

# Campaign begins for meetings on 100 years since British General Strike

**Our reporters**  
**1 May 2026**

*The Socialist Equality Party (UK) is campaigning to promote a series of public meetings to mark the centenary of the British General Strike.*

*The meetings, “Trotsky, Stalin and the 1926 British General Strike: Lessons for today”, will be held this month in London (May 30), Sheffield (May 12), Manchester (May 18), Glasgow (May 31) and Inverness (May 24). Tickets are available [here](#).*

*Campaign stalls in working class areas and on campus have encountered interest, with workers and young people drawing a connection between the period of 1926 and the conditions they face today. Reports from SEP branches in London, Sheffield and Inverness are featured below.*

## London

Last Saturday, we campaigned in Whitechapel, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, between Royal London Hospital, a Royal Mail depot and a major rail and London Underground transport hub. Whitechapel is a historic and multicultural working-class district of East London.

The banner at our stall drew immediate attention from passers-by who stopped to talk with campaigners. We sold several copies of our new pamphlet on the General Strike, along with tickets for the meeting.

A worker approached and said, “Yes, I know, it’s the Centenary of 1926”. He took a leaflet saying he would visit the *World Socialist Web Site* and attend the meeting.

A teacher from Islington said employers are using sickness procedures to intimidate and threaten workers, criminalising illness. She had studied the philosophical foundations of Marx’s thought and was an admirer of Leon Trotsky, “I don’t know about 1926, but I can learn.” She bought a ticket for the meeting, adding, “I know the TUC and the unions betray. We need a general strike today, an uprising of the people.”

Another worker attracted by the banner, pointed to the headline on the leaflet and said, “This is what we need to do again.”

A Bengali pensioner said he doesn’t trust any current politicians and that people must come together against them. Change was needed globally, not just in the UK, and he was pleased to hear that we are an international party.

A worker from Gent explained, “In Belgium we have similar histories of struggle”. He stressed that understanding history is necessary for what it teaches us for our fight today.

Another teacher approached the stall after visiting a gallery exhibition about opposition to the Gaza genocide. She had been to so many protests over Gaza that her head was spinning, she said. But after all the protests “They are doing to Iran a country of 90 million what they carried out against the Palestinians”. She asked, “How do we stop them?”

We cited our leaflet for the meeting: “The lesson of the 1926 General

Strike is that militant struggle alone, especially when directed to pushing the bureaucratized organizations to the left, is a road to defeat. An independent, internationalist, socialist and revolutionary party must be built to lead the renewed movement of the British and world working class emerging in response to the social offensive and political crimes of the ruling class.”

She took copies of the leaflet and said she would discuss the meeting with her colleagues.

A National Health Service (NHS) worker whose family is from Greece bought the pamphlet, “I’ve heard of the general strike and want to read it.” At work she had called for strike action to protect the NHS but union officials would not listen and were doing nothing to protect the NHS, “In Greece we had Syriza who tried to manage IMF [International Monetary Fund] austerity but it ended in terrible poverty and Greece has never recovered.”

SEP members explained that Syriza’s leaders Alexis Tsipras and Yanis Varoufakis were the modern-day version of the “lefts” who betrayed the 1926 general strike: props on which the capitalist class depends against the working class.

A government worker bought a pamphlet and ticket for the meeting. He approached the stall in response to the banner, wanting to understand the differences between Trotsky and Stalin. He asked what we thought of the conflicts inside Your Party and whether Jeremy Corbyn was a way forward. He was “stunned” by our critique of Your Party and is attending our public meeting to learn more about this history and the SEP’s analysis of Corbyn and New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

A young worker who was facing victimization at her workplace said that workers are made to feel alone and a movement was needed to “bring them all together”. Radicalized by the Gaza genocide, she had attended meetings of the pseudo-left Socialist Party but refused to join because they were lauding Corbyn. She agreed with our assessment of Your Party and bought our pamphlet, *Corbyn’s New Left Party. What it is and What it Isn’t*. She told SEP campaigners she was a socialist and that Corbyn “promised the world and delivered nothing at all. Everyone in my house was talking about him in a positive way, but now you can’t mention his name.”

## Sheffield

In Sheffield city centre, workers and youth stopped at the campaign stall. Many younger people were encountering the 1926 General Strike for the first time. They expressed interest in learning about it, drawing connections with the present political situation.

