around the world.

Polluting oil and gas companies rake in record profits while climate chaos accelerates. The action needed to stop the climate catastrophe is not happening; despite politicians' empty words, companies' profits are prioritised over a world in which we can live safely and securely.

Donald Trump, a symbol of this chaos, has been in power for just over nine months. In that time he has increased

deportations of migrants, encouraged oil companies to "drill, baby, drill," continued selling weapons to the Israeli state and said that Gaza should be turned into a "riviera" – a playground for the super-rich!

Trump defends the interests of the capitalist system in which a tiny few super-rich individuals own and control production – the factories, resources, patents and wealth – with the incentive to make as much profit for themselves as possible. It is plain to see that capitalism is a system in crisis. Trump is a symptom and accelerator of that crisis.

This Labour government, which also represents the interests of the bosses not the majority of us, has attacked working-class and young people since taking office last year. It has attacked disability benefits, demonised unemployed young people, and increased the bus fare cap from £2 to £3.

Keir Starmer was elected with an extremely shallow base of support. He got a lower vote than when Jeremy Corbyn was leader – not just in 2017 but also lower than the so-called 'disaster' election in 2019. People held their noses and voted Labour to get the hated Tories out, instead of voting with any real enthusiasm for what Starmer had on offer.

One year on, this Labour government is more unpopular than ever. Starmer is looking for ways to stop opposition growing – clamping down on our right to protest, and attempting to undermine working-class unity by stoking up fears over migrants, trans people, and other minority groups.

But these attempts to 'divide and rule' aren't working: the anti-war movement

for Gaza is still massive, two years on since it started; there were 100,000 people at the Trans Pride march in London this summer; and tens of thousands came out onto the streets to confront racist riots last year, just weeks after the election.

Labour's attacks have contributed to the rise of the right-wing populist Reform UK, which has been able to get support from sections of the working class looking for an alternative and a way to vent their frustrations.

Reform, however, is no alternative. They have no interest in organising a fightback for the things working-class and young people need, like housing and public services, which capitalist politicians have cut to the bone. Instead Reform blames migrants and other minority groups, to distract from the capitalist system that they defend just like all the other capitalist parties.

To cut across these attempts to divide working-class people and blame migrants not the bosses for attacks on our living standards, organisations of the working class – the trade unions – must take a lead. A united mass movement for jobs, homes and services for all and against all racist division.

A party to fight for us!

But it's also important there is a political alternative to all the parties of the bosses.

We need a working-class and socialist political party that fights for us. We saw a glimpse of the potential for this when Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour Party. He excited hundreds of thousands of young people with the policies of free education, fighting against cuts, and free internet.

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STARMER'S LABOUR?

In July, Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sulтана announced plans to form a new political party, under the banner of 'Your Party'. At the time of writing, over 800,000 people have signed up to the Your Party mailing list. Recent polls have projected that 'Your Party' could get 20% of the vote and be the largest party amongst 18 to 24-year-olds. So clearly it has huge potential to be an organisation where workers and young people come together to resist all the attacks we face, and fight for a socialist alternative to capitalist chaos.

Socialist Students says the democratic organisations of the working class – the trade unions, with 6.5 million members – should be central to the new party. That's because the working class is potentially the most powerful force in society. Things we take for granted now have been won through working-class movements. The NHS, weekends, an education system and much more were all won due to working-class action.

In the 2022-23 'strike wave', hundreds of thousands of workers took strike action, winning pay rises and improved working conditions from the Tory government and the bosses. Under Starmer's Labour government, strike action has continued. Resident (previously junior) doctors, the Birmingham bin workers, and more are all fighting important battles.

Socialist Students campaigns for the new party to be a new workers' party based on the trade unions, along with student and youth organisations, campaign groups, socialist organisations, tenants' unions and everyone else fighting back, as part of a federal 'umbrella' structure. That kind of structure would maximise the potential for democratic discussion and debates on the way forward. Socialist Stu-

dents would participate in these debates, fighting for the new party to have a socialist programme as the only way to win a decent life for workers and young people on a lasting basis.

How can we fight back on campus?

As this magazine goes to press, a new party still isn't here yet. But Socialist Students societies will be fighting back against capitalist world chaos in any way we can. That is why Socialist Students has been building the biggest possible walk-outs of school, college and university students against Trump's state visit to the UK on 17 September. We want to show that we stand with the young people fighting back in America against Trump, not with Starmer and the capitalist system they defend.

On top of this, we need to fight back against the attacks we are facing on campus from the rise in tuition fees, the student cost-of-living crisis, and cuts to courses and staff redundancies. This is why Socialist Students initiated the Funding Not Fees campaign last year, campaigning for fully funded free education, reversing education cuts and for grants students can actually live on.

We need fighting student organisations in every school, college and university. Most universities and colleges have student unions, but they do not represent us! Instead we need fighting, democratic students' unions which speak for us, and provide a democratic forum for students to discuss how we fight back against the attacks on our futures.

But we also need a national organisation building links with students fighting back in campuses across the country. There is a growing movement of students discussing

how we can build a genuinely democratic and fighting national students' organisation, and Socialist Students is part of these discussions.

Join Socialist Students

Capitalism is a system which prioritises the short-term profits of a few at the expense of the living standards of the majority of us. It is a system of crisis for which we are made to pay.

Competition between capitalist nation-states competing for profit is at the root of the wars and conflicts around the world. Profit-driven capitalism is incapable of dealing with the climate catastrophe.

There is an alternative to capitalist crisis, chaos and destruction: socialism. A society where the vast wealth and resources of society are taken out of the hands of the super-rich capitalists and placed under the democratic control and management of workers – nationalising the companies which dominate the economy with compensation paid only under proven need. With that we could draw up a democratic plan, not just in Britain but across the world, to provide the goods and services we want and need, not what makes a profit for a few. A socialist world based on international working-class cooperation would lay the basis to end all war, poverty and division between people.

If you want to fight for this then join Socialist Students today!



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THE U.S. WORKING CLASS NEEDS ITS OWN POLITICAL VOICE TO TAKE ON TRUMP



Dean Young Liverpool Socialist Students

Donald Trump has been ever-present in US and world politics for over a decade. Despite losing an election in 2020 he just refused to go away. Why is this? What does Trump represent within American society? And the inevitable question for socialists all around the world – how can Trump be defeated?

The capitalist system is deep in crisis – economic, social, political and environmental. Capitalist leaders across the world, from Trump to Starmer, look to make workers and young people pay for this, and they are hated for it. In the US, Biden's administration represented price rises and falling wages. Voters rejected that – either by not voting or voting Trump to beat Biden.

Trump has not gone away because he is currently able to capitalise on the problems within American society. What are those problems? America is a society divided by class. Even though he presents as anti-establishment, Trump is a representative of the capitalist class of exploiters, a billionaire son of a millionaire property tycoon. On the other side sits the working class, whose interests are the opposite of the private profit-prioritising capitalist class – but who have no party of their own who can answer Trump's division and build a united fightback against all his attacks.

Living standards are falling, and people do have a right to be angry because of this. For example, it was estimated by CBS News

in August 2024 that 27.1 million have no healthcare coverage. 27.1 million people. This is larger than the population of 22 of the 27 EU member states and not far off 40% of the entire population of the UK.

The American working class has never had a mass party to lead it with a programme representing its needs, such as free healthcare and education. Amid this vacuum today, Trump, despite representing American capitalism, finds an echo among workers looking for an alternative to the current status quo. He does so partly by expressing rage against the establishment but links that with populist, reactionary messaging to divert the rightful anger of millions of Americans about their dire standards of living.

Trump promised American workers that he would improve their living standards, but his measures will not end the crisis of the capitalist system. In fact, he will accelerate the crises. For example, his tariffs have the aim of increasing America's share of the world's wealth, but they will increase the costs of goods for US workers. Tariffs and other policies will also ratchet up tensions and crisis across the world.

Trump blames immigrants, LGBT+ people and any other marginalised groups he can think of for the problems of American capitalist society. His mantra is to divide and rule to sow division within the working class so that he and his billionaire friends can continue to exploit without a fightback.

Trump does not answer the anger and frustrations millions of working-class Amer-

icans have. His programme of privatisation and tax cuts for the mega-rich only makes things worse.

Whereas former Democratic Presidents such as Obama and Biden would performatively act as 'progressives' while bombing innocent people in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc., or enabling the genocide in Gaza, Trump and his acolytes will happily boast about turning Gaza into a 'riviera'.

Role of the Democrats

The Democrats are no alternative within American society. They also aided the genocide in Gaza against the Palestinian people. They had a majority in both branches of Congress (the Senate and House of Representatives) from 2020-2022, and have held similar majorities many times previously. What have they delivered for the American working class? No universal, nationalised healthcare system. No codified abortion rights. No enshrined rights for all LGBT+ people. They bailed out the corrupt banks after they crashed the world economy in 2008 while workers faced job losses and poverty pay. Remember Kamala Harris had more billionaires supporting her (83) than Donald Trump (52) according to Forbes and the Independent. The Democrats are deeply wedded to the exploitation of the working class and poor both at home in the US and abroad.

Should socialists support the Democratic party as a lesser evil? It is understandable when faced with the stark reality of a Trump presidency many will say "vote the lesser evil." But this is not a solution for the American working class. What is needed is

the building of a party of the working class, which gives people something to actively want to support.

Self-described socialists have run within the Democratic party in the past, most famously Bernie Sanders, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and now Zohran Mamdani. Sanders in 2016 and 2020 ran for the presidential nomination and saw mass enthusiasm for his programme of free healthcare and education and a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. What was the response of the Democratic party? To block him from being the presidential challenger who could have beaten Trump, and put up an establishment representative in Hilary Clinton instead.

Mamdani

It is important that the lessons are learned by the supporters of Zohran Mamdani. Zohran won the Democratic nomination for the Mayor of New York City in June 2025 with an incredible 570,000 votes.

Mamdani's programme promises reforms that are hugely popular: a rent freeze, building public housing, a \$30-an-hour minimum wage by 2030, free buses, free childcare, city-owned grocery stores with price caps, and increasing taxes on the rich. He has also been a prominent opponent of the Israeli state's genocidal war on Gaza.

Significantly he won the votes in some districts that voted for Trump in last year's presidential election, indicating the potential for socialist candidates to cut across support for Trump in the working class.

Since then, many high-profile Democratic party stalwarts have refused to endorse him. His main competitor in the primary Andrew Cuomo – a former Democratic Governor of the state of New York mired in scandal but still backed by a \$25 million 'super PAC' and endorsed by Bill Clinton and hedge fund billionaires – has announced he will run as an independent candidate.

Yet again we see the capitalist establishment in the Democratic party attempting to sabotage anyone who dares to mention the word socialism. The capitalist establishment, including Trump, will do all in its power to prevent a radical reformer winning control of the biggest city in the US, the seat of all the main capitalist institutions – Wall Street and the financial centre. While many sections of big business have accommodated to Trump and his unorthodox approach, despite backing Harris in the election, the situation is very different when the anti-establishment challenge comes from the left.

This must be a fight for the building of an political voice of the working class, independent of big business interests. The pro-capitalist Democratic leadership will aim to either neutralise him by watering down his programme or will outright sabotage him.

Mamdani must mobilise the local workers' movement in New York in support of this programme. This is crucial as the trade unions are the principal organisations of the working class. If elected, they have the ability to help carry out Mamdani's programme by, for example, withdrawing their labour to emphasise their support for Mamdani.

An example for Mamdani is in Liverpool, when socialists led the city council in 1983-85 and fought Thatcher for millions of pounds to fund what the Liverpool working class needed – including 5,000 council homes, nurseries, sports facilities, and apprenticeships. The struggle included strikes as well as trade union and community delegates being central to determining council policy.

Workers fighting back

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics there are 14.3 million workers in trade unions in the US. Imagine the power of a party which brought together the millions of organised workers across the unions, giving them a unified political voice.

Even before Trump's re-election there has been positive developments within the organised workers' movement. In workplaces there have been strike action and trade union campaigns across the country in recent years. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in its most recent reports from the year 2023, 477,900 US workers took strike action, the largest number since 2018. This included a strike movement in Starbucks, which is still ongoing with Starbucks refusing to recognise the workers' right to unionise; the SAG-AFTRA strike of film and TV workers in July-November 2023; and the September-October 2023 strike movement of the United Auto Workers against the three largest automaker companies: Ford, General Motors and Stellantis.

It is significant that a number of workers in the US, before Trump's re-election, took strike action for the first time. The consequence of this will be the development of new working-class organisers in union branches, workplaces and communities, and a greater confidence in the ability of the working class to fight independently in its own interests. A stronger basis exists therefore with these new working-class, battle-hardened activists to combat the attacks of the Trump govern-

ment. The potential for victories can be seen with a January-February 2025 strike of the Oregon Nurses Association, with the workers there winning a 22% pay increase alongside better terms and conditions for employment.

In addition, on the streets we have seen three particularly noteworthy events in the only seven months since Trump's inauguration. On 5 April 2025 there was a synchronised 'day of action' in all 50 states, comprising 1,300 demonstrations and events protesting the anti-working-class policies of the Trump administration. The 'No Kings' demonstrations (so titled because of Trump's increasing use of executive power to push through legislation) on 14 June included 2,100 events and demonstrations, with an estimated five million taking part. There was also the uprising in California against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) on 6 June amidst raids against people of both legal and illegal migrant status in Los Angeles. All of this without an existing political party that can pull together all of the struggles of the working class! Imagine the potential if such a force, armed with a socialist programme, was able to lead the way.

The importance of the trade unions, and the millions they represent, is that they are the main organisations of the working class. A collective voice for the trade unions in a new party would put the working class in the driving seat.

The job of socialists in America is to fight for a mass party of the working class, which would be capable of providing the leadership to the millions of angry working class people in the US. We as socialists internationally can aid this fight by building mass parties of the working class in each of our respective countries, in doing so providing a potential model for US workers to follow.

In addition we can stand up against Trump by protesting him and the capitalist system in decline that he represents. Socialist Students is leading such a campaign across the country with our walkout and protest campaign against Trump's September UK visit (see next page). The building of mass workers' parties, the arming of the trade unions with a fighting strategy, and building an international socialist movement is what is necessary to defeat the barbarism of Trump and the chaos of capitalism that he represents.

So, let's get on with it!

**JOIN
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Why students are walking out against Trump on September 17

Extract from a Socialist Students leaflet

TIME TO BUILD THE WALKOUTS!

Donald Trump is coming to Britain on Wednesday 17 September, at the invitation of the King and the prime minister Keir Starmer.

Socialist Students is calling on students to walk out of their schools, colleges and universities on 17 September, to protest against the chaos that Trump represents for our futures.

Trump defends a rotten capitalist system that prioritises profits for the billionaires while creating wars, climate crisis, and poverty for the rest of us. While our planet burns, Trump has encouraged the mega-rich oil companies to “drill, baby, drill”.

Trump is a warmonger. He has backed the Israeli state’s genocidal onslaught on Gaza and the Palestinians. In an attempt to prevent young Americans and workers from fighting back, he has stoked racism, anti-trans hatred and discrimination to try and divide people.

When we walk out, we can send a powerful message of solidarity to the young people fighting back against Trump in America and globally that we stand with them – not with Trump, Starmer and the rest of the politicians defending this capitalist profit system.

Let’s get organised to fight for a real future. For a socialist world free from war, poverty, and discrimination.

A decent future for young people is a million miles from what Starmer’s Labour Party wants. Just like the Tories before them, their main concern is protecting the profits of big business and the super-rich.

Starmer’s Labour says there isn’t enough money to have high-quality mental health services, decent housing that we can actually afford, free education, and reopening youth clubs. But this is a lie! In the last 15 years of attacks on our living standards, the richest 1% globally have increased their wealth by £30 trillion. We need a mass movement of workers and young people that fights to take this wealth into our hands, to provide the things we all need.

We’ve seen that Starmer’s Labour can be beaten back. Under pressure from massive opposition, they have made U-turns over attacks to disability benefits and the winter fuel payment. No wonder they are clamping down on our right to protest, to try and stop us from resisting them and the capitalist system they defend.

On Wednesday 17 September let’s show young people are ready to join the fightback. Some people say we aren’t political – but who can blame us for feeling no enthusiasm for capitalist politicians that offer us no future?

Young people need a political alternative to Labour, Reform and all the establishment parties. The huge enthusiasm for the initiative of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana to launch a new party shows the potential for this – a mass workers’ party that makes the super-rich fat cats pay, not young people.

HOW CAN REFORM BE STOPPED?



TJ Diniz Mota Leeds Socialist Students

A new era is dawning on British politics and, consequently, the lives of British people. With British capitalism in crisis, and the two main establishment parties declining in support, many looking for an alternative are turning to Reform UK, fronted by Nigel Farage and trading in xenophobia, culture-wars and anti-establishment branding.

Reform has won an increasing amount of working-class support; they won 5 seats in the 2024 general election and came 2nd

in 98 constituencies (in 89 of these, second to Labour). This is to be understood, not dismissed. Reform’s success is really owed to capitalism’s systemic worsening of our day-to-day lives and the failure of establishment parties to offer any way forward.

The rise of Nigel Farage and Reform UK isn’t a uniquely British phenomenon. Across the world, right-wing populists have gained widespread support. In the US, Donald Trump stormed into the White House earlier this year by posturing as an anti-establishment outsider, very similarly to Farage. He railed against “global elites”, attacked immigrants, and

vowed to “drain the swamp.” In reality, his presidency handed massive tax cuts to corporations, deregulated industry, and attacked workers’ rights. But to a layer, his crude nationalism and scapegoating of migrants offered a simple explanation for complex economic and social failures, presided over by the previous Democratic Party administration.

In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders recently shocked Europe by winning a parliamentary majority with his Party for Freedom, running on a hardline anti-Islam, anti-immigrant platform. Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil openly praised the dictatorship era and slashed protections

for Indigenous people and the Amazon rainforest, yet still found mass support by presenting himself as a defender of “traditional values” in chaotic times.

But this is not a one-way development: Bolsonaro is no longer president and other right populist parties have seen electoral losses, while in some countries left-wing forces have made gains. But right populism is broadly growing in significance, filling a vacuum left by the absence of a real working-class, socialist political alternative.

Britain's right-wing populists

These figures, like Farage, do not emerge in a vacuum. They are the political symptoms of a system in deep crisis: capitalism has failed to provide stability, equality or hope for the future. Corporate profits increased by £4.02bn in the first quarter of 2025 while the average person lives paycheck to paycheck in a cost of living crisis on stagnant wages. Establishment political parties offer no way out of this crisis, and have seen their bases of support crumble.

Labour came to power on a historically low turnout following the utter collapse of the Tories. Representing the same rotten capitalist system, they have continued the Tories' austerity agenda, and have plummeted in popularity.

Reform take advantage of this disillusionment, cynically posing as anti-establishment figures. But they fundamentally still represent the interests of big business, and have put forward anti-working class policies on zero hours contracts and the right of employers to fire and rehire, as well as supporting increased privatisation in the NHS. Labour have no means of combatting right populism, and have adopted much of the same anti-migrant rhetoric, with Starmer warning of an “island of strangers” – like Reform, they are aiming to distract from worsening conditions caused by the concentration of wealth in the hands of the super-rich.

Rather than a general shift in attitudes to the right, support for Reform represents mainly people's frustration, desperation and disillusionment with mainstream parties. Many see Reform as a protest vote, wanting to punish the status quo. What else does this demonstrate if not the need for an alternative the public can vote for not out of frustration, but confidence?

Build a working-class alternative

History shows that when a real working-

class option is presented, it will get mass support. When Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour party – with a platform of nationalisation, free education and real living wages – party membership grew rapidly, before again falling dramatically when Starmer became leader.

Under Corbyn, there was also a huge one million strong swing in votes from UKIP to Labour, showing how a positive program addressing people's basic needs can cut across the right wing's lies. The capitalist-owned media attempts to crush the 2017 manifesto's surging popularity and Corbyn's character just tell us what we knew: the wealthy fear a rise of left-wing forces because it threatens the depths of their pockets.