A recent MBA graduate, now working for minimum wage in a supermarket, and originally from Nigeria, was interested to see *World*

*Socialist Web Site* coverage of Africa, shown to him on a smartphone. After discussing the General Strike, the history of British imperialism and the need for a co-ordinated fight by workers internationally, he purchased a ticket for the meeting.

A secondary school teacher scanned the link to register. Responding to US President Donald Trump's threats to annihilate Iran, they said, "It is all about wealth and power. I think what we need is a revolution." They had joined the mass protests against the Gaza genocide, but said with frustration, "that didn't achieve anything." The teacher rejected the official narrative for NATO's war against Russia, "That is not about human rights or anything of the kind—it is the same grab for resources and profits. Where is this going to end up—World War III?"

At Sheffield Hallam University campus, wide-ranging discussions took place. One student remarked, "We need a general strike today."

An admin worker said, "That is what we need now. The governments keep telling us that there is no money for services, and keep wages so low, and with the war in Iran, life is going to get so much harder. They never suggest that the rich pay for it, it is always the working class. I think all workers need to get together and organise to defend themselves. I would like to know more about the general strike as this is the first time I heard about it."

At a campaign in the Walkley area, a worker recounted attending events in Moscow marking the centenary of the 1917 Russian Revolution. He said that while many people believe socialism has failed, "it had not been given a chance". He added that Leon Trotsky was "better than the other guy," Stalin. He had not studied Trotsky's writing and said he was interested in attending the meeting to find out more.

Campaigns for the meeting have been held among postal workers, striking NHS doctors, bus drivers in Doncaster striking over pay and Cummins workers in Huddersfield, who have balloted for strike action.

Discussions were held at the National Mining Museum with workers striking over wages and conditions. Many are former miners who participated in the bitter year long strike in 1984-85. They expressed interest in attending and discussed their own experiences, not just with the Tory government of Margaret Thatcher but the isolation of miners by the TUC [Trades Union Congress], leading to their defeat. One stated: "We needed a general strike then and we need one now!"

## **Inverness**

On April 22, we campaigned outside the Royal Mail sorting office in Inverness, from 6 a.m. till 8 a.m., handing out leaflets. When postal workers had their recent strike (2022-23) and went through privatisation, we intervened, warning of the role of the Communication Workers Union bureaucracy and calling for the building of rank-and-file committees. When we returned to discuss the lessons of the 1926 betrayal postal workers immediately recognised us. We were met with warmth, with one worker asking if we were "the rank-and-file guys?" When we confirmed that we were he said that we were correct about the role of the unions and thanked us for coming down.

Another postie from Eastern Europe, who also recognised us, said, "I do 280 drops in a day. In April! This is expected for December but never in April. They are now expecting less workers to do more work." After a discussion on 1926 he said, "This is right, we do have to learn the lessons of '26. One of them is that strikes are meant to last!" Another postie said, "The unions had us striking to just call it off and for us to lose wages." After we explained the unions' role in 1926, he said "1926 and 2026!"

We then campaigned at HIS (Highland Industrial Supplies). This is a meeting place for every worker in the industrial sector of Inverness. We

stood for around an hour in their car park. Here we were also met with warmth and support. Most workers didn't know about the 1926 general strike but were pleased to be approached about it.

One worker said that he'd "read this right away". He hadn't heard about the General Strike, but immediately drew the connection, "with the price of fuel and just living, something has to be done."

At the v8 cafe, the most popular breakfast cafe in the area among industrial workers, a woman behind the till was enthusiastic about getting our posters up, putting one on the front door and another in the cafe area.

**Make plans today to attend a meeting near you.**

### **Sheffield**

Tuesday, May 12, 7pm

Showroom Cinema

Paternoster Row

Sheffield, S1 2BX

***Get tickets here***

### **Manchester**

Monday, May 18, 7pm

Friends' Meeting House (behind Manchester Central Library)

6 Mount Street

Manchester, M2 5NS

***Get tickets here***

### **Inverness**

Sunday, May 24, 2pm

Royal Highland Hotel (Magnus Hall)

Station Square

Academy Street

Inverness, IV1 1LG

***Get tickets here***

### **London**

Saturday, May 30, 2pm

Elizabeth House

2 Hurlock Street

London, N5 1ED

***Get tickets here***

### **Glasgow**

Sunday, May 31, 2pm

Premier Inn Glasgow City Centre

187 George Street

Glasgow, G1 1YU

***Get tickets here***



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**