The recent launching of a new left party by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana holds huge potential. In a capitalist system based on division, it should adopt policies aiming to unite, promising jobs, homes and services for all and a movement that fights for these. To present a real alternative to Reform, as well as Labour and the capitalist system they both represent, launching on explicit, unapologetic class lines is mandatory. To be successful, the youth and the trade unions have to be central.

Trade unions are the backbone of working-class organisation – collectives of workers banding together to defend their rights, fighting for fair pay, better conditions, or protection from exploitation. But the role of the union goes far deeper than the workplace. When organised collectively, workers show the potential power of the majority in society: the very people whose tireless work keeps everything running. As we've seen in Unite's decision to suspend Angela Rayner and vote on disaffiliation from Labour, the need for the working class to have its own political voice is being raised in the trade union movement. Unions should play a leading role in the development of a new party, as one of the most powerful weapons the working class has.

An alternative for young people

Young people too have increasingly felt locked out of democracy and locked in perpetual crisis. The number of unemployed 16-24 year olds has risen 13.8% from last year. More than a third of young adults live at home with their parents, unable to access affordable housing. Rising tuition fees, cuts to disability benefits and a cost of living crisis

threaten the future of teenagers, bringing into question young dreams of someday having a home or starting a family, let alone affording a decent car.

But these layers of the youth are angry now. From rent strikes to climate walkouts, we've seen their power here (and globally) in flashes. Now, it needs permanence. More militant student unions and representation. More coordinated walkouts and national action. Young people standing in local and national elections, linked in a collective socialist movement. Any new left force must organise the next generation of activists and revolutionaries. Young people will need to be a core part of a fight for the future.

Reform UK are getting some echo on campuses, with a handful of student societies established so far. But what answers do Reform have for the issues facing students? Their proposals to tinker around the edges of student loan repayment will do nothing to fix the university funding crisis. Their Trump-inspired 'DOGE' program will mean cuts in council funding for services that students rely on. What answers do Reform have for spiralling rents? Socialist Students is campaigning on all of these issues and welcomes debate on the way forward.

Farage's gang is not unexpected or an anomaly. It's a naturally emerging symptom of a wider disease. But we have the advantage: the working class is potentially the most powerful force in society. When it moves, no politician or pundit can stand in the way. We won't stop Farage with moral lectures. We'll stop him by building something better – a real alternative rooted in the lives, struggles, and hopes of working-class people.

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10 YEARS SINCE 'CORBYNMANIA'



LESSONS FOR BUILDING A NEW PARTY TODAY

Robbie Davidson Manchester & Salford Socialist Students

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's announcement of steps towards a new party, followed by 700,000 online sign-ups in just a week, comes ten years since the former's election as the leader of the Labour Party. The four years that followed showed the huge enthusiasm for a pro-working class political alternative to the main capitalist establishment parties which exists amongst workers and young people. The lessons from this period are rich for anyone who wants to fight to make the Corbyn-Sultana project into the strongest political challenge to the interests of the rich and powerful, and a genuinely independent working-class political party.

Leadership Election

The 2015 general election, which saw the defeat of Labour under the leadership of Ed Miliband, made clear that the 'austerity-lite' policies of the Blairite New Labour Party offered no real alternative to the half decade of post-2008 austerity carried out by the Tories and Lib-Dems, which had whittled working-class living standards and public services to the bone. 'New left

formations' had exploded across Europe in Spain, Greece and Italy as workers and young people attempted to build political vehicles capable of challenging the austerity onslaught, which was unleashed by pro-capitalist politicians in the aftermath of the 2007-08 financial crash.

In Britain, despite the best efforts of its pro-capitalist leadership, this trend found expression within the Labour Party – although it appeared unlikely at the time. In fact, following Milliband's resignation, the Blairite leadership of Labour attempted to further minimise the voice of the workers' movement in the Labour Party by introducing new party rules which allowed 'registered supporters' to vote in the leadership elections for just £3.

This process – of converting Labour from a party which had avenues through which the working class could pressure and therefore influence the policies and programme of its generally pro-capitalist leaders – into an out-and-out capitalist party had already been begun under Tony Blair's leadership of what became known from the 1990s onwards as 'New Labour'. This included the abolition of Labour's

Clause 4, which constitutionally committed the Labour Party to "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange".

By endeavouring to further reduce trade union influence with this policy, the right wing mistakenly paved the way for Corbyn to become the leader of the opposition, giving the right to anybody with £3 in their pockets to vote for his anti-austerity programme of mass council house building, an increased minimum wage, free education, funding for public services and nationalisation of mail, rail and water. Almost overnight, ideas which had been completely absent from the establishment parties for decades were back on the agenda – electrifying thousands of students and young people to get involved in fighting for a future.

Despite his landslide leadership election victory, which acted as a channel for the rage which existed in society against austerity, the obtusely pro-big business wing of the Labour Party was far from eliminated. The year Corbyn won the leadership of the Labour Party, 184 Labour MPs voted for vicious £12 billion welfare cuts..

Corbyn's anti-austerity programme, if it had been realised in full, would have meant a massive transfer of wealth from the pockets of the super-rich to the working class and young people. That – and the potential mass movements a battle for Corbyn's programme could have provoked had he become prime minister – represented a material threat to the wealth and privileges of the ruling capitalist class. It was these class interests that the Blairites in the Labour Party acted to protect by attacking and undermining Corbyn.

One means of the Labour right's sabotage against Corbyn in the four years that followed was local Blairite councils continuing to vote through the same austerity Corbyn was challenging at a parliamentary level. Internal undermining went so far that Labour MP Jess Phillips was quoted in a Guardian interview saying she would 'knife Corbyn in the front'. The image of discontent from within his own party, along with the fact that few were seeing material improvements to their living conditions even under local Labour governance, dealt a significant blow to Corbyn's shot at power in 2017.

2017 General Election

In the face of right-wing sabotage rotting his campaign from within, 2017 is remembered as the landmark year that young people and the workers' movement joined to rally behind a progressive, anti-cuts programme. Labour saw the biggest increase in votes since the second world war as the Tories were beaten back into a minority government. Labour sat 1.7% of the electorate behind the total votes of the Conservatives, in a seismic shift which sent earthquakes through the capitalist establishment. It was on the platform of this electoral success that Corbyn, armed with a fighting manifesto for jobs, homes and services, became one of the most popular political figures in the world. Corbyn won up to a million votes from people who had voted UKIP previously in 2017.

Socialist Students campaigned for mandatory reselection to remove right-wing Labour MPs opposed to Corbyn's programme, which could have turned the tide on the relentless smear campaigns launched from both within the party and the capitalist press. By reintroducing the rights of Labour Party members to democratically select their potential parliamentary representatives, as Socialist Students demanded at the time, an avenue could have been opened through which the hundreds of thousands of workers and young

people who joined the Labour Party to fight for Corbyn's programme could battle to democratically replace right-wing Labour MPs who had no interest whatsoever in enacting Corbyn's policies.

After 72 working-class council flat residents were killed in the Grenfell Tower fire as a result of cuts and deregulation, Corbyn correctly stood in solidarity with survivors and families of the deceased. This once again placed him on the right side of events in the eyes of the working class as anger at the Tories continued to grow.

2019 General Election

Even wading through smears and sabotage the enthusiasm for Corbyn's anti-austerity programme still saw him win more votes in the 2019 general election than Starmer's Labour Party won in their 2024 'landslide victory'.

The failure to deliver in local government and win the 'red wall' working-class industrial communities, largely situated in the north of England, meant workers doubted Corbyn's ability to implement his programme in power in the face of the attacks of big business and state sabotage. But the most important factor was that the Labour Party was not transformed into a genuine mass workers' party.

Lessons for a new party

As Corbyn and Sultana attempt to challenge the Labour Party and Reform with their new formation, lessons from Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party must be learned. To succeed, a new party must be built and based in the power of the working class – organised in the trade union movement – and armed with a socialist programme. The storm of smears that we saw directed at Corbyn during his leadership of the Labour Party will be whipped up once again as the capitalist press attempts to sow the seeds of division and culture wars. Instead of appeasing the ruling class and their propaganda arm, the strength of a new party should come from below – most crucially from the 6.5 million organised workers in the trade union movement.

The working class, being central to the production and distribution of goods and services in capitalist society, is the most powerful potential force in the fight for root-and-branch socialist change. The 2022 strike wave – which saw healthcare workers, rail workers, education workers, telecoms workers and others take strike action – gave a small glimpse of the potential revolutionary power of the working class.

A party which gives workers – primarily but not only organised in the trade union movement – democratic control of the policies and personnel of its elected officials will help keep the programme of the party based on the working class of all different backgrounds, an essential characteristic as it attempts to win people over from the divisive rhetoric of Farage.

Part of putting the working class at the heart of any new party would be a federal structure, allowing representatives from trade union branches, from anti-cuts youth organisations, socialist organisations, and others, to collectively participate in building a new party, while at the same time the ideas and programme necessary could be debated and discussed under a federal umbrella welcoming input, affiliation and campaigning support from across the workers' movement.

Socialist Students would argue for the need for a socialist transformation of society to win the future young people and students need. Corbyn's pledge to scrap tuition fees in 2017 and 2019 was a core reason for the enthusiasm for his campaign that engulfed young people during his time as the leader of the opposition – a position which must be built on through a head-on challenge to the collapsing system of marketisation, which is currently tearing through jobs and courses in higher education. But that policy alone would pose the need to take the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich and place it under the democratic control and management of the working class, to plan society's resources to meet the needs of the majority.

That's the bold socialist change which Socialist Students is fighting for, in Britain and by linking up with young people, students and workers in struggle around the world. Get involved with us to be part of that struggle.

SOCIALISM TODAY SPECIAL ISSUE

Lessons from the Corbyn experience

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BUILD A MOVEMENT TO



KICK SEXISM OFF CAMPUS

Lottie Young
Cambridge Socialist Students

Sexism is an enduring problem in universities that has significant impacts on students. Sexual harassment, objectifying and misogynistic comments from classmates, drink spiking, and sexual assault are common. These attitudes are a product of and perpetuated by capitalism, which is a system based on exploitation and inequality. Today, women's lives are vastly different from even a few decades ago. Struggles for personal autonomy, financial independence, and legal rights – such as equal pay and access to education – have made gains. At the same time, these gains are not conclusive, and the horrors of sexism can still be seen, such as the murder of Sarah Everard by an off-duty police officer.

A survey of 4,491 students by Revolt Sexual Assault found that 70% of female students had experienced sexual violence, with 25% of these students reporting that they skipped lectures, tutorials, or changed certain modules to avoid their attackers, and a shocking 16% ended their studies as a result of the violence and harassment they experienced.

It is clear that whilst attitudes towards women in universities have experienced some progress – with women now able to earn degrees, enter into careers in academia, and hold positions of leadership in uni-

versities – we are still incredibly far from the elimination of sexism and sexual violence within universities and wider society.

These shocking statistics come amidst the years of cuts to services and infrastructure for students, including campus lighting, night transport, counselling services, student bursaries, and the funding of programmes to tackle on-campus sexism. The fact that only 6% of respondents felt that they could report their assault to their university shows that current university services are not helping students to feel comfortable, safe, and supported on campus.

Fight for funding and democratic control of our campuses

In 2023, the average salary for the vice chancellor across the UK's twenty-four Russell Group universities exceeded £400,000 (with the vice chancellor of Oxford University earning a staggering £1,048,000), with more than two-thirds of them receiving pay rises. While students are left to deal with rising tuition fees, the cost-of-living crisis, and cuts to education – including the subsequent lack of prevention of sexual violence – the decision-makers are raking in the cash.

If we can't trust the cutting university bosses to keep us safe, then students have to fight to guarantee this right ourselves. That should start with student unions linking up with trade unions to campaign against sexual harassment in schools, col-

leges and universities. Part of that should be campaigning for democratically elected committees of students and staff to be in charge of investigating reports of sexism and sexual violence on campus, ensuring that the processes are effectively implemented and accessible to those who need them.

The money is clearly there in society to create fundamental change for all students, but it is going into the pockets of a select few instead. Socialist Students has initiated the Funding not Fees campaign to build a movement for fully funded, free education – paid for by taking the wealth out the hands of the super-rich.

Imagine what we could do if we had all the resources we need for education. We could scrap tuition fees and introduce maintenance grants that actually cover the cost of living. There could be massive investment in things like campus lighting and secure student housing. We could make sure that every university campus had free-to-use, properly staffed creche facilities, so that parents with young children could attend classes.

How to take on 'lad culture'

Many measures within universities to tackle sexism are aimed at quelling 'lad culture'. This sees sexism and sexual violence as deriving from the behaviour of individual or groups of men, or a culture among young men which encourages sexism.

Misogynistic ideas exist across society, and can even become more prominent among sections. The Revolt Sexual Assault survey found 42% of respondents agreed that actions constituting sexual assault and harassment had become “normalised” at university. There are also stories of disgusting sexist messages shared on many student group chats. For example, a group chat of Durham University students included discussions of sleeping with ‘a different bird every night for a bed’ and ‘posh lads’ competing to sleep with the ‘poorest girl’.

Students absolutely have the right to ‘call out’ derogatory comments made by individual men, but what could most effectively stamp out sexism and misogyny on a campus- and society-wide basis is a mass movement against sexism and for the things we all need, uniting people of all genders in a common struggle. Today working-class and young people’s struggles against all forms of oppression have been pushed back. Previous generations were able to use their collective weight and joint interest in challenging reactionary ideas to make gains against sexism.

It is no coincidence that the propaganda of Andrew Tate and Co. has become more popular during the huge crisis of capital-

ism which exists today and the misery which comes with it. But limiting campaigning against sexism to opposing male ‘culture’ or individual sexist men, without acknowledging that the capitalism system embraces and promotes gender inequality and sexism, also doesn’t offer women a way forward. It can also subsequently repel men from participating in the fight against sexism (and thus capitalism) instead of uniting the working class in a mass struggle against oppression, both on campus and beyond.

A socialist alternative to sexism and capitalism

There are many examples of how capitalism benefits from promoting gender inequality and sexism. The notion that women should care for both the family and the home is promoted because it means that women will continue to do this unpaid work, subsequently saving the capitalist class billions, which would otherwise need to be spent on public services – like expanded childcare and social care – or on increased wages so that those services could be bought privately in the market. The objectification of women and unattainable beauty standards are promoted by the fashion industry to sell their products, continuously promising women that they can help them reach this ‘ideal’ form of

attractiveness. And finally, sexism, which more often than not causes strain between men and women in society, is useful to the ruling class as it encourages the division of the working class.

To truly eliminate the sexist ideas and ‘culture’, the dismantling of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society is necessary, for it is capitalism that drives sexism and misogyny. A socialist society would be one in which public and state organisations and institutions (including universities) were under the democratic control of workers and service users; in which society was democratically planned for need not profit; and in which the idea of gender norms and inequality were no longer promoted.

Whilst this would not instantaneously eradicate gender norms that have been embedded in class society, the socialist transformation would dismantle the structures and means through which those ideas have been sustained, thus forming a society in which gender norms, sexist ideas, and gender-based power imbalances would no longer be relevant. Therefore, the ‘lad’ culture and the deeply ingrained sexist values within our society which significantly drive sexism on-campus would be eliminated.

Hertfordshire Uni: Socialist Students win SU action on violence against women

*Morgan Tritton
Herts Socialist Students*

At the University of Hertfordshire the SU has repeatedly defended the university’s actions over the interests of its own members – students ourselves. There is no real separation between the university and the SU which often echoes university management.

We investigated the SU’s governance, transparency, and action plan. We found little evidence of advocacy on urgent issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, tuition fee hikes, accommodation conditions, violence against women, and campus safety. What we did find, however, was stagnation – a culture that prioritises protecting the image of the university over fighting for the needs of the student body.

We raised our concerns at the November 2024 student council meeting. It took four months, and the submission of a formal motion, before any action was taken!

In April 2025, we submitted three motions: to improve SU governance and transparency, to allow free society memberships and open meetings, and to demand action on violence against women on campus. Prior to this, there had only been one motion passed in the last two years. We faced attempts to resist, delay, water down, or dismiss the motions entirely from SU staff. They downplayed safety concerns by citing a lack of official reports, and claimed transparency had now been addressed and further student oversight was unnecessary.

Two days before the council meeting, the SU backed down. All three motions were debated and passed overwhelmingly. We came in force to a student council meeting to highlight inaction and received a positive response from students.

This fight is far from over. We are in contact with the SU President and Women’s Officer and will be meeting in the coming weeks. Our passed governance motion requires monthly officer updates, motion tracking, and scheduled council meetings, basic measures that should have existed already, and we will make sure these happen.

We are fighting to repoliticise and democratise our SU. We are organising not just for better policies, but for a shift in power on campus from unelected managers and bureaucrats to the hands of students ourselves, alongside representatives of staff unions. We must continue to scrutinise our SUs and question: who benefits from keeping students in the dark? Who benefits from an unorganised student body? University managements and the relationships they have with pro-capitalist politicians and big business.

The failures of Herts SU reflect a nationwide crisis across higher education; faced with a funding crisis, universities constantly put their finances above the interests of students and staff.

As part of the Funding Not Fees campaign, we must confront every institution on campuses that facilitates poor student and staff conditions and rising costs for students. Compromised and undemocratic student unions, acting as extensions of university management, must be challenged as part of a broader fight for free, fully funded education, and fighting democratic student organisations must be built.

CUTS, FEES & COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

WE WON'T BE PRICED OUT OF UNIVERSITY!

Adam Powell-Davies
Socialist Students
national organiser

A record number of 18-year-olds – over 250,000 – are heading to university this year.

For working-class young people, getting into university is rightly something to be proud of: a hard-earned victory against an unequal capitalist system that puts up obstacles to a decent future at every turn.

The right to a university education has always had to be fought for. One hundred years ago, less than 10,000 students attained a first degree at university each year. In 2024, that figure surpassed 465,000. Today more than half of all university students are women, compared to just one-third in 1980.

While the capitalist class has tried to direct the expansion of higher education to meet its profit interests – for example, pushing students to choose degrees deemed most profitable for big business – the historic impetus for widening access to education, at all levels, has been through the working class and young people fighting for it.

Clearly that fight is still needed today. The cost-of-living crisis has become a permanent fixture in student life. The average maintenance loan now falls well short of the average student rent, let alone covering all our other living costs. Surveys consistently reveal about one-in-five students using food banks, as well as the impacts student poverty has on our mental health.

Even on the maximum maintenance loan this year, a student would need to work 20

hours on minimum wage per week just to reach a 'basic standard of income'. That is more hours than the average student gets in teaching time per week.

All of this is even harder to stomach when we're being asked to pay higher tuition fees. For the first time in nearly a decade, the government has increased undergraduate tuition fees this year, from £9250 to £9535. And Starmer's Labour government wants to continue increasing fees each year, so that they could reach well over £10,000 by 2029.

Priced out of university

The student debt associated with taking a degree can put many working-class young people off applying to university – especially when the stable and well-paid jobs that could alleviate that debt burden after graduating are increasingly difficult to find.

While the absolute number of 18-year-olds going to university has never been higher, the application rate this year was actually down – the third consecutive decrease. For the first time ever last year, there was a drop in the proportion of students on free school meals applying to university. University dropout rates are also twice as high for working-class students.

Students need to fight to save education as a right, not a privilege. That means fighting for the genuine right to a high-quality, free and fully funded education for all – including abolishing tuition fees and introducing maintenance grants that cover the cost of living.

If education was fully funded by the government, university managements would

not be incentivised to invest our tuition fees in arms manufacturers and other shady companies in order to boost income. They would have no justifications for making cuts. Student housing could be massively expanded, with rent controls introduced to ensure no student is paying the majority of their income on a place to live.

The wealth exists in society. The FTSE 100 biggest corporations in Britain have been paying out around £85 billion annually to their shareholders. To win free and fully funded education, students and workers have to unite in a movement that could put that wealth in our hands.

Cuts catastrophe

This Labour government has no interest in increasing funding to universities, however, because that would risk upsetting the capitalist 'markets' and its demands for 'austerity'.

Faced with a university sector in a deep funding crisis, Labour politicians have encouraged university bosses to make brutal job cuts to save money. Instead of making big business and the super-rich pay, Labour has pushed the burden even further onto students and staff.

The University and College Union (UCU) estimates that 10,000 staff were cut by university managements in 2024/25 alone. But the real figure for job losses could be 20,000, if you account for 'back-door redundancies' like voluntary severance, hiring freezes, and non-renewal of contracts.

For students, this has meant courses and entire departments shutting down. It has meant even bigger class sizes, longer wait-



ing lists for counselling and other campus services, and delays to assessments being marked.

The current trajectory is – at best – for more of the same this year. Despite Labour increasing our tuition fees in an attempt to ‘steady the ship’, this will not stop more university job cuts this year, as even more universities are expected to record deficits in the new academic year.

Starmer can be beaten

Last year, Socialist Students initiated the ‘Funding Not Fees’ campaign on over thirty campuses nationally, as a means to rally students and workers in a struggle for fully funded, free education, paid for by taking the wealth off big business. Given the dire conditions on campus, we think such a struggle is more vital than ever.

Starmer’s Labour government has shown it can be beaten. Under pressure from massive opposition, they have made U-turns over attacks to disability benefits and the winter fuel payment.

The same potential exists over the question of university funding. This year, we’ve seen staff taking strike action to stop all compulsory redundancies in Newcastle and Cardiff. Under pressure from a united student-staff campaign in Cardiff, in which Socialist Students played an important role (see next page), the Welsh Labour government announced £19 million extra funding; money it originally said wasn’t available.

In Scotland, the government was forced into finding over £60 million to bail out Dundee University. But at the same time, that hasn’t stopped the university management from going ahead with plans to cut 700 jobs.

While any extra funding won under pressure from workers’ and students’ action is welcome, the example of Dundee shows

why university finances have to be under the control of students and staff – not unaccountable politicians and vice-chancellors, who want to run education like a business.

Imagine how much more could be won if a UK-wide fightback was launched, linking the shared struggle of students and staff across universities into one mass movement for fully funded, free education.

Building the fightback

That is what Socialist Students wants to push for through the Funding Not Fees campaign this year.

Wherever campus union branches take strike action against cuts at their university – or over any other attacks – we will be on the picket line. At the same time, we support trade union activists pushing for UK-wide strike action, as a step to building the biggest possible movement for fully funded, free education.

On the 60+ campuses where Socialist Students members are active, we will be calling on students’ unions (SUs) to affiliate to the Funding Not Fees campaign and commit to building it widely among students. Where possible, we will be organising socialist, pro-free education candidates to run in SU officer elections, as a step towards building democratic and fighting SUs that give us a voice.

On a national level, we have also been putting pressure on the National Union of Students (NUS) to give a clear lead to students against the current university crisis.

Unfortunately, the NUS has stayed silent on our proposal to call a national ‘free education’ demonstration this Autumn. In the time since we raised this with the NUS, they have conspired with unelected SU CEOs to clamp down on elected students’ officers, who have criticised the NUS for distancing itself from the student struggle in solidarity with the Palestinians.

As a step towards the national representation students really deserve, SUs could link up nationwide to coordinate campaigns for fully funded, free education – which could include the demand for divestment from arms and big business to end university complicity in the Gaza slaughter.

Political voice

A crucial component in the fight for fully funded, free education will be the building of a serious political opposition to Starmer and the capitalist system that seeks to make workers and young people foot the bill for the crisis of capitalism.

The initiative by Jeremy Corbyn and Zahrah Sultana to build a new party – focused on the website yourparty.uk – represents a big step forward.

In his 2017 and 2019 manifestos as Labour leader, Corbyn pledged to scrap tuition fees and reintroduce maintenance grants for all students. His free education policy was a key reason for his high support among young people in particular, helping to generate the largest youth movement of the past decade around his leadership of the Labour Party.

There are lessons to learn for now. Corbyn garnered the hatred of right-wing politicians and big business, because of the mass enthusiasm his anti-austerity policies generated among young people and the working class. Unfortunately, Corbyn did not sufficiently mobilise this mass mood into a movement capable of challenging capitalism and its political representatives, inside and outside the Labour Party.

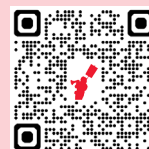
Socialist Students will be campaigning this term for ‘Your Party’ to be formed as a working-class party, capable of mobilising students alongside workers for socialist policies to transform our lives – including the need for fully funded, free education.

FUNDING NOT FEES



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO DEMAND:

- No fee rises! Scrap tuition fees and cancel student debt
- Living grants, not loans
- Stop all cuts and closures on campus
- Rent controls in student accommodation
- End low pay and casualisation of staff
- Divestment from arms and big business – no place for profiteers from war and exploitation on our campus



Fighting cuts in Cardiff | Aris Prevost Cardiff Socialist Students

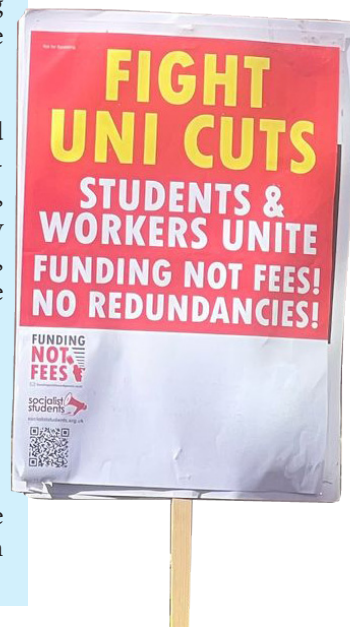
400 job cuts were announced at Cardiff University, including the closure of the Schools of Nursing, Music, Modern Languages, Ancient History, and Religion and Theology. A statement by the Vice Chancellor said: "In the context of tightening finances, we need to take difficult decisions". Students and staff shouldn't be made to pay for the crisis in higher education. Universities proposing cuts should open their books, and any proposals subjected to democratic oversight by students and staff (for example, on how to use Cardiff's £426m reserves).

Socialist Students jumped into action against the cuts, organising an open meeting on how students can fight back. Over 70 people attended our meeting, including UCU members and our Student Union president. From this, we organised a student-staff solidarity rally, which garnered over 150 people. It was a powerful show of solidarity, with both students and lecturers sharing how devastating the cuts

would be to their lives. This was part of the fight back against the cuts, with Nursing students also holding a rally at Heath Campus and a protest outside of the Senedd (Welsh Government) Building.

Through this process of organised pushback and supporting the Cardiff UCU branch through negotiations with the University Executive Branch, the scale of the cuts was lessened to 69 job cuts by 2029-30. In addition, the Schools of Nursing, Music, and Modern Languages are no longer being cut. The Welsh Government has also given the Higher Education sector a £19 million cash boost.

This reduction of job cuts and money is welcomed, and it shows that with an organised fightback, change is not only possible but something we can achieve. But we have to continue fighting over the cuts that remain, and the broken higher education system that is fuelling the crisis at universities.



Lobbying MPs for Funding Not Fees | Dan Bassey York Socialist Students

As part of the work campaigning for Funding Not Fees, Socialist Students at York planned to lobby our local MP Rachael Maskell to raise it in parliament. This would bring our campaign wider publicity and put pressure on the government to respond.

Living costs are extremely high for students studying at the University of York. Rent for housing on campus ranges from between £160-£200 per week, while accommodation off campus is even more expensive. Students are paying up to £10,000 per year on accommodation, almost an entire maximum maintenance loan. Alongside rising living costs, these figures are pushing students into working

long hours at punitive rates to afford to scrape by.

The quality of education at the university is in decline. In an attempt to cut down on staff costs, the university introduced a new 'voluntary severance' scheme in April 2024, leading to 272 members of staff leaving their jobs by December. The UCU described this as "a clear and articulated attempt to make the future look as bleak as possible so as many people as possible will leave." The university planned further cost-cutting measures, such as further centralising control by dissolving the board of studies responsible for maintaining academic standards, and removing the 'double-blind' marking

system considered "duplication and unnecessary work" by senior management.

Without addressing the funding crisis, universities will continue to cut the quality of education. Without a departure from the marketised business model, universities will pass on increasing running costs to students, making university completely unaffordable to students from low-income backgrounds.

Free, fully funded education is possible by taking the wealth off the super-rich. A prominent political voice calling for this is necessary to combat Labour's narrative that university education for the public is too expensive to support.

POLITICIANS DEFENDING BIG BUSINESS PROFITS LIE ABOUT RIGHTS FOR TRANS & NON-BINARY PEOPLE BEING DANGEROUS OR UNAFFORDABLE!

How our campaign won gender neutral facilities for students

**Queen Mary
Socialist
Students**

April
2025

- We found that trans and non-binary students at QM don't yet have sufficient, appropriate changing facilities, including at the Qmotion gym
- QM Socialist Students launched a campaign jointly with the LGBT+ Society in October 2024
- We discussed how to fix it with the SU, students and staff
- We leafleted, ran a petition, and held a public meeting
- We won a commitment to gender-neutral changing facilities at Qmotion

What next?

- We say the SU must organise discussions, representing all students and staff, on how to properly implement these facilities.
- When we organise collectively and fight for resources we need, facilities for any section of students don't come at the expense of others.



FIGHT FOR TRANS LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM!

James Gretton
Southampton Socialist Students

Transgender rights are a major civil rights issue of our generation. Transgender people currently struggle with their ability to access gender-affirming care and obtain gender self-identification, in addition to workplace discrimination and housing barriers, such as when landlords evict their transgender tenants based on their gender identity.

Compounding this are the attacks from capitalist politicians of all parties. Labour's health secretary Wes Streeting has banned NHS England from prescribing puberty blockers to young trans people. Meanwhile, in the US, Trump cut funding to an LGBTQ+ helpline used by 1.3 million crisis contacts.

The Conservatives' unprecedented blocking of the Scottish Parliament legislation on gender self-identification aims to delegitimise transgender people's legal status, further marginalising them, while Reform UK's 2024 manifesto called for "no gender questioning" as part of their policy of banning "transgender ideology" in schools.

This 'divide and conquer' strategy is designed to manufacture fear and suspicion that transgender people – a tiny sector of the population – are the enemy, their rights unnecessary, and their presence dangerous.

Particularly pernicious is the common attempt to claim that transphobic rhetoric and policies are on behalf of women. Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch framed the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of a woman in equality law as a supposed victory for women's rights. This is outrageous from a party whose time in government left women's services devastated by austerity.

The Conservatives, Starmer's Labour and those who welcomed the ruling lean

on fears over women's rights, safety and services, to which our movement needs to offer political arguments and action to fight together for what we all need.

Socialists explain that the biggest threat to domestic violence refuges is not trans women seeking refuge, but austerity. Austerity and women's oppression are interwoven with the capitalist system, which produces a wealthy minority who profit from the exploitation of the working class.

The Women's Budget Group (WBG) reported that between 2010 and 2018 alone, "17% of specialist gender-based violence refuges in England have closed. A third of all referrals to refuges are turned away [...] normally due to lack of available space."

The driving down of working-class living standards has also exacerbated the disempowerment that working-class women have experienced since the COVID-19 pandemic, as the WBG and others have reported.

Worsening job security and reductions in hours for 'non-essential' roles, all alongside the continuation of austerity, are the threats to women's lives and living standards, not transgender women using the same gendered spaces.

Those attacking trans rights claim they are protecting safe spaces, but single-sex spaces are not safe in a society where violence against women is tolerated. A staggering 97% of young women in the UK report experiencing sexual harassment.

Linking the fight for women's rights, transgender rights, and the socialist programme we all need is solidarity in practice. And in these trying times, when Labour and other parties attack legal rights and public services, building a workers' party is vital for the political representation our movement needs.

With the announcement of 'Your Party', socialists have the opportunity to influ-

ence the building of a new party towards the labour movement. Alongside fighting for a unifying programme of a workers' party, social movements must unite against the common enemy of capitalism, envisioning a socialist alternative built on principles of mutual support, understanding and compassion on a firm class basis.

In the 1980s, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) demonstrated the value of solidarity between the striking miners and the LGBTQ+ community, who shared a common struggle against Margaret Thatcher's government, as depicted in works like the film *Pride* (2014).

Trade unions today continue to spotlight transgender rights and their needs in the workplace. The role for the trade union movement is as the organised mass force fighting for what's needed – defending jobs and pay, ending austerity, fighting for services, like those supporting victims of domestic violence, to be run safely, with adequate screening processes, sufficient trained staff and specialisation to meet different needs, and striving for the united programme we need to counter division in the workplace and in society. Socialist Students stands united with trade unions fighting back.

Furthermore, Socialist Students identified the state visit of US President Donald Trump to the UK as an opportunity to intervene against what Trumpism represents, its influence in Reform, as well as Starmer's complicit support for it. Trump's attacks on the working class and transgender people represent an assault on the groups he seeks to subordinate, which does not have to go unchallenged.

Whether in the workplace, on campus, the doctor's office, public office or wherever you call home, the socialist fightback can represent transgender liberation. As the Industrial Workers of the World potentially noted, 'an injury to one is an injury to all'.



Mihaela Ivanova Queen Mary Socialist Students

As the slaughter on Gaza continues after nearly two years of destruction, with tens of thousands dead and millions displaced under an ongoing famine, there has been no let-up for the people of Palestine. The Israeli state has relentlessly terrorised the Gaza strip and the West Bank since the Hamas-led 7 October 2023 attacks.

The extensive bombing campaign further imposed a complete siege, cutting off water, fuel and electricity which was already being rationed in the Gaza strip, one of the most densely populated places on earth.

This mass destruction of infrastructure, hospitals, homes and livelihoods has been broadcast through social media. Across the world, millions can see the deepening humanitarian crisis, and a reality is clear: capitalism has nothing to offer but poverty, death and destruction.

Despite two ceasefires and another being negotiated at the time of writing, there has been no light at the end of the tunnel for those in the occupied Palestinian territories. The destruction has been aided by Western governments, especially US president Trump, but also Starmer under whose Labour government arms exports to Israel have actually increased.

However, despite this support, the Israeli capitalist regime is not stable. Under constant pressure to escalate from

the far-right groups in the Israeli government, and the crisis of his own political career, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu now faces growing opposition with protests and strikes of hundreds of thousands of people in Israel who have been demanding the return of all hostages and an end to the war.

Capitalism means war

War is the inevitable consequence of an international capitalist system based on profit, exploitation and oppression. States act in the interest of the ruling capitalist class, fighting in constant competition for resources, control and profit.

Today, on the international stage so-called diplomatic means to end the conflicting interests of different capitalist classes have illuminated the corruption and greed behind who gets to decide the 'winners' and 'losers' of war. For example, under huge pressure of the anti-war movement Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced the recognition of Palestine. But in reality it was as a bargaining chip against Israel's planned siege of Gaza.

This has further exposed how capitalist politicians do not prioritise human life over the profit of the capitalists. The rotten capitalist system can only bring widespread impoverishment and misery to ordinary people whose homes become the battlefield.

Neither can the Palestinians rely on the regimes of the Middle East, such as President Sisi in Egypt, who has tightly guarded exit out of the strip through the Rafah crossing. This is due to the fear

that a mass influx of displaced Palestinians could inflame domestic unrest, destabilising Egypt's already fragile political order.

The memory of the Arab Spring in 2011 looms large for Sisi and Co. It toppled dictators in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, and mass protests spread across the region, including in Israel. These events revealed the staggering power of the masses and the potential for the working class to take power and transform society, but were ultimately defeated.

Flashes of the power the organised workers' movement can harness have been evident in recent times. In 1987, Palestinians made significant gains under the first intifada, in mass movements demanding self-determination, weakening the depravity faced under Israeli occupation. In 2019, workers united in Lebanon rose up in mass protests against government corruption, which intensified the cost of living crisis, forcing the government to resign, despite decades of civil war. In 2022 in Iran, a revolutionary movement broke out of protests against the brutal repression against women, ousting the president from government.

Mass upheavals have the power to transform society, but it is important that any movement against the symptoms of capitalism must have the organised workers' movement playing a central role to achieve this. For example, trade union action to stop the flow of arms, without loss of jobs, and an organised mass movement of protests, strikes

and international solidarity, can assist the struggles in the Middle East. It is also necessary for the working class to have its own independent political voice.

Future mass movements in Palestine, Israel, and across the Middle East – including the development of new workers' parties with a programme for the socialist transformation of society – will be capable of bringing an end to the cycles of slaughter, and open up a democratic, socialist future.

Students and workers unite

Students need to organise, linking up with others in particular the trade union movement to defend the right to organise and protest. The ban on Palestine Action is an attempt to intimidate the anti-war movement.

It also means joining forces with the trade union movement in a fight to end Starmer's war and austerity agenda, and

with a political voice and a socialist programme to end all wars.

Along with the wars on Ukraine, Congo, Sudan, and countless others, Gaza marks this era of capitalism as one blazed with instability, divisions and unprecedented struggle and poverty across the world. While the capitalist system exists, competition for profits with no regard for human life is inevitable. Ending the vicious cycle of war and death means overthrowing capitalism, and fighting for a socialist change in society. This should be based on the working class owning and controlling the means of production, meaning the resources, land and work that create the wealth in society should be democratically controlled and planned to benefit the needs of all people rather than profit.

The hugely popular announcement of Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana indicates the potential to create a new work-

ers' party that could be a political voice for the anti-war movement as well as the workers in trade unions and across society, fighting for a socialist alternative to war and austerity.

The creation of such a party would terrify Starmer, enormously strengthen our movement in Britain, and give confidence to the working class and oppressed fighting Trump and Netanyahu worldwide, to build parties that struggle for the ending of this rotten capitalist system and the war and exploitation inherent to it.



How can we build the Palestine solidarity protests on campus?

As Israeli state terror has stepped up, so have international demonstrations which swelled across the globe, including student-led encampments which spread from the US to the UK. Despite the courageous action taken on by students in bolstering the anti-war movement, universities like Queen Mary spent over £100,000 taking its own students to court, and has unfortunately not yet led to their demands being met or the end of the plight for Palestinians in Gaza. **How can we build the movement now?**

DISCLOSE ALL FINANCES!

Universities should open their books to a democratic inquiry by elected students' representatives and the campus trade unions, with the power to terminate all contracts and research tied to war and occupation, while guaranteeing jobs and funding.

END MARKETISATION!

The government must fully fund education to disincentivise universities from gambling our fees on dodgy companies and 'vanity projects'. Scrap tuition fees, cancel student debt, and reintroduce living grants for all students.

WE NEED A POLITICAL VOICE!

Winning a free, democratic, and genuinely ethical education system means fighting to take wealth and power off the capitalist elites. Starmer's Labour government won't even begin to fight for this. We need a mass workers' party, with a socialist programme to end the capitalist system that breeds war and oppression.

MAXIMISE OUR STRENGTH!

Our movement would be strengthened if more students and workers joined. Socialist Students is calling for students to join us with:

- **Mass meetings** open to all who want to discuss how we can build a movement against war, oppression and capitalism
- **Stalls and leafleting sessions**, where we can talk to other students about any upcoming protests and action, and encourage them to join
- **A rally** with speakers invited from local trade union branches, and students from other universities, colleges and schools nearby
- **A lobby of our local MP or councillors** alongside other students, workers and trade unionists, to demand they explain their position on the Israeli state's onslaught in Gaza



Read why Socialist Students called walkouts against Trump's state visit on September 17 2025

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

AND HOW CAN WE FIGHT FOR IT?



Isis Smyth Liverpool Socialist Students

This system, capitalism, has inequality and conflict baked into it. It is an economic system in which the means of production (the resources and technology needed to produce things) are privately owned, concentrated in the hands of a small minority of individuals, the capitalists.

The capitalists use their overwhelming control of wealth and resources to make profits for themselves, with no regard for the living conditions of the working class, young people, or the planet.

The Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – then at a formative stage of capitalism – was driven by workers in factories. It was an economic engine for world-changing scientific and industrial developments.

But all of this was achieved through the relentless exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class. Despite production – and the bosses' profits – relying on workers, they had no control in the workplace. Instead, their bosses owned the factories they worked in and the machinery they used, profiting greatly while the workers were provided a wage of subsistence to live on. Only by organising collectively could they force a few more crumbs from the capitalists.

In the twenty-first century, this economic relationship persists. The coffee shop barista in Starbucks labours for minimum wage, while the billionaire owner of Starbucks makes mega-profits.

Right now, capitalism is in a deep crisis. The economy is stagnating, and there is little, if anything, to persuade young people and the working class that capitalism is a system designed for us.

The richest one per cent own almost 48 per cent of the world's wealth. Poverty is a necessity, with global big business thriving on subjecting people to working for little to nothing. The capitalist class is ramping up its attacks on workers and young people, as profits become harder to guarantee in today's stagnant global economy. Competition for profit between different sections of capitalists is getting more intense, increasingly spilling over into military and trade wars between nations acting in the interests of 'their own' capitalists.

A different world is possible

In this world of turmoil, it can be easy to feel hopeless. But an alternative does exist, and we have the power to make it a reality.

Socialism is a system in which the world's resources and technology are collectively owned, with the working class democratically deciding how to organise production as part of a global economic plan. The world would run on the basis of providing for the needs of all people instead of trying to make a profit for a tiny minority.

Democratic planning would enable humanity to take the action needed to prevent climate catastrophe.

Access to high-quality and free health-care, water, electricity, and a decent home would be granted as basic, fulfilled human rights, and wouldn't fall victim to an unstable capitalist economy.

Human health wouldn't be secondary to profit. Hospitals would be run by staff with expertise in keeping people safe and healthy, instead of managers instructed to cut costs.

Public transport would be free to use and genuinely publicly owned, not handed over to billionaires. There could be

investment to massively expand and integrate transport networks, to ensure they run regularly and efficiently.

War would be a distant memory of a grizzly past, as relations between people and states would be based on democratic cooperation, not competition and struggle for resources.

Under socialism, political representatives would be democratically elected and would take the average wage of those they represent – a far cry from the polarity of today's politics, in which MPs earn almost £60,000 more than the average worker! They would be subject to the right to recall, meaning if they were not fulfilling their promises and the working class wanted them out, we would have the power to democratically decide on another representative.

Socialism would allow the full potential of human talent to be harnessed. Without profit meddling in science, medical developments could be made on a scale not seen under capitalism.

The question, then, becomes how to fight for this? What role can students play in bringing about a socialist transformation of society?

The capitalists will battle tooth-and-nail to maintain control of the economy and society, using the power of the state – like with the law, the police, the courts and the media.

That is why socialism could be achieved through movements on a mass scale, introducing democratic working-class control and management of the economy at every level of society and internationally.

Power of the working class

The working class is potentially the most powerful force in society, and the key force to fighting for its socialist transfor-

mation. That's because of its role in capitalist production: as the class that keeps society running through its collective exploitation, the working class has the potential to collectively act and decisively take matters into its own hands. This potential can be glimpsed when workers take strike action – when workers withhold their labour, production is halted, and the running of society is impacted.

We also saw this with the Russian Revolution of 1917, in which workers took power and built the first workers' state, notwithstanding its later degeneration. Similarly, trade union and working-class victories in the UK have given us the NHS.

Therefore, student movements must be tied to workers' movements, with both groups marching together, in order to have the biggest possible impact. At the same time, students historically have played a vital role in wider movements, one of the most notable examples being when workers almost took power in France, 1968.

In May 1968, student protests escalated rapidly in France. They were angry about their overcrowded classrooms and poor quality of education, as well as a lack of employment opportunities upon graduating. Similar issues students face today.

Student protests were met with brutal suppression from the Charles de Gaulle government, but they showed no signs of slowing down. At the same time, workers were angry about the conditions they faced at work and the inflation that was eating into their wages. This anger culminated in workers joining protesting students in a common struggle that shook French capitalism to its foundations.

At the height of this struggle, striking workers numbered ten million across France and paralysed the country, making it one of the biggest strikes in history. De Gaulle fled the country and the potential existed for the working class to take power, but tragically no party or trade union leader was prepared to give a lead.

Advancing the struggle today

The most prominent student movement at the moment is the ardent stand students have taken against the genocide being committed by the Israeli state in Gaza, with encampments across the world rattling chains and striking fear into the hearts of university bosses.

The agonies students experience at the hands of capitalism now – tuition fees, insecure work, overcrowded classes and a lack of opportunities – will, when we graduate, become debt, low wages and inflation as we enter the workforce.

Capitalism's sole motive is profit. It is prepared to, and does, sacrifice human safety, access to food and clean water, human rights and the health of the planet to make a profit.

Many have felt a glimmer of hope with Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's announcement of a new party. Socialist Students welcomes this as a brilliant step in the right direction, and will be fighting for this to be a democratic party that puts the organised working class in the drivers' seat, and fights for socialist policies.

History has made clear that anyone offering even a glimmer of hope to the working class, as Corbyn did during his time as leader of the Labour Party, will be bitterly opposed by the capitalists and their institutions. Any party looking to make the rich pay, not workers and young people, must be able to mobilise the working class in a movement to put wealth in our hands.

But while the capitalists maintain their control over society, any gains won through our mass movements will be at risk of being clawed back in the name of profit. That's why we need a socialist transformation of society, with democratic workers' governments linked up around the globe.

This can finally build a world that functions for the millions, not millionaires. If you agree, then join Socialist Students!





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HOW CAN STUDENTS MAKE COUNCILS FIGHT FOR US?

Joe Woolfall
Liverpool Socialist Students

The austerity agenda in the last fifteen years, driven by the Tories and now Labour, has had devastating effects for young people.

Labour has done nothing to support students; in fact, it has worsened the crisis by raising tuition fees, increasing bus fares, and maintaining policies like the two-child benefit cap, which indirectly harm students through their families. Record numbers of students are now relying on food banks. The student housing crisis is worse than ever, with average rents at an all-time high.

Acting on behalf of big business and the super-rich, this Labour government has continued where the Tories left off: carrying out brutal cuts to our services, and looking to sell off public assets to profiteering private companies. Workers and young people continue to pay the price while the rich just get richer.

Where national government has led, local councils have followed. In the decade since 2010, central government funding to local authorities was cut by 55%. But instead of fighting back, councils have passed on the cuts to working-class communities – closing children's and youth centres, shutting libraries and leisure cen-

tres, and doing nothing to build the council housing that students and the working class desperately need.

Labour councillors often claimed over the last fourteen years of Tory rule that there was nothing they could do about voting for and implementing cuts. But since Starmer's Labour government got into power, nothing has changed! There is currently an ongoing strike of bin workers in Birmingham against a Labour council attempting to effectively fire and rehire workers, reducing their wages by up to £8,000.

Lessons of the Liverpool council

The example of the socialist Labour council in Liverpool in the 1980s demonstrates that there are many things you can do instead of being passive to the class enemy waging attacks on the working class and youth.

The historic struggle in Liverpool City Council saw 49 councillors take a stand against Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government. Though only a minority were supporters of 'Militant' (Marxists fighting for the Labour Party to mobilise the working class for socialist policies) it was these socialists who played the leading role in the council's resistance.

The achievements of the socialist council were far-reaching: three new parks, five

sports centres, thousands of council houses, the creation of thousands of jobs and the eradication of homelessness among single women in Liverpool.

The socialist council transformed the lives of many young people, demonstrating the powers that local councils do have and that can be utilised by socialists. The socialist council offered permanent clerical jobs to unemployed youth, topping up allowances to match full-time wages, and ensuring permanent employment after placements.

By 1985, Liverpool students received free meals, books, paper, and travel tokens, particularly targeting those unemployed or under 18. Student unions saw increased funding and were supported with three full-time



paid union officers. Youth trainee workers could attend union meetings and access trade union reps.

Further education was expanded, with new nursery school units built and teachers retained above government limits.

A strategy to resist cuts today

The potential strategy for councils resisting cuts, drawing on the lessons of the 1980s Liverpool struggle, centres on setting 'no-cuts budgets'. By drawing on reserves and local authority borrowing powers, councils could refuse to implement cuts, while organising a mass campaign for full government funding.

Such a stand would inspire young people and working-class communities, just as happened in the Liverpool struggle. It would provide the impetus for the council to mobilise a mass movement against austerity, involving coordinated action with trade unions, community groups, and local residents.

And with almost every council facing a funding crunch, a united bloc of even a small number of defiant authorities could force the government to retreat.

Warning from the local elections

The local elections earlier this year revealed widespread anger and disillusionment with both the ruling Labour Party and the Tories. Reform UK had a significant breakthrough, capitalising on the anger felt after fifteen years of austerity implemented by all the main establishment capitalist parties, both in Parliament and in local councils.

Reform's gain of 677 council seats brought its total number of councillors to 805. In this context, Reform clearly acted as a protest vote for many working-class people who saw no viable alternative.

Reform UK is a right-wing populist party, reflecting a broader international trend of such forces gaining ground due to anger at establishment politicians. These parties posture as champions of the 'little people' while ultimately defending the capitalist system and promoting nationalism and racist division, most visibly through their anti-immigration stance.

In reality, Reform have continued the austerity agenda in the councils they lead, and will take whatever measures necessary to defend capitalism. Like all pro-capitalist parties and politicians, they will

come up against working-class and youth opposition.

Nonetheless, the rise of Farage's Reform is a source of concern for many students. 'Reform' societies have already begun appearing on several university campuses, and online polls suggest the party could do well in the next general election.

With the May 2026 local elections on the horizon, Reform could pick up more seats, if left unchallenged by an anti-cuts, anti-war alternative.

The launching of a new party by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana could begin to cut into Reform's support. It is worth remembering that in the 2017 general election, up to one million former UKIP voters backed Corbyn's anti-austerity manifesto.

But in order to most effectively combat Reform and right-wing populism, any new party must be prepared to mobilise workers and young people in a mass movement against austerity – including in local government – by fighting to take the wealth out of the hands of the super-rich.

What about the Greens?

In the recent May elections, the Green Party also increased its number of seats by 86, reflecting a perception of the Greens as a left alternative. However, Green councillors have repeatedly implemented cuts in councils when they have been in power.

Despite having over 850 councillors nationally – more than Reform, and a potentially huge platform to mount a fightback against Labour austerity – the Green Party in local government has shown it will ultimately accept the capitalists' demand to make the working class pay.

Socialists must always oppose austerity and fight all council cuts. If elected, we would fight for no-cuts budgets and work to mobilise support in working-class communities to resist government pressure. The lesson for today is clear: the working class and youth need our own party committed to socialist policies.

Socialist Students has long called for a new mass workers' party and has, since our 2024 conference, stood in elections under the banner of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) – an umbrella organisation uniting socialist groups, trade unionists, independents, and individual activists.

Our campaigns – such as Funding Not Fees, which fights tuition fee hikes, cuts and redundancies on campus as well as fighting for fully funded free education – show the need for grassroots struggle. But fighting these struggles without our own political voice is like fighting with 'one arm tied behind your back'.

In this new era, Labour has confirmed it is no longer a party of the working class. That is why Socialist Students participates in TUSC and also calls for the formation of a new mass workers' party, joining together trade unions, socialist organisations and campaign groups in an 'umbrella' structure.

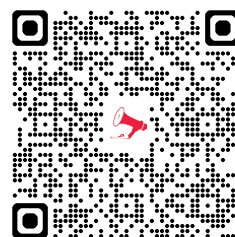
We will be campaigning this term for Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's 'Your Party' initiative to be a step towards a new mass workers' party, armed with a bold socialist programme to transform the lives of young people.

Looking ahead to the May 2026 elections, students need council candidates prepared to stand on a platform of no-cuts, needs-based budgets, as part of a wider programme to transform society. Whether or not a new party prepared to take on cutting councils materialises by then, Socialist Students will be standing candidates in whatever capacity we can. If you want to get involved in an anti-cuts socialist stand at the ballot box next May, get in touch with Socialist Students.

The future only appears bleak for young people if we remain on the path of capitalist crisis. Join Socialist Students to fight for a socialist future!

FIGHTING CUTS AT THE BALLOT BOX

Read more about when Socialist Students stood anti-cuts, socialist candidates in the council elections last year



socialiststudents.org.uk



The climate crisis: Hurtling towards disaster

Hannah Ponting
Liverpool Socialist Students

Climate change has got the world hurtling towards disaster. The disaster flowing from capitalist governments across the globe has left a trail of destruction, with wildfires raging, sea levels rising, and a potentially very bleak future for young people on the horizon.

The internationally agreed target of capping global warming at 1.5% above pre-industrial levels, deemed essential by climate scientists to prevent the worst effects of climate change, is looking dangerously out of reach, with the effects of climate change being no longer predictions of the future, but current events. In early 2025, the LA wildfires burned over 40,000 acres of land, resulting in the loss of the homes of tens of thousands of people. Around 40% of glaciers are already beyond saving and doomed to melt, which will have a massive impact on the billions of people reliant on glaciers to regulate the water used to grow food.

We have also been feeling the effects of climate change in the UK. The summer of 2022 saw temperatures hitting 40 degrees in the UK for the first time in history, leading to rail lines buckling, 20% of hospital operations being cancelled during the peak of the heatwave, and over 3000 people dying prematurely due to the heat. Following this, at the start of July 2023,

the planet endured the two hottest days ever recorded.

No Climate Justice Under Capitalism

There is no solution to the climate crisis under capitalism. Capitalism, driven by competition and big business profits before all else, cannot deliver the coordinated, long-term planning required to address the climate crisis. In fact, 71% of all global greenhouse gas emissions since 1988 can be traced to just 100 fossil fuel producers.

This Labour government defends the interests of capitalism, and has demonstrated its lack of willingness to fight the climate crisis head-on. Even before the election, Keir Starmer abandoned Labour's policy of investing £28 billion into green investment funds, despite the ongoing climate crisis.

The same unwillingness to act can be seen in country after country, where capitalist governments prioritise the profits of 'their' capitalist class over the needs of ordinary people and the environment.

While many may hope that international climate agreements may offer a step in the right direction, this has been demonstrated to not be the case. Even if every commitment made at the 2016 Paris Agreement was met, global warming would still go beyond the 2-degree limit that the summit declared as an essential

cap. Furthermore, not a single industrialised country is even on track to meet the commitment that it made in 2016.

Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is a clear indication that capitalist politicians are willing to abandon climate targets in favour of national interests and short-term profit motives. The US is a massive contributor to climate change, ranking second in the world after China, with the US still having a higher rate of emissions of planet-warming gases per capita.

Rather than attempting to tackle this problem, Trump is ignoring the scientific evidence and encouraging further acceleration of fossil fuel and oil extractions as part of his 'Drill, Baby, Drill' pledge! The Trump administration has also launched attacks on universities, pulling funding from diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) programmes, many of which are based around climate change, which will limit further research into environmental studies.

At a time when global cooperation to end the climate crisis is needed more than ever, Trump's divisive politics and use of trade tariffs globally make him a clear example of the unplanned chaos that capitalism means for the world today.

Clearly we can't trust our planet in the hands of the capitalists and their politi-

cians. By fighting to take big businesses into public ownership, including nationalising polluting oil and gas companies under democratic workers' control and management, the working class could run these industries for social need not profit, and focus on taking co-ordinated steps to make the switch towards environmentally friendly energy sources.

If workers had a democratic say in how society is run, a planned 'green transition' away from fossil fuels and towards environmentally friendly alternatives could be achieved without mass job losses for workers in those industries.

Workers' control

The 'Lucas Plan' in the 1970s gives a glimpse of how workers currently employed in environmentally harmful industries could redirect their skills and expertise to lead the charge for a green transition.

Over fifty years ago, workers at Lucas Aerospace – a company making electronic systems for missiles – were threatened with mass redundancies due to deindustrialisation. Instead of accepting these losses, the workers, organised in trade unions, proposed a shift in production from military manufacturing to socially useful goods.

Over 150 ideas with detailed technical designs were included in the plan, offering a glimpse into the opportunities that can arise when workers are given the chance to repurpose their technical expertise into socially useful goods.

Tragically, due to resistance from the management and the lack of workers' control in the company, the plan was ultimately blocked. Nonetheless, the Lucas Plan is perhaps relevant now more than ever before. It highlights why we need democratic, fighting trade unions to play a central role in the fight against climate change and towards a sustainable future.

The impact of war

This era of capitalist crisis means horror on end – not just seen in the deepening climate crisis, but also in increasing wars, including the genocidal horrors suffered by the Palestinians in Gaza.

War not only displaces millions of people and causes devastating loss of life. It also wreaks havoc on the climate. Russia's war in Ukraine, for example, has severely damaged biodiversity and inflicted lasting

harm on Ukraine's natural environment.

Examples of capitalist war's devastating effects on the climate can also be seen throughout history. During the Vietnam War, over 5 million acres of forest and 500,000 acres of farmland were destroyed, with over 400,000 tons of the toxic chemical Napalm being sprayed over the Vietnamese countryside by the US. In Iraq, marshlands were reduced by 90% after President Saddam Hussein ordered major rivers be stopped in order to crush an uprising. Furthermore, Afghanistan has lost nearly 95% of its forest cover in recent decades.

Even during peacetime, militaries use vast amounts of dirty energy. For example, the US Department of Defense's 566,000 buildings make up 40% of its fossil fuel consumption. These structures include training centres, dormitories, factories, and other facilities across the department's nearly 800 bases worldwide. As nations continue to boost military spending in an increasingly multipolar and unstable world, the climate continues to bear the consequences.

Youth vs climate chaos

The message is clear: young people aren't willing to pay the price for capitalism's exploitation of the climate, and failure to give us a future. The climate crisis is pushing more and more students and young people into action. As well as countless grassroots youth-led campaigns taking shape in various communities, the 'School Strike for Climate' movement saw millions of students across the globe mobilise in protest against climate change, demonstrating that a new generation of young people have been pushed into action. After all, young people are now entering into a world of climate breakdown, increased militarisation, and vast economic inequality. Now, more than ever, young people are seeking an alternative system which can provide a genuine way forwards.

While many young people may have looked to the Green Party, hoping that they may provide an alternative, their actions have fallen short. For example, the party voted through £51 million in cuts to Bristol City Council, a move defended by Green council leader Tony Dyer as a necessity, as he explained in a BBC interview that they were simply having to "work within the constraints that are placed upon us." This just exposes the Greens' lack of a clear, transformative vision for a socialist society, which is vital for any party looking to stand up to the capitalist

system and its demands that the working class pay for the bosses' climate catastrophe.

As Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn's 2019 manifesto included a £250 billion green transformation fund, a commitment to a publicly owned national grid, and for the "supply arms of the big six energy companies to be brought into public ownership". His manifesto, which also included other bold policies such as the scrapping of tuition fees, electrified millions of young people.

Now Corbyn has joined Zarah Sultana in pledging to build a new party to take on Starmer's Labour. Socialist Students welcomes this as a potential major step forward in fighting climate change and capitalism. As a bare minimum, Corbyn's green policies from 2019 would be a starting point, from which a mass movement for socialist change, not climate change, could be built.

Under a socialist system, the banks and major industries – including the major energy companies – would be placed in the hands of workers, not the capitalist bosses. By cooperating and discussing together, it would be possible to democratically draw up a plan of production based on human need, including the need for a healthy environment. The world's massive wealth, resources and technology could be steered towards ensuring we live sustainably. Millions of high-quality, eco-friendly jobs would be created as societies shift rapidly towards green energy. Decisions about where to locate renewable energy production could be made democratically, with proper community consultation.

Socialist Students campaigns at schools, colleges, and universities across the country – to allow young people to make their voices heard in the fight for a viable socialist future, in which the needs of people and the planet which we live on are no longer secondary to profit. If you agree, then join us this term.



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